



HANDBOOK

ON VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

CROATIA

The EU Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism (EUCVT) is set up and run by the European Commission. The tasks of the EU Centre are executed by a consortium led by Victim Support Europe and include ARQ National Psychotrauma Centre, Association française des Victimes du Terrorisme and Fondation Lenal.

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INTRODUCTION

Recently, the threat of terrorism has hung over the European Union and the rest of the world. The occurrence, on an almost regular basis, of terrorist attacks – whether by suicide bomber or other means – has shaken society to the core, especially as EU citizens are often caught up in such events outside their home borders as well as within EU borders. The impact of terrorism on individuals can be terrible whilst the recovery of victims of terrorist attacks can be affected by the way in which governments, organisations, and individuals respond to the immediate attack and by how victims are supported afterwards.

The Victims' Rights Directive, together with provisions in the Counter-Terrorism Directive (Chapter V) and the Directive on Compensation, provide a general framework of rights for victims of terrorism. The Counter-Terrorism Directive goes beyond the Victims' Rights Directive to establish services supporting the specific needs of victims of terrorism. EU Member States are bound by these instruments, have the obligation to transpose them into national legislation and to ensure that they are applied in

practice. In doing so, each Member State must evaluate how to implement these provisions to ensure measures are appropriate to the specific situation and to national circumstances.

In Croatia, the terrorist threat is very low, and as such Croatia is considered to be a safe country. In modern Croatian history, only a single terrorist attack has been registered on the national territory – in 1995, when a suicide bomber activated an explosive device in front of the Rijeka police station. The attacker was killed and 29 persons were injured.

Apart from this isolated domestic incident, only a limited number of incidents involving Croatian victims of terrorism have been registered. Most of these involved Croatian nationals working for contracting firms in Iraq, Afghanistan and Egypt.

However, Croatia has recently experienced a series of earthquakes, which have caused mass destruction and the death of several individuals. Some of the consequences and parts of the response to such disasters might be pertinent to planning a response to terrorist victimisation in Croatia.

Further reading:



- **On rights:**
 - Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing the rights, support and protection of victims of crime replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/PUP, SL L 315, 14. 11. 2012., p. 57–73, hereinafter referred to as [Victims' Rights Directive](#)
 - Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework 2002/475/PUP and amending Council Decision 2005/671/PUP, SL L 88, 31. 3. 2017., p. 6–21, hereinafter referred to as [Counter-terrorism Directive](#)
 - Council Directive 2004/80/EZ of 29 April 2004 on compensation to crime victims, SL L 261, 6. 8. 2004., p. 15–18, hereinafter referred to as [Directive on compensation to crime victims](#)
- **On needs:**
 - Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- **On psychosocial support:**
 - Vicente Colomina, Aída de (2019) Victims of Terrorism Quality Assistance Guide
- **On legal support:**
 - Victim Support Europe, APAV (2019) VOciare Synthesis Report
- **On organisations of victims of terrorism:**
 - RAN (2017) The power of victims of terrorism: how to give support
- **On the recognition of victims and useful figures:**
 - MEP Maité Pagazaurtundúa (2019) le livre blanc et noir du terrorisme en Europe

EMERGENCY RESPONSE STRUCTURE TO TERRORISM – IMPACT MANAGEMENT

In 2008, the Croatian Government adopted the National Strategy for the Suppression of Terrorism. The Strategy was complemented, in 2012, by the National Action Plan. In 2014, the Government set up a National Commission for the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism, which was tasked with the coordination of the national response and implementation of the national strategy. In 2015, a new national strategy was adopted.

In 2017, the Croatian Government adopted a new National Security Strategy, which commits to guaranteeing the citizens of the Republic of Croatia the highest possible degree of protection from threats and challenges to their security, especially from contemporary threats such as terrorism. According to this Strategy, the Homeland Security system foresees a coordinated and combined action with a coherent capacity-building model, covering the responses to everyday needs for routine action, emergency situations, disasters and crisis situations on land and sea. This also includes the further development of civil protection, Croatian Firefighting Association, Croatian Red Cross, Croatian Mountain Rescue Service and of other actors at the state, regional and local level, and their capability to coordinate response to disasters and major accidents, while ensuring the independence of their operations.

The 2015 National Strategy for the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism is the guiding document in the field of counter-terrorism. The Strategy sets out five main strands of action: prevention, suppression, protection, impact management, and prosecution. It also recognises the need for an enhanced international cooperation, as well as the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Strategy explicitly states that “the Republic of Croatia will develop a whole series of organisational and other procedures aimed at reducing the potential impacts of terrorist threats, providing rapid relief measures, and managing the situations that can be provoked by

terrorist activities, thus minimising the impacts of terrorist intentions and activities. These impact management measures will include, inter alia, the development of mechanisms and measures to provide assistance to victims of terrorist attacks”. Furthermore, it recognises the need for “strengthening of bilateral, regional, and multilateral cooperation in the area of prevention of terrorism, and in reaction and assistance after a terrorist attack”.

The complexity of the phenomenon of terrorism requires the inclusion of a large number of state institutions, and thus an effective mechanism for their coordination. All competent state bodies regularly take measures to prevent and combat terrorism from within their scope of work. Furthermore, the Strategy states that “for the purposes of implementing the measures to prevent and combat terrorism, the competent state administration bodies shall provide funds in their budgets and shall analyse the organisational and staff-related possibilities concerning the implementation of the Strategy and, if necessary, propose adjustments.”.

Whereas the strategic management of the counter-terrorism system in the Republic of Croatia is centralised, the immediate implementation is functionally decentralised, i.e. each participant in the counter-terrorism system of the Republic of Croatia has clearly indicated activities divided into the following functional categories (as per the above Action Plan for Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism): I. Prevention measures, II. Counter-terrorism measures and procedures, III. Protection measures, IV. Impact management, V. Legal infrastructure, VI. Counter-terrorism training, and VII. Intergovernmental coordination and international cooperation.

The provision of assistance to the victims of possible terrorist attacks immediately after a terrorist attack, as required by the 2017 Directive and set out in the 2012 National Action Plan for

the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism, in the case of mass casualties, is the responsibility of the national structures for emergency response, i.e. civil protection system, activated to implement the impact management measures and recovery from a terrorist attack, within the above-mentioned Measure IV. Civil protection is a system of organising participants, operational forces and citizens aimed at protecting and rescuing people, animals, material and cultural goods, and the environment in major accidents and disasters, and eliminating the consequences of terrorism and war destructions. Activation of civil protection systems refers to the procedures of mobilising emergency services, civil protection operational forces and citizens. Impact management and recovery measures are aimed at minimizing the impact of terrorist intentions and actions. Generally, emergency response activities are normally undertaken immediately after a disaster, to provide emergency assistance to victims within the shortest possible time period to reduce life-threatening conditions, and prevent additional damage to people, property and the environment. During this phase, operational forces of the civil protection system, depending on the type of emergency, are engaged in a myriad of activities. For example: search-and-rescue efforts are made to find individuals, who may be trapped under debris; a register of wounded and their transportation to medical institutions is provided; first identification (based on identity documents), transportation and burial of the dead are organised; evacuation and taking care of survivors including the list of evacuees and those taken care of with their locations; basic commodities such as food, water, clothing and hygiene supplies are distributed to the affected population; temporary shelters are established and provided; fires and leaks of hazardous materials are controlled; decontamination in case of chemical or radiological attack is carried out; psychological support to victims, families of victims and members of the operational forces; establishment of a centre for communication and providing information to victims' families, etc.

Recovery includes the activities of the renewal and the improvement of livelihoods and health; the restoration of economic, physical, social, cultural and ecological sources, systems and activities of communities or society affected by a major accident or disaster, that are undertaken promptly after an immediate threat to humans, to prevent or reduce the risk of future major accidents or disasters.

All of the above mentioned activities are performed by the civil protection shareholders

and operational forces and, in case of mass casualty terrorism, they are coordinated by the National Civil Protection Headquarters (CP HQ of the Republic of Croatia).

Civil Protection Headquarters are expert, operational, and coordinating bodies in charge of the implementation of civil protection measures and activities in major accidents and disasters, with the aim to mitigate and eliminate consequences. They collect and process early warning information on the possibility of a major accident and disaster, develop an action plan for the civil protection system in their respective area, manage the response of the civil protection system, inform the public and propose a decision to cease implementation of measures and activities within the civil protection system. Civil Protection Headquarters can be established at local, regional or national levels. According to the subsidiarity principle, when the operational capacities of lower level government jurisdictions are overwhelmed, higher levels are called upon to assist (local CP HQ → county CP HQ → national CP HQ), as shown in the figure below. However, in the case of mass casualty events such as terrorism, the national level will be directly activated, due to the complexity of the issues.

The National Civil Protection Headquarters (hereinafter: CP HQ) is appointed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia and consists of heads of the state central administration bodies, operational forces of the civil protection system and other legal entities of special importance for the civil protection system of the Republic of Croatia.

Civil protection headquarters may request scientific and other institutions, institutes, public enterprises and institutions to provide professional assistance and advice, so as to apply effective operational measures, i.e. to provide additional or specialized support for the protection of members of the operational forces of the civil protection system, citizens, material and cultural assets and the environment. National CP HQ may also request military support, and, if national capacities are overwhelmed, they can also request international support. Following the declaration of the end of the state of emergency, normal services can take over again.

According to the subsidiarity principle, when the capacities of lower level government jurisdictions of the CP system are overwhelmed, higher levels are called upon to assist. In the case of mass casualty terrorism events, the national level will directly be activated.

