



*“Dedicated to Justice” • «Au service de la justice»*

May 26, 2017

The Honourable Ralph Goodale, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Public Safety  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

The Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (CRCVC) is writing to you upon our return from the Victim Support Europe conference in Dublin, Ireland. We also had the opportunity to attend a full day International Symposium on Victims of Terrorism presented by the International Framework for Dialogue and Information Sharing (IFDIS). Following our return to Canada, we learned of the bombing in Manchester, England where children, youth and young adults were targeted following a pop concert. While no Canadians appear to have been harmed, we feel it is only a matter of time until a significant event impacts Canadians at home or abroad.

It is well documented that mass violence incidents have long-term impacts on the victims, survivors, responders and the wider community. We believe that a shared government and NGO response is needed in order to fully address all of the victims' needs over time. Victim and family support is a critical component to ensuring a successful overall response to a mass violence incident. The quality of the overall operational response to a mass casualty will, in large part, be judged by the response to victims and families, and should be based upon trust, cooperation, and respect shown to victims, families, and eye witnesses.

Since large scale attacks involve complex and chaotic scenes where many actors/actions are involved, it is important for communities to predict and prepare for the challenges that will arise from these incidents. We know that pre-planning a response is known to prevent long-term harm to victims/survivors and the nation as a whole. It is important to ensure the response is coordinated through each phase including the immediate response, transition process, and post-crisis support in a way that integrates into the investigative and operational response. Coordination with local resources is critical to ensure a smooth provision of services throughout the longevity of the case. Does Public Safety Canada engage with provincial/territorial/local partners regularly in exercises/trainings in order to pressure test response plans? Managing the responses to victims and families is a vital part of response planning. Our organization would welcome an opportunity to be proactively involved in such discussions, exercises/trainings or the operational development of such plans.

While a compassionate immediate response is critical; there must also be capacity to support and respond to the needs of victims, survivors and responders over the medium and long-term. From our work with individuals impacted by terrorism and mass violence, we know that the consequences of extremist violence are felt for decades following the event. Families of deceased victims, witnesses in the area, injured survivors (both visible and invisible injuries), and emergency responders have complex needs, which are not quickly resolved. We also draw your attention to the emerging issue of foreign victims, which is making the response environment more challenging across Europe. Language barriers, lack of knowledge of rights/processes, higher costs, greater isolation and greater difficulties upon returning home are all issues that should be considered in the pre-planning stages.



*“Dedicated to Justice” • «Au service de la justice»*

We believe that Public Safety Canada has a direct role to play in the response to victims of terrorism/mass violence, being the lead agency on issues of counter-terrorism, national security, public safety and also responsible for policing. Do you agree that it would be prudent for Public Safety Canada to create a federal office or national program to assist/support Canadians harmed by terrorism (both domestic and abroad) and other violent crimes abroad? The United States has specialized victim assistance program through the FBI to respond to domestic mass violence incidents; as well as the Office of Justice for Victims of Overseas Terrorism (OVT) which provides support to U.S. victims of overseas terrorism by helping them navigate foreign criminal justice systems and by advocating for their voices to be heard around the world. There is also an International Terrorism Victim Expense Reimbursement Program. We believe a similar Canadian office should be created with greater jurisdiction than the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime and the capability to provide more direct services and practical assistance to victims than what Global Affairs Canada currently does.

Victims need help to normalize their lives in the wake of extremist or mass violence and require long-term aftercare so that they can recover and be resilient. France has legislation (amended in 1990) that guarantees legal rights, services, financial and healthcare supports to victims of terrorism, regardless of their nationality. It assigns victims of terrorism the status of victims of war. An inter-ministerial office (Cellule Interministérielle d’Aide aux Victimes (CIAV)) has been created where Justice, Foreign Affairs, Social Affairs & Health and the Ministry of the Interior work together collaboratively to respond to incidents to ensure victims needs are met. France also has a specific victim compensation scheme, through the guarantee fund for victims of terrorism (1986) and other criminal acts, which provides compensation to all victims, whatever their nationality, of terrorist acts perpetrated in France and to all French victims of terrorist acts perpetrated outside France. It is financed by a levy of €3.30 on the premiums paid to property insurance and provides financial redress for all injuries, losses and expenses. Will Canada consider similar comprehensive legislation for victims of terrorism since our provincial compensation programs for victims of violent crimes do not cover crime outside their borders?

The CRCVC has supported a number of families impacted by terrorism and mass violence and was funded by Public Safety Canada through the Kanishka Project to develop resources, specifically [www.terrorvictimresponse.ca](http://www.terrorvictimresponse.ca), to help communities develop response plans that consider the needs of victims/survivors, thereby increasing community resilience. We are recognized as a leader in Canada on these issues and would welcome the opportunity to be engaged further as you develop policy relating to victims of terrorism and/or overseas crimes.

Sincerely,

Executive Director  
Heidi Illingworth

Cc Mark Holland, MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness  
Sue O’Sullivan, Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime