



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

Remarks delivered by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General

United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism

**Wreath Laying Ceremony to Honor the Victims of the Terrorist Attack at the UN House in
Abuja**

30 August 2023

Her Excellence, Ms. Oluremi Tinubu, First Lady of Nigeria,
Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am both humbled and honored to take part in this wreath laying ceremony in memory of our fallen colleagues and friends who died in the attack on the United Nations House on 26 August 2011.

Terrorism continues to threaten peace and security, leaving in its wake hundreds of thousands of victims and survivors.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria knows the consequences of terrorism within and around its borders all too well. Indeed, parts of Africa has experienced the highest impact of terrorism for many years.

The United Nations itself is not immune from terrorism. Two weeks ago, we marked the 20th anniversary of the devastating attack on the Canal Hotel in Baghdad, Iraq, on 19 August 2003.

On that tragic day, which we now remember as the World Humanitarian Day, we, the UN, lost 22 people. Many of them were staff members of the United Nations, including Sergio Vieira de Mello, the UN Special Representative to Iraq.

Today, we are gathered here to commemorate the victims of the attack on the United Nations House in Abuja, which claimed the lives of 23 United Nations staff and civilians and left over 60 people injured.

It was not only an attack on Nigeria, but an attack on the global community, and as former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said at the time, the attack was "an assault on those who devote their lives to helping others".

We must never forget our dear colleagues who perished and those who have to live with the life-long scars of terrorism. Our actions to create a peaceful future are the best tribute we can pay in their memory and honour their sacrifice.

Today's commemorative event reminds us that no matter how long ago an attack occurred, victims continue to live and cope with its legacy.

Last week, we marked the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism. This year's theme - *Legacy: Finding Hope and Building a Peaceful Future* - highlighted the very human and common desire of victims to change things for the better.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nigeria has played a critical role in the efforts of the international community to help and support victims and survivors of terrorism, especially through the establishment of the International Day, and your active role in the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism. I also commend your efforts to support victims at the national level.

By reinforcing victims' resilience, showing solidarity, and providing support, we can contribute in rebuilding the fabric of communities torn apart by terrorism.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To all the victims, survivors, families, and friends present here today, the United Nations stands with you.

We cannot falter in our efforts to support victims of terrorism. An investment in upholding their rights is an investment in building a strong, vibrant, and inclusive society, where people can live with dignity and hope for the future.

We must continue to work together, for a world free from terrorism.

Thank you.