The Action Plan for the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism details the planning for victim support and first response provision and, in this regard, specifies the bodies responsible. Included are a number of ministries, regional and local authorities, as well as the Croatian Red Cross (hereinafter referred to as CRC), as one of the key operational forces of civil protection, whose representative is a member of the CP Headquarters of the Republic of Croatia. The role of CRC is to provide practical and psychosocial support to victims during crisis.

According to the Act on Civil Protection System, citizens' associations of interest to the civil protection system represent supplementary operational forces of the civil protection system, pursuing opportunity for participation of the Network of Support and Cooperation for Victims and Witnesses of Criminal Offenses (hereinafter referred to as: The Network of Support to Victims) that gathers a number of Croatian NGOs for support to victims and that is coordinated by the Ministry of Justice Office for the Protection of Victims and Witnesses.

CASE-STUDY – POTENTIAL FOR INVOLVEMENT OF ADDITIONAL VICTIM SUPPORT IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Emotional and psychological first aid is provided by the Croatian Red Cross, acting

as a key operational force within the civil protection system. A representative of the Croatian Red Cross will always be present in the emergency headquarters (CP HQ) to organize such support. CP HQ may, if deemed necessary, mobilise the Network of Support to Victims) to supplement capacity for the provision of emotional and psychological support to victims of terrorism.

Further reading:



- Action Plan for the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism, Akcijski plan za prevenciju i suzbijanje terorizma NN br. 136/2012 NN No. 136/2012
- National Strategy for the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism NN No. 108/2015, Nacionalna strategija za prevenciju i suzbijanje terorizma NN br. 108/2015
- Strategy of National Security of the Republic of Croatia, NN No. 73/2017, Strategija nacionalne sigurnosti RH, NN br. 73/2017
- Act on Homeland Security System NN No. 108/17, Zakon o sustavu domovinske sigurnosti br. NN 108/17
- Act on Civil Protection System, NN No. 82/2015, 118/2018 , 31/2020 and 20/2021, Zakon o sustavu civilne zaštite NN br. 82/2015, 118/2018 , 31/2020 i 20/2021
- Civil Protection Directorate, Ravnateljstvo civilne zaštite
- Rulebook on the Composition of Headquarters, Work Practice, Requirements for Appointment of Chief, Deputy Chief and Members of the Civil Protection Headquarters, NN No. 126/19, Pravilnik o sastavu stožera, načinu rada te uvjetima za imenovanje načelnika, zamjenika načelnika i članova stožera civilne zaštite NN br. 126/19
- Rulebook on Holders, Content and Procedures for Drafting Civil Protection Planning Documents and Informing the Public on Process of their Adoption, NN No. 49/17, Pravilnik o nositeljima, sadržaju i postupcima izrade planskih dokumenata u civilnoj zaštiti te način informiranja javnosti u postupku njihovog donošenja, NN br. 49/17
- European Union Civil Protection Mechanism

TERRORIST ATTACKS

Terrorism evolves constantly as perpetrators, methods and targets are changing. The characteristics of an attack will influence the scale of the response and the impact of the attack on its victims and associated local, regional, national or international communities.

Key characteristics

Influential key characteristics include:

- scale (a single victim or large numbers of victims)
- location (open or closed environment; one or more points of attack)
- timing (within hours or on consecutive days, during the day/night/rush hour)
- weapons used
- target groups
- degree to which the terrorists are organised

Regardless of the attack characteristics, thorough preparation is required to ensure the crisis is managed in line with the EU rules on victims' rights.

Scale

The scale of the attack (the number of those killed or wounded) varies from event to event. In the Rijeka attack in 1995, the aggressor was killed and 29 people were injured. However, these figures only confirm the numbers of dead and injured. Those affected will be much larger. The greater the number of victims, the more resources are required during both the emergency response phase (e.g. hospital beds) and in the longer term (e.g. in criminal proceedings, professional mental health services, information and support providers). The larger an attack, the greater the media

attention will be on the victims, their families and society.

Location

In the recent past, attacks have tended to concentrate on a single localised area. However, during the Paris attacks in November 2015, six separate attacks took place in different locations within a short period of time. The multiple sites, in both enclosed and open venues, and numbers of victims created a chaotic environment: identification of victims and securing individual locations required complex management of the various services involved.

Timing

In the case of multiple, related, terrorist attacks, the timing of any consecutive attack(s) has usually been within a few hours of the first attack; for instance, in 2016, the two attacks in Brussels occurred within an hour of each other. Yet, the attacks in Barcelona, on 17 August 2017, were followed by an attack in Cambrils, about 100 kilometres to the south, the next day. In Asia and the Middle East, follow-up attacks have been timed to hit first responders and helpers.

Weapons

Bombs are not the only weapon used by terrorists: trucks are driven through crowds; airplanes are taken down by missiles; suicide

vests, knives, firearms, chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) agents etc. are used. Each weapon impacts its victims differently and will require a different response: for example, the truck attack in Nice initiated a new approach in defining victims eligible for compensation and the French government delineated zones around the attack location to help establish victim lists.

Target groups and organisation

Various ideologies motivate terrorists to carry out attacks: e.g. antisemitism (Halle, Germany in 2019), jihadism (London, UK in 2019), right-wing extremism (Hanau, Germany in 2020), etc. Europol's annual Terrorism Situation and Trend (TE-SAT) Report lists

jihadist, ethno-nationalist and separatist, left-wing and anarchist, right-wing and single-issue terrorist groups, in addition to a new grouping of attacks committed by informal organisations or lone wolves.

Cyberterrorism

The internet can also be used for terrorist purposes: by threatening individuals, organisations or governments with violence that may result in bodily harm or loss of life, or by large-scale disruption of computer networks. These forms of terrorism are not explicitly addressed in this handbook. However, preparation for such attacks, and support of their victims, are similar to 'offline' terrorist attacks.



Further reading:



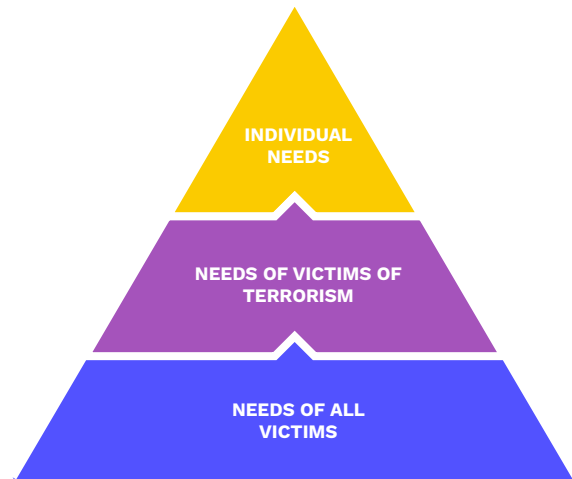
- Europol (2020) TE-SAT Report
- Institute for Economics and Peace (2019) Global terrorism index

VICTIMS' NEEDS

As specified in Recital 27¹ of the Counter-terrorism Directive, Member States should adopt measures of protection, support and assistance in responding to the specific needs of victims of terrorism, in accordance with the Victims' Rights Directive and as specified by the Counter-terrorism Directive. The measures on protection, support, and assistance to victims of terrorism are further developed in Title V of the Counter-terrorism Directive.

Recital 16 of the Victims' Rights Directive specifically addresses the needs of victims of terrorism, who have suffered injuries – whether physical or psychological – from attacks that were intended to harm society. They may need special consideration, support and protection due to the nature of the crime committed against them. Member States should pay attention to the needs of victims of terrorism, and should seek to protect their dignity and security.

In Croatia, Article 43.a. of the Criminal Procedure Code emphasises that the authorities must pay specific attention to the vulnerabilities of victims of terrorism, in the process of the individual needs assessment.



Layers of needs

To understand the needs of victims of terrorism, it is important to comprehend that there are different layers of needs. The first layer consists of the needs of all victims of crime. The second layer consists of specific needs due to the nature of the terrorist attack. The third layer of needs depend on personal and environmental factors of the individual victim.

Emergency support to meet victims' needs immediately following a terrorist attack is critically important: survivors need to be safe and secure, receive emergency medical – and psychological – aid, food and drink. Member states shall ensure that support services addressing special needs of the victims are established and easily accessible immediately after a terrorist attack for as long as needed.

¹ Under EU law, Recitals provide background information and reasoning for the inclusion of particular Articles in legislative acts.

In addition to the emergency support, needs of all victims of crime, including victims of terrorism, are divided into five major categories:



Needs of victims of terrorism

Once emergency care has been given to victims of terrorism, their specific needs, as related to the above five categories, can be evaluated. These needs may differ from, or be more intense compared to, victims of other intentional crimes:

1. Recognition and respect: as a victim of terrorism. According to the Criminal Code, criminal prosecution or execution of a sentence for the criminal offense of terrorism under Article 97, paragraph 4 of the Criminal Code does not become time-barred (if the perpetrator intentionally kills one or more persons while committing the criminal offence of terrorism).
2. Support: medical care, specialised psychological-trauma care given the trauma experienced, information, practical assistance, legal assistance, communication (media) support, peer support, etc. In Croatia, support – other than legal assistance – would be at least partly available to all victims, including victims of terrorism, through the services provided by the Network Support and Cooperation for Victims and Witnesses of Criminal Offenses, and primarily by the civil protection system. Specific psycho-trauma support would be available through the National Psycho-trauma Centres.
3. Protection: physical protection, protection from secondary victimisation.
4. Access to justice: safe participation in the criminal justice process. In Croatia, the Victim Support Network, together with existing services for victim and witness support established at seven county courts would be available to support victims during judicial proceedings.
5. Compensation and restoration: financial compensation and help with the financial impact of a terrorist attack. Restoration includes overall recovery and restorative justice processes. In Croatia, damages caused by terrorist attacks are covered by the State, in accordance with the

Responsibility for Damages Caused by Terrorist Acts and Public Demonstrations Act (Zakon o odgovornosti za štetu nastalu uslijed terorističkih akata i javnih demonstracija).

