

U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice for Victims of Overseas Terrorism Fact Sheet

The Office of Justice for Victims of Overseas Terrorism (**DOJ/OVT**) provides support to U.S. victims of overseas terrorism by helping them navigate foreign criminal justice systems and by advocating for their voices to be heard around the world. Our office consists of attorneys and professionals with expertise in crime victims' rights and national security. We help victims and their families understand foreign criminal justice systems and participate in those systems to the extent permitted by foreign law. We are committed to an efficient and effective continuum of services for overseas terrorism victims through our partnerships with other U.S. Government agencies and components within DOJ.

Am I a U.S. victim of overseas terrorism?

A "victim" is (based on 42 U.S.C. §10607e(2)):

- A U.S. citizen;
- Who suffered direct physical, emotional, or financial harm as a result of an act of overseas terrorism; or,
- A spouse, parent, child, sibling, or legally designated representative of the victim, if the direct victim is a minor or is incompetent, incapacitated, or killed (the direct victim must be a U.S. citizen; the representative of the victim does not have to be a U.S. citizen).

"Overseas Terrorism" is (based on 18 U.S.C. § 2331):

- Violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that violate federal or state law;
- That are intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, or affect the conduct of a government; and,
- Occur outside the United States.

What are my rights?

Foreign Investigations & Prosecutions:

- When the foreign government investigates and prosecutes the foreign terrorist attack, you may or may not have rights under foreign laws during the criminal justice process. We are here to help you find out what rights you may have in a foreign legal system and support your exercise of any rights. Please contact us with your questions.
- U.S. crime victims' rights laws do not apply to U.S. citizens during investigations and prosecutions in foreign criminal justice systems.

U.S. Investigations & Prosecutions:

- If the FBI opens a U.S. criminal investigation into the attack, the FBI's Office for Victim Assistance (OVA), is responsible for providing services to victims, including information about the status of the investigation of the crime (42 U.S.C. § 10607).
- If the U.S. Department of Justice files charges in the U.S. court system related to a

foreign attack, victims of that attack have rights during the prosecution (18 U.S.C. § 3771). For more information, contact the U.S. Attorney's Office that is handling the U.S. prosecution.

- You can also learn more about crime victims' rights in the U.S. court system from the Justice Department's Office for Victims of Crime (OVC).

How can DOJ/OVT assist me?

- *Information & Notification*— provide information and notification about the foreign criminal justice system, victims' rights in the foreign system, and what is happening with the case.
- *Foreign Criminal Justice Participation*— advocate for your voice to be heard in the foreign criminal justice proceedings to the extent permitted by foreign law.
- *Referrals*—connect to U.S. and foreign government and non-government service providers to address physical, psychological or criminal justice system needs.

Pursuing Justice, Protecting Rights, Providing Services

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Contact us by phone at (202) 233-0701 or (877) 738-0153, or by e-mail at nsd.ovt@usdoj.gov