

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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Amnesty International welcomes UN decision to discuss Human Rights of Victims of Terrorism

Amnesty International welcomes the decision of the UN Human Rights Council to host a discussion on the human rights of victims of terrorism. A panel took place today at the Council in Geneva, Switzerland. Amnesty International hopes the discussions will mark a further step towards better respect for the human rights of victims of terrorism and other victims of violence by armed groups. A representative of Amnesty International's Security with Human Rights campaign was present to participate in the discussions.

One of the main aims of the Security with Human Rights campaign is to ensure that the human rights of such victims are better recognised, respected and fulfilled: especially the rights of victims to justice, reparation and truth.

International standards on the rights of victims more generally include the 1985 UN Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power and the 2005 UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law.

In 2008, the UN Secretary-General convened a Symposium on Supporting Victims of Terrorism, which made recommendations for the better protection of the human rights of victims of terrorism at national and international levels. The Council of Europe in 2005 had adopted Guidelines on the Protection of Victims of Terrorist Acts, which apply on a regional basis.

In its 2008 Report, *Security and Human Rights: Counter-Terrorism and the United Nations*, Amnesty International called on states and inter-governmental bodies similarly to adopt guidelines to ensure that the rights of victims are respected in a framework that ensures the protection of the human rights of all persons. The organization suggested a set of principles derived from the existing standards, as a guide.

Full implementation of such standards would go a long way towards improving respect for the human rights of victims of terrorism and other violence by armed groups.

To this end, Amnesty International is seeking to build a campaign of solidarity with survivors, and family members of victims, and will campaign for their right to access and receive effective remedy and reparation – in all of its components - for the harm they have suffered. This may involve, for instance, involvement in investigations and trials, receiving adequate financial compensation and other assistance to rebuild their lives in so far as that is possible in light of the devastating consequences. In parallel to this, we will continue to work on our long-standing demand that armed groups end all attacks that target civilians or fail to discriminate between military and civilian targets, and that governments thoroughly investigate such attacks, and bring those responsible to justice through fair trials.

For more information, please see: *Security and Human Rights: Counter-Terrorism and the United Nations* <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/IO40/019/2008/en>