Individual needs

Individual victim's needs will depend on personal characteristics (previous victimisation or stressful life events);

(mental) health; social network; socio-economic situation; cross border situation; and daily stressors. These needs will evolve over time, therefore, responding to the needs of victims of terrorism requires an individualised victim-centred approach.

In Croatia, the individual needs assessment is conducted in line with specific regulations, by the police, prosecution and the court, as described in section 1.7 below.

Further reading:



- Dolci, L. (2018) A Victimless Crime? A Narrative on Victims of Terrorism to build a case for support
- INVICTM (2018) Symposium Report: Supporting Victims of Terrorism
- RAN (2018) Enhancing the resilience of victims after terrorist attacks
- Responsibility for Damages Caused by Terrorist Acts and Public Demonstrations Act (Zakon o odgovornosti za štetu nastalu uslijed terorističkih akata i javnih demonstracija), NN 117/03
- German Presidency Report (2020) State of play regarding support to victims of terrorism, particularly in cross-border situations

1. THE RIGHTS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

1.1 VICTIM OF TERRORISM – DEFINITION UNDER NATIONAL LAW AND IMPACT

DEFINITION UNDER EU LAW Victim of Terrorism

Under the Counter-terrorism Directive, a victim of terrorism is defined as follows, in line with the definition offered by the Victims' Rights Directive:

- a natural person who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss, insofar as that was directly caused by a terrorist offence, or
- a family member of a person whose death was *directly* caused by a terrorist offence **and** who has suffered harm as a result of that person's death.

Note: the use of the word 'victim' is not always appreciated by those who survived or were otherwise affected by terror attacks, they may not identify themselves as victims despite severe trauma, but may see themselves as 'survivors', which indeed they are. However, for practical reasons, this handbook will identify those involved by the word 'victim'.

Terrorist offence

The Counter-terrorism Directive defines intentional acts that should be criminalised as acts of terrorism by Member States. These acts are discussed in detail in Subchapter 1.1 of the EU Handbook on Victims of Terrorism.

DEFINITION UNDER CROATIAN LAW Victim

The definition of victim in Croatia excludes legal entities and introduces the distinction between "indirect" and "direct" victims of the criminal offence. Immediate victims are those directly affected by the consequences of a criminal offence and indirect victims are the members of the family of the deceased victim of the criminal offence.

The Penal Code defines a victim as "a physical person who has suffered physical and mental consequences, property damage or substantial violation of fundamental rights and freedoms that are the direct consequence of a criminal offence". A victim of a criminal offence can be a spouse or a common law partner, a life partner or an informal life partner, or a descendant. If the direct victim had no partner or descendant, the indirect victim can also be an ancestor, a sibling or a person the victim was obliged to support under the law.

There is no specific legal definition of a victim of terrorism.

A detailed definition of the terrorist act is provided in Section 97 of the Croatian Penal Code. The National Strategy summarises that in Croatia, terrorism is understood as "planned, systemic, deliberate use of violence, or threat of violence against persons and/material goods, used as a means to cause and benefit from fear, within an ethnic or religious community, general public, state or the entire international community, all with the aim of achieving political, religious, ideological or socially motivated changes. [...] Terrorism is also determined by the intention of causing devastating political and psychological consequences which can significantly overcome the goal of an individual act of terrorism, as well as by the intentions of those who practice terrorism to create an atmosphere of lawlessness or causing excessively repressive and non-selective response of the authorities, with the goal to compromise in the eyes of the public and justification of terrorist methods and intentions".

In 2015, Croatia adopted a National Strategy and Action Plan to develop a system for supporting victims and witnesses in the Republic Croatia for 2016-2020, the Victims' Strategy. This document briefly recognised the special vulnerability of victims of terrorism. A new strategy is currently being developed.

IMPACT OF TERRORIST ATTACKS ON VICTIMS

All victims of all violent crimes face physical, mental health, and financial consequences; however, the impact on those present at a terrorist attack means the violence of their experience is different from that of their peers.

Physical consequences

Terrorists intend for their attacks to cause many casualties, as indicated by the weapons they use (firearms, explosives, etc.). Hence, the fatality rate in a terrorist attack is relatively high and injuries tend to be severe.

Mental health consequences

Victims experience fear and anxiety after a terrorist attack at levels that may not incur psychological problems, but that may have behavioural, relational and financial consequences. Post-traumatic stress is often diagnosed in victims following a terrorist attack. Victims may re-experience the event, have repeated and unwanted intrusive thoughts, hyper arousal, emotional numbing and/or avoidance of stimuli reminding them of the traumatic experience.

Financial consequences

Victims of terrorism may incur severe injuries, that are linked with a (higher) probability of developing a psychological disorder. This implies that the costs related to victimisation

will be higher (for the victims, their property, their insurers and/or the government).

Future events

While the risk of involvement in another terrorist attack is relatively small, the perception of this risk may be high. Consequently, victims may experience feelings of insecurity, especially if they suffer from a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Perceived risk and the presence of PTSD contribute to psychological damage caused by terrorism.

Risk groups

Previous physical or psychological trauma, existing mental disorders, lack of social support and low socio-economic status may lead to a greater psychological impact on victims. Children and minority groups have a higher risk of developing psychological problems. Children are at risk when they are too young to be able to express their symptoms verbally or when the ability of parents to support them is diminished. Minority groups have a higher risk when their health literacy is low or if they have experienced similar trauma in the past.

Loss and grief

The sudden loss and violent death of a loved one in a terrorist attack may lead to complicated psychological reactions in family members, which may be further aggravated by the specifics of a terrorist attack: e.g. having to identify a severely damaged body.

Further reading:



- Letschert, R.M., Staiger, I., Pemberton, A. (2010) Assisting victims of terrorism: towards a European standard of justice
- Damiani, C., Victime et traumatisme, in Tigrane Tovmassian, L., & Bentata, H. (2013) Le traumatisme dans tous ses éclats, p. 61-70
- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- German Presidency Report (2020) State of play regarding support to victims of terrorism, particularly in cross-border situations
- National Strategy for the development of a system for supporting victims and witnesses in the Republic Croatia for 2016-2020 (Nacionalna strategija razvoja sustava podrške žrtvama i svjedocima u Republici Hrvatskoj 2016-2020)

1.2 VICTIMS' RIGHTS TO RESPECT AND RECOGNITION

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

Recognition and respect underpin the healing process of victims as individuals and community members. Under EU law, Member States must ensure that victims are treated in a respectful manner by all those they come into contact with. Recital 16 of the Victims' Rights Directive mentions that victims of terrorism often need social recognition and respectful treatment by society.

Recognition and respect are established by ensuring that actors appreciate the victims' situation, their individual and group circumstances, the nature of the attack and how that can influence victims' behaviour.

The first step towards recognition and respect of victims of terrorism is their identification, while subsequent commemorative events and memorials form an integral part of the healing process for victims of terrorism, their families and all those affected.

Identification of victims and information about victims

The Counter-terrorism Directive requires Member States to have mechanisms and protocols in place to facilitate the identification of victims and their families. In the aftermath of a terrorist attack, especially those involving a large number of victims, it is key to establish mechanisms of gathering information from the scene that serves multiple purposes. Identification is necessary to complete several key actions, including:

- Establish the identity of the deceased and injured;
- Cross-refer these identities to the information received from the concerned public, friends and family members, who fear that their loved ones were at the scene;
- Enable the authorities to make sure that the loved ones are informed about the loss of life or injury of those who were identified at the scene;

- Inform the foreign countries about the fate of their nationals.

Recognition

Society (local, regional or national government; politicians; media; support providers, and justice/law enforcement actors) can recognise victims of terrorism in many ways: formal written acknowledgement of status as (indirect) victim, remembrance ceremonies, memorials, financial compensation, and/or granting of specific rights. In its EU Strategy on victims' rights, the Commission urges Member States to ensure proper recognition for all victims of terrorism, especially since terrorist attacks are directed at the state and society as a whole.

Commemorative events and memorials form an integral part of the healing process for victims, their families and all those affected. While states may face competing community ideas in the preparation and delivery of such events, it is the wishes and input of the victims that are decisive in the development and realisation of any commemoration: this may be one of the few times victims come together.

Commemoration events provide victims as well as the general public with the opportunity to express feelings and opinions; to experience and receive social support; to show societal acknowledgment and to give meaning to the attack. If done properly, the commemoration can contribute to the victims' recovery process, however, as acts of remembrance may 'dilute' over time, changes in frequency and form should be discussed with the victims. The aim should be to invite all victims and all responders, even those who will not be able to attend due to injuries or geographical distance. Financial reasons should not weigh in on the victims' decision to attend anniversaries.

Respect

Treating victims with respect can significantly influence victim satisfaction with government and criminal justice systems. Fundamental to respectful treatment are:

- the way professionals interact with victims

and

- the procedures and infrastructures in place.

The cultural and religious background of the individual victim of terrorism determine, to a large extent, what the victim considers respectful treatment.

Respect begins with empathy. Understanding the victims' situation empowers professionals to act in an empathetic manner. However, compassion should be moderated by sufficient professional distance to provide the best possible support.

