



Statement by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov,  
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism  
Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism

28 September 2020

Excellencies,

It is a pleasure to attend this second Ministerial meeting of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism.

I would like to thank the co-chairs - Afghanistan and Spain - for their continuing dedication and vision in leading this Group.

We meet online due to COVID-19, which has shaken the foundations of our world to the core.

The full political, socioeconomic and security impact of the pandemic, and its interaction with other global challenges and trends, is still unclear.

But we know that terrorists are determined to exploit the current disruption, uncertainty and fear to further disseminate their hateful narratives, strengthen their operations, challenge state authority, raise funds and recruit new followers.

The virus is likely to act as a catalyst in the spread of terrorism by fueling grievances and inequalities, undermining social cohesion and exacerbating conflicts.

Victims of terrorism are especially vulnerable to the consequences of the pandemic.

Lockdowns have had a detrimental effect on their mental health and isolated them from loved ones.

They have struggled to get the wide-ranging support and they need to recover and heal.

And their long and painstaking fight for justice has often been further delayed.

So, today's meeting is an important opportunity to reiterate that we stand in solidarity with all victims of terrorism, during and beyond the pandemic.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

Discussions during the first Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week at the United Nations in July demonstrated that we understand that supporting victims of terrorism is a critical human rights priority, and that we know what must be done to address it.

