

Opening Remarks
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United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
Eighth International Congress for Victims of Terrorism

Nice, France, 21 November 2019

Prefect Gonzalez,

Mayor Estrosi,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thirty-one years ago, when I was a graduate student in London, I sat down in the dormitory dining hall next to a young medical student from Scotland. We struck up a conversation. She was in London working on a Ph.D. related to finding a cure for Alzheimer's. She was an avid musician and a vibrant humanist. She was one of those people that make the world a brighter and more hopeful place.

We discovered we would both be in New York for Christmas. She was going to see her boyfriend, and I was going to see my parents. We agreed to try to meet up. I took the Pan Am flight to New York a few days before she did. She never made it. A terrorist bomb destroyed her plane over Scotland. She perished with 258 others, including another person who had lived in our same dormitory.

Some 13 years later, just a few days after I had completed a Navy reserve assignment at the Pentagon, terrorists flew a fuel-laden passenger jet into the Navy command center there. The

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We see victims of sexual and gender-based violence at the hands of terrorists, and children groomed and forcibly recruited into terrorist ranks.

The trauma from these ordeals do not simply disappear.

They scar individuals, families and communities.

They can reverberate from generation to generation.

Civil society must be more engaged.

The protections for the human rights of victims of terrorism in national legal systems must be strengthened.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In order to help realize these goals, next June the United Nations will hold its first-ever Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism as part of the Second Counter-Terrorism Week which will be dedicated to