Respect is not only important for individual victims, but also for the entire group victimised. It is particularly important for vulnerable victims or minority groups, the elderly, children, and people with disabilities.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHTS IN CROATIA

The Croatian Police Administration and Authorities Act foresees that police officers must respect the dignity, honour, and reputation of every person and, in particular, they must show respect to children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and victims of crimes and misdemeanours. The Croatian Criminal Procedure Act also emphasises the obligation of the police, public prosecution and the court to pay particular attention when dealing with the victim – including obliging them to inform the victim of their rights, to make sure these rights are safeguarded during the proceedings, and to ensure that the victim's right to protection and dignity is respected when they testify.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES Commemoration events

On 11 March each year, the European Remembrance Day for Victims of Terrorism is organised with victims and for victims together with the European Commission.

Monuments

Monuments create a physical place where victims can gather to share their individual loss with society. Such monuments preserve collective memory to be shared with future generations. For example, on the Breitscheidplatz in Berlin, a monument was unveiled in 2017, one year after the attack there. A bronze crack crosses the square, and the names of the victims are engraved in the steps of the stairs in front of the Gedächtniskirche.

Recognition of victims

In its EU Strategy on victims' rights, the Commission urges Member States to ensure proper recognition for all victims of terrorism, especially since terrorist attacks are directed at the state and society as a whole. France, Italy and Spain introduced positive examples of government recognition. In France the National Recognition Medal for Victims of

Terrorism exists; in Italy the Gold medal for Victims of Terrorism and in Spain the Royal Order of Civil Recognition of Victims of Terrorism.

In Croatia, in the wake of recent earthquakes, which occurred many times in late 2020 and in early 2021, the State declared a national day of mourning to commemorate the victims, at the same time making funds available to provide financial support to the victims.

GOOD PRACTICE – RECOGNITION OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM IN SPAIN:

In 2011, Spain adopted special legislation on the rights of victims of terrorism (Law 29/2011). The Preamble of this law states that 'With this Law, Spanish society [...] pays homage to the victims of terrorism [....]. This Law is therefore a sign of recognition and respect [...], inspired by the principles

of memory, dignity, justice and truth.' Law 29/2011 provides for the awarding of educational grants, exemptions from academic fees, scholarship systems, and support within the education system and the option to grant nationality to foreign victims of terrorism.

In addition, extraordinary or exceptional pensions can be awarded to victims of terrorism and their successors, even if they do not have the right to an ordinary pension under any social security scheme.

Further reading:



- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- European Commission (2020) EU Strategy on victims' rights (2020-2025)
- VSE (2019) Remembering Victims of Terrorism: A guidance document
- Government of the Republic of Croatia, Vlada Republike Hrvatske, Dan žalosti 2. siječnja 2021.
- Police Administration and Authorities Act (Zakon o policijskim poslovima i ovlastima), NN 76/09, 92/14, 70/19

1.3 VICTIMS' RIGHTS TO ACCESS INFORMATION

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

The Victims' Rights Directive and the Counter-terrorism Directive set out the following minimum scope of a victims' rights to access information:

- The information should be easy to understand and available in multiple formats. In choosing the distribution medium particular attention should be paid to reaching vulnerable groups;
- the Member States' obligation to provide of advice and information on relevant legal, practical or financial matters as an integral part of the support offered to victims after a terrorist attack;
- the victims' right to receive information from the first contact with a competent authority;
- the victims' right to receive information on the investigation and justice procedures with regard to their case;
- the victims' right to understand and be understood.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHTS IN CROATIA

At a victim's first contact with the authorities, the police and prosecutors inform them of their rights, and provide them with information on the availability of support services. The information is provided verbally as well as in writing through a prescribed form on the rights of victims of crimes. This form on the rights of victims is available in twenty different languages and its integral part is a list of victim support institutions/organisations and civil society organisation (members of the Network for Support and Cooperation for Victims and Witnesses of Criminal Offenses and a number of local associations). The public prosecution department also provides

victims with similar written information, with the same content.

In Croatia, all victims have the right to demand that the public prosecutor keeps them informed of actions taken in their case. In particular, they have the right to be informed of the decision terminating criminal proceedings, including the decision not to prosecute (in which case they can resume prosecution themselves). Victims have the right to be immediately informed of the termination of the offender's detention in police custody, of which the police informs them, the offender's escape or release from prison, of which they can be notified by the Service for victim and witness support at the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration, and the right to have measures put in place for protection in such situations.

If the victim chooses to participate in criminal proceedings as an injured party they also have the right to:

- inspect their case file and to request a public prosecutor's notice of actions, on application, and to file a complaint with a Senior Public Prosecutor
- be informed on the outcome of the criminal proceedings.

Victims are routinely informed in writing about the progress of their case.

When an offender is granted release on probation or unconditional release, the prison informs the Service for Victim and Witness Support of the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration which shall then notify the victim on the release of a prisoner.

If the victim dies within the time limit for filing the criminal complaint, or if they die during the criminal proceedings, their next of kin can file the complaint or step into the proceedings in their stead.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

In practice, it is essential that information is made available to victims of terrorism at all times. Information reassures victims, helps them understand and make decisions, and aids their recovery. The provision of adequate, timely information about the terrorist attack and its consequences is important to victims and their family members.

State authorities play a crucial role in providing accurate information after an attack. Government information is more effective when it is co-ordinated with civil society actors, media companies, social media, etc.

Information can be divided into:

1. rights and services, actions and expectations – as required by EU rules;
2. factual and topical information regarding the attack, the current situation, and the condition of loved ones;
3. dealing with the attack (involving reassurance and psycho-education on normal reactions and practical suggestions to encourage healthy behaviour).

In Croatia, there is a growing effort to provide information to victims of all crimes, including

victims of terrorism. The Ministry of Justice and Public Administration provides a webpage with useful information for all victims, which includes information on their rights, multilingual information for cross-border victims, and a comprehensive interactive map of available victim support services around the country.

The Ministry of Justice and Public Administration has prepared a detailed Guide for Victims and Witnesses in Criminal and Misdemeanour Proceedings. The guide is available in Croatian and English and contains practical information, including: information about the rights of victims, a drawing of the courtroom and seat placements for different actors in the proceedings, setting out in simple terms the course of the proceedings with possible variations, and instructions for the victims on how to avail themselves of the European protection order. The guide is available on the website of the Ministry.

In addition, the National Call Center for Victims of Crimes and Misdemeanours - NPC (116006) is operational 24/7 and provides information and emotional support to victims. Moreover, operators of the National Call Center (112) routinely refers victims of crime to the services for victims and witness support, civil society organisations, and to the services that provide free of charge treatments to persons coping with a psychological trauma.

Information centres

It is recommended that victims of terrorism are provided with a centralised, single contact point that coordinates the work of all those involved in the support and protection of victims. Additionally, a dedicated website,

providing all relevant information, can act as – or be supported by – a one-stop-shop, a centre where a range of services (e.g., psychosocial, legal, medical and financial) is provided in the immediate aftermath of an attack (or may co-exist with another one-stop-shop).

PROVIDING INFORMATION IN CRISIS - GOOD PRACTICES:

In France, immediately following a terrorist attack affecting a large number of people, the Interministerial cell for public information and victim support (Cellule Interministérielle d'Information du Public et d'Aide aux victimes - C2IPAV or infopublic) is activated. Infopublic cooperates closely with local authorities and local victim support organisations to set up a family reception centre, which will function as a single physical location where victims and family members receive information on their rights and procedural aspects.

In the Netherlands, ARQ (National Psychotrauma Centre) has the ability to set up a special website, within minutes of a crisis event. In the case of a terrorist attack or large-scale disaster, Victim Support Netherlands (Slachtofferhulp Nederland) can set up an online Information and Advice Centre (IAC) within a few hours, providing victims, witnesses and family members with current, complete and reliable information, such as important phone numbers and the latest news from involved organisations such as the police, the Public Prosecutor and the government. An IAC was established after the MH17 plane crash on 17 July 2014.

Further reading:



- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- German Presidency Report (2020) State of play regarding support to victims of terrorism, particularly in cross-border situations
- VOciare, National Report for Croatia (2019)
- A Guide for Victims and Witnesses In Criminal and Misdemeanour Proceedings in English (Vodič za žrtve i svjedoke kroz kazneni i prekršajni postupak in Croatian)
- 🌐 Ministry of Justice and Public Administration , Korisne informacije za žrtve (Useful information for victims, in Croatian)
- 🌐 Ministry of Justice and Public Administration , Interactive map of services
- 🌐 'One-stop victims' information and declaration portal'
- 🌐 IAC Air Disaster Ukraine
- 🌐 Ženska soba, Mreža podrške i suradnje za žrtve i svjedoke kaznenih djela

1.4 VICTIMS' RIGHTS TO ACCESS SUPPORT SERVICES

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

The Victims' Rights Directive and the Counter-terrorism Directive set out the following minimum scope of a victims' rights to access support services:

- Ensure victims' access to generic and specialist support services that are confidential, free of charge and easily accessible;
- Provide at least the following support to victims of terrorism: emotional and psychological support, assistance regarding compensation claims and provision of adequate medical treatment;
- Facilitate referral of victims to support services within the competent authority.

This subchapter focuses on the rights in relation to access to support services, as established mainly by the Victims' Rights Directive. Chapter Three describes the organisation of support in the specific context of terrorist attacks and other crisis situations in light of provisions in the Counter-

terrorism Directive.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHTS IN CROATIA

In Croatia, the right of victims' access to support is ensured through a network of governmental and non-governmental services. Throughout the country, there are a number of generalist and specialist victim support organisations, while in larger counties there are Departments for Victim and Witness Support at county courts. National Call Center for Victims of Crimes and Misdemeanours (NPC) 116 006 is active 24 hours a day and is run by an NGO, with dedicated funding from the government.

