

**CANADIAN RESOURCE
CENTRE FOR VICTIMS
OF CRIME**



**CENTRE CANADIEN DE
RESSOURCES POUR LES
VICTIMES DE CRIMES**

"Dedicated to Justice" • «Au service de la justice»

September 15, 2008

The Honourable Stockwell Day
Minister of Public Safety
340 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, ON K1A 0P9

The Honourable Rob Nicholson
Minister of Justice
284 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H8

The Honourable David Emerson
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2

Dear Ministers:

The Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime advocates for and supports victims and survivors of violent crime, including Canadians impacted by terrorism. We recently attended a Symposium on Supporting Victims of Terrorism, convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. We thought it necessary to share with you what was learned at this important Symposium.

The fundamental purpose of the Symposium was to show solidarity with victims of terrorism and find better ways to support them. We heard many messages repeated again and again throughout the day; including the fact that victims deserve social recognition, justice, and to have their needs met.

As you will know, the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy was adopted by Member States on September 8, 2006. Among other things, it calls for an end to the dehumanization of victims, facilitating the normalization of their lives, and giving practical meaning to these commitments. We agree with the President of the General Assembly who said that national systems of assistance for victims of terrorism are needed to facilitate the normalization of their lives.

The following key issues were also highlighted at the Symposium:

- Responses to terrorism cannot be ad hoc; a comprehensive government approach is needed to respond to victims and survivors in the immediate aftermath and over the long-term.
- Society must continue to remember by honouring the victims; governments must acknowledge the suffering of victims and give them a voice to share the true human cost of terror.
- Victims must be supported in restoring their lives, not left to cope on their own.

We respectfully request that your Ministries undertake a joint evaluation of Canada's ability to provide comprehensive support and services for persons harmed in the event of a terrorist

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event occurring within Canada or abroad. In the wake of this ground-breaking UN Symposium, we feel it is crucial for Canada to develop a national system of response to a terrorist incident. The research we have undertaken in this area suggests that Canada can learn much from other jurisdictions, such as Israel and France; countries with legislation that guarantees all aspects of aftercare for victims, eye witnesses, and first responders, regardless of their nationality.

The rippling effects of a terrorist attack are significant and inter-generational. We have directly observed the lasting impacts of terrorism in our efforts to support Air India Flight 182 family members, Canadians impacted by 9/11 and a Los Angeles Airport shooting victim. We ask that the government consider implementing assistance provisions to meet the physical, emotional and financial needs of all Canadians, past and future, who are victimized by terrorism. These provisions must be retroactive, to provide support to those who continue to suffer from past acts of terrorism.

Please do not hesitate to contact our office should you additional information from this important Symposium.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Illingworth', written in a cursive style.

Heidi Illingworth
Executive Director

Cc Air India Victims Families Association (AIVFA)
Canadian Coalition Against Terror (C-CAT)
Mr. Steve Sullivan, Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime