

PRESS RELEASE

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Spanish Memorial Center for the Victims of Terrorism open the “Memories” Exhibit in Vitoria, Spain

Vitoria (Spain), 7 June 2023 – Today, Mr. Fernando Grande-Marlaska, Minister of Interior of Spain and Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), inaugurated the UNOCT “Memories” exhibition at the Victims of Terrorism Memorial Center in Vitoria, Spain.

Featuring 22 victims from around the world, the “Memories” exhibition offers a compelling visual narrative about the life-changing impact of terrorism on civilians. It speaks to the universality of victims’ experiences across time, place, and location. Their openness in retelling their experiences serves as a reminder of the importance of providing victims with support to help them recover and be part of a resilient community in the face of terrorism.

During the launch event, **Under-Secretary-General Voronkov, Minister Grande-Marlaska, Mr. Florencio Domínguez, Director of the Victims of Terrorism Memorial Center**, and several Spanish victims of terrorism reflected on the importance of listening to victims, understanding their experiences, and standing in solidarity and support with victims to strengthen the collective resolve to end terrorism.

“We must remember the victims, honor their sacrifice and their example. They are the ethical and moral reference of our democratic values. They are the symbol of a world that defends peace and freedom in the face of terrorist desolation,” said the **Minister of the Interior**.

“Their stories of courage and resilience show us how to transform unimaginable pain and suffering into positive change,” said **Vladimir Voronkov**, referring to victims of terrorism.

According to the **Director of The Victims of Terrorism Memorial Center**: “ “Memories” [The exhibition] presents us with a selection of victims from around the world who represent a community of pain, reflecting the damage caused by terrorist violence, but who through their testimony convey a powerful message that serves to delegitimize terrorism. They use their words and their suffering to challenge any rationale that might be invoked by those who use weapons for political purposes.”

The exhibition included a screening of the “Memories” film, which captures the ways in which the memories of victims are just as integral to their rehabilitation as other support efforts. Through captivating storytelling and cinematic techniques, the film showcases the unique bond between victims and their cherished possessions, while emphasizing the importance of remembrance and tribute.

The event concluded with a visit of the Victims of Terrorism Memorial Center in Vitoria

Collaboration between Spain and the United Nations

The opening of the “Memories” exhibition in Spain demonstrates the strong collaboration between UNOCT and the Government of Spain in their common efforts to address the needs and rights of victims and survivors of terrorism.

The UNOCT Global Victims of Terrorism Support Programme provides technical assistance and capacity-building support to Member States, civil society, parliamentarians and UN entities and enhances the capacity of victims to develop and communicate their stories through multimedia training and advocacy campaigns.

The Kingdom of Spain co-chairs the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism, a UN Member State driven initiative, and will host the first international conference on victims of terrorism in 2024 to follow up on the outcomes of the first United Nations Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism.

“Memories” reflects the critical role of international solidarity and cooperation in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism, whilst ensuring the centrality of human rights. By holding this joint event, the United Nations and the Kingdom of Spain hoped to raise awareness of the crucial role of victims in the prevention efforts to end terrorism.

For any queries, please contact:

Ms. Laurence Gerard (oct-info@un.org), Head of the Strategic Communications Unit, UN Office of Counter-Terrorism