In the immediate aftermath of a mass casualty terrorist attack, the Civil Protection Headquarters of the RC is responsible for setting up support for those affected. In the coordination of the response, the National CP HQ cooperates with the Croatian Red Cross, acting as operational force within the CP system, and other possible non-governmental actors in the provision of emergency medical, emotional, psychosocial, financial or other types of support.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

As each victim will undergo a different recovery process, victims' needs change over time and the

assistance and support provided has to be adapted to meet these changes.

Victims, especially if they have to deal with serious (mental) health problems after a terrorist attack, will face difficulties in absorbing information. Information on (organisations that provide)

assistance and support will be more effective when it is provided on different occasions. Ideally, those offering help will be proactive: reaching out to victims on a regular basis, finding ways and opportunities to connect with them. Victims need information on available services, but should not be coerced into using them.

Victim assistance centres

It is beneficial to set up a victim assistance centre after large-scale terrorist attacks: a one-stop-shop, where victims can go to get information and support.

In Croatia, in the case of a mass casualty terrorist attack, setting up a victim assistance centre is within the jurisdiction of the National Civil Protection HQ, which brings together representatives of the central state administration bodies and other public bodies. The Croatian Mountain Rescue Service, Croatian Red Cross and other non-governmental actors can be included in setting up victim assistance centres.

After the earthquakes, which struck Croatia at the end of 2020 and beginning of 2021, the organisation of victim assistance centres was impeded by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and by the earthquake affecting sparsely populated areas, hence the logistics of organising a single centre would have been difficult. In such circumstances, the Croatian

Red Cross, in cooperation with other NGOs, provide a helpline for those affected people.

Central contact point within government

Croatia appointed the Head of Service for Victim and Witness Support of the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration, as a national focal point for victims of terrorism.

Other types of support

In the wake of the earthquakes in 2020, as well as in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, several crises services were made available, which would also be made available in a case of a terrorist attack.

For example, the Croatian Chamber of Psychologists coordinated a national helpline to support the citizens struggling in the pandemic, while the Croatian Public Health Institute also published a handbook on the provision of the psychological first aid in the times of the pandemic. After the earthquake, there was a major disruption in the telecommunication services. Understanding the difficulties that victims faced, some Croatian telecom operators introduced special helplines for those affected and offered specific support to ensure their continued use of these vital services.

Further reading:



- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- German Presidency Report (2020) State of play regarding support to victims of terrorism, particularly in cross-border situations
- Hamer Vidmar, N., Bajto, M. (2018). Potrebe žrtava i zadovoljstvo pruženom podrškom od strane odjela za podršku žrtvama i svjedocima, in Kriminologija i socijalna integracija Vol. 26 No 1/18 (pps 43 — 60)
- Hamer Vidmar, N. (2016): „Prava žrtve prema Zakonu o kaznenom postupku Republike Hrvatske – potrebe žrtve i iskustva u praksi iz perspektive odjela za podršku žrtvama i svjedocima“. Temida, No 1/ year 19
- Hamer Vidmar, N., Bajto M., Ivanović D., Pamuković M., Ruševljan A. (2015): „Obavještanje žrtava o otpustu počinitelja kaznenih djela s izdržavanja kazne zatvora u Republici Hrvatskoj“. Temida, No. 2/ year 18
- 🌐 Hrvatski telekom, Informacije korisnicima s potresom pogođenih područja
- Stipišić Lj., Slavica N., Bajto M. (2019), Pojedinačna procjena žrtava – Iskustva i problemi u praksi
- 🌐 Hrvatski zavod za javno zdravstvo, Služba za promicanje zdravlja, Pružanje psihološke prve pomoći u vrijeme epidemije COVID-19
- 🌐 Chamber of Psychology, Phone numbers for provision of psychological aid (Psihološka komora, Telefonski brojevi za pružanje psihološke pomoći)

1.5 VICTIMS' RIGHT TO ACCESS JUSTICE – PROCEDURAL RIGHTS

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

The Victims' Rights Directive and the Counter-terrorism Directive set out the following minimum scope of a victims' rights to access justice:

- the right to be heard;
- the right to access legal aid, where victims have the status of parties to criminal proceedings;
- the right to reimbursement of expenses resulting from their active participation in the proceedings.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHT TO ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN CROATIA

In Croatia, a victim's role in the proceedings is driven by the role they play in the proceedings. Namely, legislation recognises the notion of victim, as defined in Section 1.2 above, and the notion of injured party – which is the procedural role a victim can take in the proceedings. When choosing to assume the role of an injured party, a victim gains the rights to:

1. file a motion for the enforcement of property claims and provisional security measures
2. be advised of facts and suggest evidence
3. attend the evidentiary hearing (special part of pre-trial, investigative phase)
4. attend the hearings and participate in the trial phase and present a final speech
5. inspect the case file
6. request a Public Prosecutor's notice of actions taken, and file a complaint with Senior Public Prosecutor

7. file appeals against decisions in proceedings

8. seek restoration of the previous situation.

Injured parties, who do not speak the Croatian language can request translation and interpretation services be provided to them.

An injured party has the right to be notified of the outcome of the criminal proceedings (Article 51 Paragraph 1 point 11. of the Criminal Procedure Code).

Victims, who testify as witnesses, enjoy additional rights. When acting as witnesses, victims who, due to their age, health or disability, cannot go to the courtroom may be interviewed in their apartment or other area in which they reside. These witnesses can also be examined via audio-video devices, handled by an expert. Additionally, depending on the situation of the witness/victim, the examination can be conducted so that the parties can ask questions without being in the same room as the witness. Again, the questioning will be recorded with an audio-video recording device, if necessary, and the recording will be sealed and linked to the court file.

In Croatia, the right to legal aid is regulated by the Legal Aid Act, and its provision is dependent on the level of complexity of aid required. Primary legal aid, which is limited to general legal information, legal advice, the preparation of submissions before public bodies (not including law courts), representation in front of public bodies, and support in resolving non-contentious issues is available on request to anyone not having the means (means test: paying the legal aid would jeopardise the livelihood of the victims' household).

All victims have the right to secondary legal aid, without the verification of a means test,

in proceedings for compensation against the offender. However, given that victims of terrorism are granted compensation by the state, it is unlikely that this form of support would be required.

Secondary legal aid is reserved for more complex cases and includes representation before the courts, albeit only in civil and enforcement proceedings, but not in a criminal trial. The injured party who assumed the plaintiff in proceedings that are carried out upon his/her request for an offence punishable by imprisonment for a term of more than five years may, at his/her request, be appointed a legal representative if it is to the benefit of the proceedings and if the injured party due to his/her financial situation cannot cover the costs of legal representation (Article 59, paragraph 1 of the Criminal Procedure Code-CPC). However, in accordance with Article 51, paragraph 1 of the CPC, the injured person is entitled to a legal representative, but in accordance with Article 150 of the CPC, the remuneration and necessary expenses of the legal representative shall be paid by the represented person, the injured person, except when according to the provisions of this Code the remuneration and

necessary expenses of the defence counsel are borne by the budget funds.

Costs related to criminal proceedings, in Croatia, are advanced by the court budget and their subsequent reimbursement may be ordered at the end of the proceedings. Victims' travel, and other necessary costs, qualify as trial costs only when participants act as witnesses or as injured parties. Otherwise, they cannot claim for reimbursement of the trial participation costs – for example, if they only want to observe.

Victims, who assume proceedings from the public prosecutor and act as either the injured party or private prosecutor, will be required to reimburse costs, if the proceedings end in an acquittal or dismissal of charges. Victims may also be charged with expenses if proceedings are suspended due to the statute of limitations that can be blamed on the victim's behaviour.

Victims, who require copies and recordings of the file, or part thereof, will be asked to cover the cost of providing the copies. Only the ex officio defence attorney is exempt from this cost.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

Large scale attacks

Criminal proceedings and trials for large scale attacks are complex. Large numbers of victims and witnesses are involved, and all should equally have the right to take part. States may need to establish special measures to facilitate participation, which may include holding trials in a larger secure locations to accommodate all those involved.

Where criminal proceedings about terrorist

attacks and other disasters account for large numbers of victims, there may be a need for more support compared to other criminal proceedings.

Public inquiries

Victims of terrorist attacks, as other victims, express a need for truth. They want to know what happened, how it happened, who was involved and why. The instigation of formal criminal procedures takes time and victims are often left without answers. A public inquiry can serve as an alternative means of answering the questions of victims and society as a whole.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT TO VICTIMS DURING CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS FOR LARGE SCALE ATTACKS – GOOD PRACTICE:

In Spain, in the context of the trial for the

attacks of 11 March 2004, one of the largest ever held in Spain, a special pavilion was set up in which social workers, psychologists and association members accompanied victims attending the trial, providing them with emotional and practical support.

Further reading:



- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- German Presidency Report (2020) State of play regarding support to victims of terrorism, particularly in cross-border situations
- Act on Legal Aid, NN 143/13, 98/19, Zakon o besplatnoj pravnoj pomoći, NN 143/13, 98/19

1.6 VICTIMS' RIGHTS TO PROTECTION: PHYSICAL AND PRIVACY

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

The Victims' Rights Directive and the Counter-terrorism Directive set out the following minimum victims' rights to protection, in particular physical protection and privacy:

- Availability of measures for the protection of privacy, personal integrity and personal data of victims and their family members, particularly in the context of criminal proceedings. In balancing these measures against the pluralism and freedom of the media, self-regulatory measures should be encouraged;
- Availability of measures to protect victims and their family members from intimidation and retaliation as well as from the risk of emotional and psychological harm;
- Requirement for an individual assessment of victims' protection needs to determine whether and to what extent the victim

would benefit from special measures in the course of criminal proceedings.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHT TO PROTECTION IN CROATIA

Personal data of victims is protected and cannot be shared without a valid legal basis. Courts rarely make public statements, but court judgments are by definition public. Victims can seek to enter into a witness protection programme, however, access to the programme is limited.

Support includes the organisation of psychological and legal aid, as well as physical protection in high risk cases.

According to the Police Action and Authorities Act, victims and their family members can be given physical protection by the police, if the situation so requires. This protection can be provided for as long as necessary.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

Government and the media

While governments may agree that the (social) media, with its various roles, can be a strategic resource at times of crisis, finding the right tone in communicating with the media is a challenge. To be able to practise reliable, respectful messaging, to prevent the spread of rumours and to contribute to the recognition of those affected by terrorist attacks, government officials must work hard to communicate with the media.

To make communication more manageable, state authorities can proactively approach the media in the aftermath of a terrorist attack. However, to make the best of the relationship, communication frameworks should be defined, key messages prepared, and the timing of press releases coordinated.

There must be a balance between respecting the privacy and needs of victims and their relatives, and informing the public through media channels. Information from government sources must respect the dignity and security of victims, particularly children. Secondary victimisation must be avoided. In the medium- to long-term, personalised information should be made available to victims and relatives prior to a formal report being made publicly available through media channels.

Regarding media reporting, in Croatia there is an Ethical Code for Croatian Journalists, which guarantees individuals the right to dignity and the protection of privacy, in particular when journalists are reporting on exceptional situations, such as on crime. The Code indicates a need to protect individuals from sensationalism and emphasises that it is not acceptable to record

persons without their consent in an environment in which that person can expect privacy. Intrusion of privacy can only be justified by an exceptional public interest.

The Republic of Croatia is part of the international initiative Christchurch Call, which deals with this topic.

Victims and the media

It is difficult to balance the freedom of the media, the general populations' need for information and the privacy protection of victims. While speaking out in the media can be empowering for victims and helpful to the general public, intrusive media attention may violate their privacy and negatively affect the lives of those portrayed, even in the future. Information may be (come) distorted or manipulated, by journalists or others using news footage.

For example, in the aftermath of an attack or disaster, broadcast and print media show images of the scene of the attack and, potentially, of victims and witnesses. These images will likely be shown again in light of commemorations and remembrance activities of this attack or disaster, which is retraumatising to victims and victims' families. It is advised that victim support organisations are sensitised about the recurrence of distressing images in order that this can be dealt with in a victim-sensitive manner.

It is difficult to restrict harmful information flows on social media channels. However, these can be useful tools for victims and law enforcement in the aftermath of an attack. For example, Twitter users started posting pictures of cats after a request from the Belgian authorities not to share information on ongoing police activity during the Brussels lockdown following the Paris attacks in November 2015.

Further reading:



- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- UNESCO (2017) Terrorism and the Media: A handbook for journalists
- VOciare, National Report for Croatia (2019)
- Ethical Code of Croatian Journalists (Kodeks časti hrvatskih novinara (2009)
- Police Administration and Authorities Act (Zakon o policijskim poslovima i ovlastima), NN 76/09, 92/14, 70/19
- 🌐 Cristchurch Call to Eliminate Terrorist and Violent Extremist Content Online

1.7 VICTIMS' RIGHTS TO PROTECTION: SECONDARY VICTIMISATION

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

According to the Victims' Rights Directive and the Counter-terrorism Directive, Member States should ensure that measures are available to protect victims and their family members from secondary victimisation.

Terrorist attacks result in deaths, physical and psychological injuries or material damages that affect those involved. This is called primary victimisation: the direct consequences of the violent act. If, in the aftermath of an attack, victims receive poor or inadequate assistance from the staff and institutions in charge of their care (public authorities, first-responders, state security forces, social workers, lawyers), their suffering can be aggravated. This is known as secondary victimisation, re-victimisation or double victimisation.

Causes

The effect of an attack on victims can be magnified in many ways:

- repetition of statements in police interviews;
- lack of information;
- government, police or hospital staff engrossed solely in the immediate events without attending to the shock suffered by the victims;
- experts questioning the credibility or mental health of victims;
- delay in judicial procedures, confrontation with terrorists in the court room, having to recount publicly and in detail their traumatic experience;
- media exposure;
- lack of support from colleagues/peers in the workplace, school, university.

Solutions

It should be kept in mind that many solutions reflect the understanding that victims of terrorism are in an abnormal situation and require greater care. Such solutions can include the training of professionals on how to engage with victims of terrorism, specific procedures, nomination of staff solely for these cases, forward planning and ensuring victims' participation.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHT TO PROTECTION FROM SECONDARY VICTIMISATION IN CROATIA

The National Strategy for development of a system of victim and witness support, for the period from 2016 to 2020, in the Republic of Croatia sets out that all bodies involved in the proceedings should consider and manage the interests of the victims in a way that prosecuting the perpetrator would not lead to secondary victimisation and re-traumatisation. The Strategy recognises that protection from secondary victimisation is just as important as protection from the original unlawful offence. In addition, according to the National Strategy, the police provide physical protection in anticipated legal cases, in accordance with the provisions of the Police Law and Powers and the Rules on the conduct of police officers.

Victims undergo assessment of individual needs for protection from secondary victimisation, which is conducted in accordance with Rules on the implementation of individual assessment of victim (Pravilnik o načinu provedbe pojedinačne procjene žrtve).

The individual needs assessment is initially conducted by the police and, later in the proceedings, by the public prosecutor and the judge. The assessment is carried out by a semi-formal interview with the victim. In assessing the victim's need for protection,

the body in charge of the assessment can request input from other services, such as the social care centres as well as other organisations and institutions that provide support to victims of crimes, and, in particular, the Services for victim and witness support and civil society organisations. This works in reverse too – with victim support organisations and services (including the non-governmental organisations involved in providing victim support) being able to suggest recommendations for protection measures to the body in charge of individual assessment.

Individual assessment may determine specific procedural protection measures, including but not limited to: use of audio-video technologies for giving statements, request from the victim for same-sex police and prosecution interaction, or exclusion of the public. In addition, the victim can ask to be accompanied by a person of their choosing, can refuse to respond to a question that is not strictly related to the case etc. The list of protection measures is not exhaustive and can be adjusted to the victims' personal situation.

Victims will usually be expected to be interviewed at least three times during the proceedings: pre-investigation by the police, during the investigation by the prosecutor, and

at trial. Given that the individual assessment is conducted and updated throughout the proceedings, an effort is being made to reduce secondary victimisation.

Victims have the right to be accompanied by the person of their choice throughout the proceedings. This right is available to the victim from the time the crime is reported to the police, or public prosecutor, and lasts throughout the proceedings. The person of choice can be any adult chosen by the victim – a relative, friend or a representative of a victim support organisation, unless they are expected to become a witness in the same criminal proceedings. This person can participate, with the victim, at all stages of the proceedings – e.g. during the victim's testimony, revision of files, or participation in evidence gathering. However, the support person is not allowed to intervene in the proceedings, examine witnesses, or otherwise become engaged, and they cannot claim reimbursement of travel costs to attend the hearing. The body conducting the proceedings or hearing the victim can refuse access to the person of choice and do not need to provide a reason for such refusal, but the victim has the right to object to these actions.

Victims have the right to be accompanied by the person of their choice throughout the proceedings.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

GOOD PRACTICE – USE OF NON-DEFERRABLE EVIDENCE IN ITALY:

The establishment of “incidente probatorio” in the Italian criminal procedure ensures the acquisition and utilization of not-deferrable evidence. This was originally foreseen for child victims and was gradually extended to complainants in conditions of

particular vulnerability, such as victims of organised crime or victims of terrorism. The aims of the “incidente probatorio” are to foster a rapid removal of the traumatic experience, avoid intimidation/retaliation and reduce questioning to a minimum. At the same time, it aims to avoid the alteration or distortion of the vulnerable person’s testimony, by formally recognising the evidence submitted as soon as possible after the criminal act.

Further reading:



- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- Karas E., Burić Z., Filipović H., (2019), First Experiences of Police Officers in the Implementation of Individual Assessment for Victims of Crimes (Prva iskustva policijskih službenika u provođenju pojedinačne procjene žrtava kaznenih djela)
- Book of Rules on the implementation of individual assessment of victims’ needs for protection and support (Pravilnik o načinu provedbe pojedinačne procjene žrtve) NN 106/17
- VOciare, National Report for Croatia (2019)
- Rules on the conduct of police officers, Pravilnik o načinu postupanja policijskih službenika.

1.8 VICTIMS' RIGHTS IN RELATION TO ACCESS TO COMPENSATION

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

The Victims' Rights Directive, the Counter-terrorism Directive and the Compensation Directive set out the following minimum scope of a victim's rights in relation to compensation:

- Member States' obligation to set up a scheme on compensation for victims of violent intentional crimes committed in their respective territories, which guarantees fair and appropriate compensation to victims and applies to cross-border situations;
- Provision of advice, support and assistance to victims, including cross-border victims, regarding compensation claims.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHTS CROATIA

In Croatia, the general rule is that compensation is to be claimed from the perpetrator, usually through a claim defined in criminal proceedings. However, damages caused by terrorist attacks are covered by the State, in accordance with the Responsibility for Damages Caused by Terrorist Acts and Public Demonstrations Act (Zakon o odgovornosti za štetu nastalu uslijed terorističkih akata i javnih demonstracija).

In accordance with the above Act, compensation can be claimed irrespective of whether the perpetrator was identified, apprehended, or held criminally liable. Compensation can be awarded to direct victims, as well as to those who were trying to prevent the offense and to those who were assisting victims. However, persons who were working at the scene as a part of their duties (first responders) cannot claim damages under this Act, but only under general regulations in relation to damage compensation.

Compensation is provided only for damage occurred as a result of death, physical injury and impairment of health. It is not clear if compensation for psychological suffering can be claimed. As instructed by the Responsibility for Damages Caused by Terrorist Acts and Public Demonstrations, material damages caused by a terrorist attack are covered in accordance with the Reconstruction Act.

The amount of victim compensation is determined by an external evaluation, and then up to 60% of the value is covered and up to a maximum of 350,000 HRK (46,500 EUR). While the Act does not determine territorial application of the legislation, it is assumed that it is only applicable to damages caused by terrorist acts in Croatia, and not those caused by terrorist attacks affecting Croatian nationals abroad.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

EMERGENCY PAYMENTS AND COMPENSATION TO VICTIMS OF TERRORISM – GOOD PRACTICE:

In France, the Guarantee Fund for Victims of Terrorist Acts and Other Offences (FGTI) makes a provisional compensation payment, between 24 and 48 hours after a terrorist attack, to allow victims to cover immediate costs. No later than one month after receiving a valid claim from the victim,

the FGTI will pay out an initial amount of compensation, further additional amounts can be paid based on costs incurred and foreseeable final damages.

The French compensation system is available to all victims of terrorism in France, and all French nationals, who are victims of terrorism abroad.

New types of harm have been recognised as grounds for compensation, such as the harm of anxiety.

Further reading:



- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- VSE (2019) A Journey from Crime to Compensation
- German Presidency Report (2020) State of play regarding support to victims of terrorism, particularly in cross-border situations
- ⊕ Responsibility for Damages Caused by Terrorist Acts and Public Demonstrations Act (Zakon o odgovornosti za štetu nastalu uslijed terorističkih akata i javnih demonstracija), NN 117/03
- ⊕ Reconstruction Act (Zakon o obnovi), NN 24/96, 54/96, 87/96, 57/00, 38/09, 45/11, 51/13, 98/19

2. CONSIDERING PARTICULAR GROUPS OF VICTIMS

2.1 CROSS-BORDER VICTIMS

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

The Victims' Rights Directive, the Counter-terrorism Directive and the Compensation Directive set out the following minimum scope::

- Appropriate measures should be taken to minimise the difficulties faced where the victim is a resident of a Member State other than that where the criminal offence was committed
- Expenses, incurred as a result of their active participation in criminal proceedings and according to their role in the relevant criminal justice system, should be reimbursed;
- Member States should ensure that victims of terrorism, who are residents of a Member State other than that where the terrorist offence was committed, have effective access to information as well as access to support services;
- Appropriate action should be taken to facilitate cooperation between Member States to improve victims' access to the rights.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHTS IN CROATIA

In Croatia, the exchange of victim information in cross-border situations is implemented via EU mechanisms (Europol, Eurojust etc.) as well as through bilateral relations with various countries via the foreign legal aid mechanisms.

General criminal and procedural legislation does not distinguish between the rights of Croatians and nationals of other EU, or third, countries.

Compensation schemes

Croatian compensation for victims of terrorism is available to all persons, who suffered harm as a consequence of a terrorist act, regardless of their nationality or residence status. By contrast, compensation for victims of other crimes is only available to Croatian and EU nationals, or persons with permanent residence in the EU.

Participation in criminal proceedings

Participation in criminal proceedings for cross-border victims is not a matter of specific concern in Croatian legislation and policy. However, individual needs assessments may indicate that victims in cross-border situations can participate in proceedings via a video link or may offer other procedural accommodations.

Translation of official documents

Official documents will only be translated to a victim's language if the victim has assumed the role of injured party in criminal proceedings and only in relation to criminal proceedings. There are no specific rules about the use of language for victims of terrorism in compensation proceedings. General rules for victim compensation require that the proceedings are conducted in Croatian, and that any foreign language documents will be returned to the victim for translation. It is not clear if the same rule would apply to victims of terrorism.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

CASE STUDY: EMERGENCY PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO ITALIAN VICTIMS OF TERRORIST ATTACK ABROAD

On 18 March 2015, a terrorist attack took place at the Bardo Archaeological Museum in Tunisia. Among the victims, four Italian citizens were killed and eleven were injured.

Just a few days after the terrorist attack, the Municipality of Turin entrusted the

association of volunteer Psychologists for the People ('Psicologi per i Popoli' Torino) with the task of providing initial psychological support to the victims involved in the attack and their families. The group, selected on the basis of their skills, was composed of five professionals, who worked for about a year before the Mental Health Service took charge. The team relied on the municipal Civil Protection, which already had a group of emergency psychologists.

Further reading:



- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- German Presidency Report (2020) State of play regarding support to victims of terrorism, particularly in cross-border situations

2.2 CHILDREN

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

The Victims' Rights Directive and the Counter-terrorism Directive set out the following minimum scope:

- Member States should ensure that the child's best interests are their primary consideration and the specific protection needs of child victims are assessed;
- Special protection measures for child victims should be available in light of judicial proceedings.
- The public dissemination of information that could lead to the identification of a child victim should be prevented.

IMPACT OF TERRORIST ATTACKS ON CHILDREN

Most children respond sensibly and appropriately to disaster, especially if they experience protection, support, and stability from their parents and other trusted adults. Like adults, they may exhibit a wide range of reactions in the aftermath of a terrorist attack: headaches and stomach pain. It must be noted that children's fears may also stem from their imagination as, unlike adults, they are less able to judge which fears are real and which are not; however, their fears should be taken seriously. Information for children and adolescents should be provided in an age-appropriate manner. For child survivors of terrorism: remember to also ask about the health and wellbeing of their brothers and/or sisters.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES Children as direct victims

Children in criminal proceedings will be able

to give their statements in a separate room, via a video link. The statement is, hence, given in the absence of other participants in the proceedings (in particular the offender), in a more accessible and calm atmosphere, where they can give their statement free from fear, pressure and other consequences.

The child victim of a crime offence has a right to a representative paid from the budget.

In relatively recent case-law, the Croatian Constitutional Court was asked to look into the right of access to justice of a child victim. The victim, who was under 14 at the time, was questioned in the same way as adult, in the presence of the offender and without participation of a psychologist or other professional support. The offender could not only ask the child questions, but was allowed to slap the child. The Constitutional Court found a violation of the child's right to access to justice.

Interaction between TV broadcasting or written media and children

The Ethical Code of Croatian Journalists prohibits journalists from taking statements or photographs of a child under the age of 14, without consent and in the absence of parents or other persons responsible for the child. And even if there is such consent and presence, it is prohibited to use any material obtained if that would jeopardise the wellbeing of the child. The code explicitly states that the wellbeing of the child is superior to the public interest.

The Code also sets out that children, under

the age of 18, cannot be identified in relation to a crime, regardless of the child's role. Revealing the identity of a child in the context of criminal proceedings is allowed only if: it is in the public interest and does not jeopardise the wellbeing of the child; when child's parents consent to the identification of the child in case the state authorities demand identification to advance the wellbeing of the child.

Interaction between caregivers and children

In criminal proceedings involving children, all information needs to be confirmed by the child, through their explicit statement that they understood the meaning of the information. In this process, the participation of a professional supporter is fundamental, since they are tasked with explaining to the child, in an appropriate manner, the meanings of different procedural steps and announcements.

As regards interaction of the police with children, the Ministry of Interior has equipped 60 "children's rooms" across the country, which are reserved for interviews with children. 50 police officers have received special training on how to conduct interviews with children, based on international best policing practices.

Further reading:



- Ivanković, A., Altan, L., Verelst, A. (2017) How can the EU and Member States better help victims of terrorism?
- Ethical Code of Croatian Journalists (Kodeks časti hrvatskih novinara) (2009)
- Stipišić Lj., Procedural Aspects of Interrogating Child Victims and Recent Case-Law in light of the Directive 2012/29/EU (Procesni aspekti ispitivanja djece žrtava i recentna sudska praksa u svjetlu Direktive 2012/29/EU)
- Constitutional Court of Croatia, Case No U-III-2249/10, Decision of 6 March 2014
- National Strategy for the development of a system for supporting victims and witnesses in the Republic Croatia for 2016-2020, Nacionalna strategija razvoja sustava podrške žrtvama i svjedocima za razdoblje od 2016. do 2020. godine

3. ORGANISING SUPPORT

3.1 PREPARATION AND ORGANISATION OF SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF TERRORIST ATTACKS

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

The Victims' Rights Directive and the Counter-terrorism Directive set out the following minimum requirements for the preparation and organisation of support for victims of terrorist attacks:

- Organise training on how to interact with victims and on victims' needs for practitioners that come into contact with victims
- Ensure that mechanisms or protocols are in place allowing for the establishment of support services for victims of terrorism within the framework of the national emergency-response infrastructures;
- Ensure a comprehensive response network tailored to the specific needs of victims of terrorism.

It should be noted that the availability of an extensive response network depends on Member States' past experiences in terrorist attacks and some Member States have not yet developed protocols for the establishment of a specific response network. Where such response network is not available, it is our understanding that existing crisis response structures can be adapted to terrorist attacks.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHTS IN CROATIA

Preparation and training – national perspectives or international good practices

Planning and co-operation

Crisis response planning in Croatia related to the threat of terrorism is conducted in compliance with the National Strategy for the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism.

The Strategy commits to developing a series of measures to reduce the impact of a potential terrorist threat and to provide rapid relief responses. One of the measures is meant to include developing mechanisms for victim support. As mentioned previously, in the case of mass casualty terrorism, Civil Protection Headquarters organises and coordinates emergency assistance and the provision of victim support during the response and recovery phases. Potentially, if the existing operational forces are overwhelmed, they could rely on, and engage with, victim support organisations in responding to the needs of victims of terrorism. It remains to be seen how to make this engagement work in practice.

Training

The National Strategy for the Prevention of and Combatting Terrorism and the Action Plan dedicate significant space to the planning of training and education for professionals involved in crisis response.

All responsible bodies of the Republic of Croatia are involved in the implementation of the Strategy, consistently applying measures for the prevention and suppression of terrorism from the area of their jurisdiction.

Emergency response phase – national perspectives or international good practices

In Croatia, as described previously, emergency assistance and victim support, in a case of mass casualty terrorism, rests with the civil protection system. The Croatian Red Cross is in charge of providing emergency emotional, practical, and psychological support to victims of terrorism. It would be worthwhile exploring how to involve victim support organisations in the emergency response mechanism, in

particular the National Call Center for Victims of Crimes and Misdemeanours 116 006. In addition, it would also be advisable to include family members in the emergency response phase, with the cooperation of victim support professionals.

With regard to international good practices in the post-attack crisis stage, the operational protocol of the Spanish Directorate-General for Support for Victims of Terrorism includes immediate, direct and up-to-date communication with the consulates and embassies of countries, whose nationals are among the victims of the attack. For example, Spain exchanged information on individual situations with France: as with the attacks in Catalonia, when 34 French nationals were among the victims. Those responsible in Spain and France already knew each other and were in regular contact, which made coordination simple and efficient, thereby benefitting the victims.

Medium- and long-term – national perspectives or international good practices

In general terms, several associations and other public, and private, institutions can provide humanitarian and personal assistance in the long term, even though at present, this has mostly been seen as the predominant task of the Red Cross.

With regard to international good practices in the long-term monitoring and assistance for victims of terrorism, close cooperation, in particular between Belgium and Spain, has enabled victims of terrorism and their loved ones to be assisted when they return to their country of residence, to be informed of their rights and the services in place to support them (compensation, medical and psychological support, etc.).

Further reading:



- 2008 National Strategy for the Prevention of and Combatting Terrorism (Nacionalna strategija za prevenciju i suzbijanje terorizma)
- 2012 Action Plan for the Prevention and Combatting Terrorism (Akcijski plan za prevenciju i suzbijanje terorizma)
- 2015 National Strategy for the Prevention of and Combatting Terrorism (Nacionalna strategija za prevenciju i suzbijanje terorizma)
- Network of Support and Cooperation for Victims and Witnesses of Criminal Offenses, Mreža podrške i suradnje za žrtve i svjedoke kaznenih djela – in Croatian, English and more languages

3.2 ORGANISATION OF SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

THE RIGHTS UNDER EU LAW

The Victims' Rights Directive and the Counter-terrorism Directive set out the following minimum requirements for the organisation of support for victims of terrorist attacks:

- The availability of support services immediately following a terrorist attack, and for as long as necessary. These support services should be confidential, free of charge, and easily accessible to all victims of terrorism;
- The establishment of free confidential specialist support services in addition to, or as an integrated part of, general victim support services: victim support organisations should be able to call on existing specialised entities providing such care, as necessary;
- Ensure that mechanisms or protocols are in place that allow for the activation of support services for victims of terrorism within the framework of the national emergency-response infrastructure.

AN OVERVIEW OF RIGHTS IN CROATIA

In Croatia, a number of state actors and non-

governmental organisations work hand in hand to ensure systemic support to victims of all crimes. At the helm of the support system, the Ministry of Justice has appointed the Service for the Support for Victims and Witnesses to lead the effort in coordinating the Croatian support system.

In some counties, namely Osijek, Rijeka, Sisak, Split, Vukovar, Zadar and Zagreb, there are specific Service for Victim and Witness Support within the respective county courts. These departments employ clerk who primarily provide support to victims participating in criminal proceedings before the courts. The support provided by these county courts is supplemented by the work of civil society organisations, who primarily assist victims without access to this support.

In the remaining 13 Croatian counties, victim support is mainly organised by the Network for Support and Cooperation for Victims and Witnesses of Criminal Offenses (the Victim Support Network). The Network was set up in 2018, with a grant from the Ministry of Justice, bringing together 11 civil society organisations, who act jointly to support victims in Croatia. The members of the network are, of course, not limited to providing assistance to those victims in their counties, help can be extended to victims in counties where support is provided at the courts.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM RELATED TO THESE RIGHTS



EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OR INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

Whilst it is evident that victims have a right to

support, it is not always clear how that support should be organised in any given country: who should provide it, how should it be made available, and what services should be offered? There is no one-size-fits-all answer to these questions. Each Member State will find solutions that take into

account their specific national circumstances. Victim support can be provided by the state, by victim support organisations, or by a combination of both.

Victims' associations

Peer groups are valued because of their understanding and shared experience of those involved. Peer groups can therefore provide support that is particularly beneficial to those affected. These groups are largely formed spontaneously thanks to individual contacts between those affected, experiences they exchange and mutual support.

In Croatia, there are no organisations which focus on the issues of victims of terrorism, and there are also no associations for victims of terrorism. There are, however, a number of associations for civil victims of conflicts of the 1990's, which conduct a number of activities similar to those of associations for victims of terrorism.

Certified psycho-trauma experts

Within the Croatian Institute for Public Health, as well as within regional public health institutions, there is a network of mental health centres, which remain available for all individuals needing specific mental health services.

Additionally, there is a national programme of psychosocial and healthcare support in Croatia, developed and implemented by the Ministry of Veteran Affairs, which primarily caters to Croatian war veterans and participants of international peace keeping, and other military, missions. In case of need, this programme could be adapted to support victims of terrorism.

The National Psychotrauma Centre as well as three regional centres and 21 local centres participate in the programme. These centres are equipped to support those suffering from PTSD and other trauma-related disorders. At the local level, support is organised through a daily programme of psychosocial counselling, peer support groups, family treatment and children's workshops. The centres employ psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, lawyers, and other specialists, who can support their clients in their recovery.

While the national system for support in case of psychotrauma is obviously not aimed at victims of terrorism, it is a valuable resource, which could be easily made available to vulnerable victims of terrorism, if need be.

In this regard, it should be noted that the EUCVT has compiled a list of Psycho-trauma experts in Europe, who have all been invited to join the online Hub of expertise with a view to exchanging best practices and increasing expertise at national level.

Further reading:



- Ministry of Veteran Affairs, National Programme of Psychosocial and Healthcare Support for Participants in and Victims of the Homeland War, World War II and Returnees from Peace Missions (Nacionalni program psihosocijalne i zdravstvene pomoći sudionicima i stradalnicima domovinskog rata, drugog svjetskog rata te povratnicima iz mirovnih misija, in Croatian)
- 🌐 Ministry of Justice and Public Administration, Korisne informacije za žrtve (Useful information for victims, in Croatian)
- 🌐 Ministry of Justice and Public Administration, Interactive map of victim support services (Interaktivna mapa usluga za žrtve)
- 🌐 Ženska soba, Mreža podrške i suradnje za žrtve i svjedoke kaznenih djela
- 🌐 Addresses of centres for mental health and prevention of addiction (Adrese službi za mentalno zdravlje i prevenciju ovisnosti)
- 🌐 Regional centres for psychotrauma and National center for psychotrauma (Regionalni centri za psihotraumu i Nacionalni centar za psihotraumu)
- 🌐 Federation of associations of civil victims of the Croatian homeland war (Zajednica udruga hrvatskih civilnih stradalnika iz Domovinskog rata Hrvatske)

4. EUCVT

In January 2020, the European Commission set up the EU Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism (the EUCVT) as a two year pilot project, to offer expertise, guidance and support to national authorities and victim support organisations.

Expertise is available on all matters related to victims of terrorism: e.g. on their needs, their rights according to EU legislation, the psychological consequences of terrorist attacks and therapies available for victims, and judicial processes.

During the term of the pilot project, national authorities (departments of justice, of health, of the interior; national organisations of the police, public prosecution or law courts; national first responders; NGOs that support victims of terrorism) may contact the EUCVT for expertise, guidance and/or support.

The EUCVT is unable to provide direct help and assistance to individual victims of terrorism. However, victims that contact the EUCVT will be referred to the authority or service provider in the appropriate Member State (or in other countries as required) that can support them.

Website

- Basic information on the rights of victims, on the needs of victims and on available support for victims of terrorism is available on EUCVT's website.
- The website also contains key documents on victims of terrorism, links to online resources, video statements of victims of terrorism and the professionals involved in their support.

Experts

- The EUCVT has an extensive network of experts, including victims of terrorism, practitioners and researchers from Member States and around the world. The EUCVT will connect you with the relevant experts as required.
- EUCVT experts are available, at short notice, to deliver advice in person in EU Member States. The costs involved shall be borne by the Member State making the request for assistance.

Contact details

eucvt@victimsupporteurope.eu

Further reading:

- National Programme of Psychosocial and Healthcare Support to Participants and Victims of the Homeland War, Second World War, as well as Returnees from Peace Missions (Nacionalni program psihosocijalne i zdravstvene pomoći sudionicima i stradalnicima domovinskog rata, drugog svjetskog rata te povratnicima iz mirovnih misija)
- Ministry of Veteran Affairs, National Programme of Psychosocial and Healthcare Support (Nacionalni program psihosocijalne i zdravstvene pomoći)
- 🌐 EU Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism

