

**Victims of Terrorism Abroad Task Force  
2009 Victim Perspective Meeting**

**Summary Report  
Lessons Learned from Victims of International Terrorism**



**Compiled By**

**Office of Justice for Victims of Overseas Terrorism  
National Security Division  
United States Department of Justice**

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**MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF  
THE OFFICE OF JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF OVERSEAS TERRORISM**

Before the Oklahoma City bombing in 1996, and the attacks of September 11, 2001, Americans typically thought of terrorism as a crime that happened primarily outside of the United States. Generally, the only Americans at risk for terrorist attacks were those who ventured beyond our borders to visit or reside in foreign countries. With the exception of a few high profile attacks, such as the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988, Americans took little notice of foreign attacks, even when they killed or injured Americans. As a consequence, Americans victimized by terrorism overseas received little support or assistance from the U.S. government.

In recent years, however, this situation has changed. With increased globalization and international travel, and because on September 11, 2001, foreign terrorists struck at the heart of this country, the American public has a much greater appreciation for the risks of terrorism to Americans both at home and abroad. Additionally, in part because U.S. victims of overseas terrorism made efforts to seek government help, and in part because the federal government expanded system-based crime victim assistance programs, the U.S. government has improved its outreach to U.S. victims of terrorism overseas.

The two agencies most significantly involved in this outreach are the U.S. Departments of State and Justice. Over the past eight years, both agencies established complementary crime victim assistance programs focused on assisting U.S. citizens victimized in other countries. Then, in 2005, Congress directed the Department of Justice to establish an office devoted to advocating for U.S. victims of terrorism abroad — the Office of Justice for Victims of Overseas Terrorism (OVT). Congress also asked OVT to develop a joint task force composed of State and Justice Department agencies to respond to terrorist attacks against Americans taking place in foreign countries. The Victims of Terrorism Abroad (VTA) Task Force brings together leaders from State and Justice Department offices with responsibilities for fighting terrorism and assisting U.S. victims of international terrorism.

On May 28, 2009, the VTA Task Force sponsored a “Victim Perspective Meeting” during which VTA Task Force members heard directly from U.S. victims of past overseas terrorist attacks. On behalf of the Task Force, I would like to thank the seven victim/survivor participants for sharing their experience at that very powerful meeting. The voices of Americans who have been victimized by acts of international terrorism are vital to the development of victim assistance efforts. We would also like to thank the Office for Victims of Crime's (OVC) Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC) for providing the funding to support this project, and all the attendees who generously set aside time from their busy schedules to participate.

Heather Cartwright



## INTRODUCTION

This Summary Report was developed by a subcommittee of the VTA Task Force based on discussions from the May 28, 2009, Victim Perspective Meeting. The Report's purpose is to provide the Meeting attendees, both the victim participants and the U.S. government agency staff, with meaningful documentation of the information and insights gained at the Meeting.

The Report begins with an overview of the VTA Task Force including information about each of the government agencies represented on the Task Force. The Report then provides summary information about the Victim Perspective Meeting and identifies three overarching concerns raised by the victim attendees. The Report also addresses each of the three overarching concerns and provides information about U.S. government programs currently in place to meet those concerns. In separate sections, the Report presents advice that the victim attendees would give to future victims and a list of additional concerns victims raised for further Task Force consideration. Finally, the Report contains an acronym list and a glossary, to aid the reader in understanding the Report and the parameters of the Task Force's work.

Throughout the Report, the reader will find direct quotes from the victim participants. We hope that through these quotes the victims' voices will be more clearly heard. We have chosen not to identify the individual victim participants out of respect for their privacy and to encourage open, honest communication.

*"It is humbling to be reminded that ours is not the only example of sorrow and loss. I am struck that here, in this setting we can learn from and instruct each other. It is an honor and an education."*

**Victim Participant**



## THE VTA TASK FORCE

The United States Departments of Justice and State formally established the Victims of Terrorism Abroad (VTA) Task Force in September 2007, in compliance with Congressional direction. The Task Force's goals are:

- to ensure that the U.S. government response to U.S. citizen victims of terrorist attacks abroad continues to be a high priority within our agencies;
- to coordinate the U.S. government response to U.S. citizen victims of terrorism attacks abroad, especially in attacks involving multiple victims, to ensure efficiency, prevent redundancy, and provide victims with timely, compassionate assistance; and
- to ensure that victims receive the rights and services mandated by federal law. These rights and services include: (1) information and crisis intervention services in a timely manner in the immediate aftermath of a terrorist attack; (2) information on available assistance, including the International Terrorism Victims Expense Reimbursement Program (ITVERP), and other forms of financial assistance; and (3) information on the status of the investigation and any related criminal justice proceedings.

The Task Force consists of representatives from the U.S. Departments of Justice and State agencies that have policy development, investigatory, prosecutive, and victim-related responsibilities when an act of international terrorism affecting U.S. citizens occurs overseas. An overview of roles and responsibilities of each agency follows.

### U.S. Department of State

Bureau of Consular Affairs: The mission of the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) is to protect the lives and interests of American citizens overseas and to strengthen U.S. border security. Earthquakes, hurricanes, political upheavals, acts of terrorism, and hijackings are only some of the events threatening the safety of Americans abroad. Each event is unique and poses its own special difficulties. However, for the U.S. Department of State (DOS) there are certain responsibilities and

*“I was able to remain on it [the foreign investigation] because of the support of the foreign government, which came because of pressure and attention from our government.”*

*Victim Participant*

actions that apply in every disaster or crisis. When a crisis occurs, the DOS sets up a task force or working group to bring together in one set of rooms, all the people



necessary to work on that event. Usually this Washington task force will be in touch by telephone 24 hours a day with our Ambassador and Foreign Service Officers at the embassy in the country affected. Within a task force, the immediate job of the DOS's CA is to respond to the thousands of concerned relatives and friends who begin to telephone the DOS immediately after the news of a disaster is broadcast. Relatives want information on the welfare of their family members and on the disaster. The DOS relies on its embassies and consulates abroad for hard information. Often, these installations are also affected by the disaster and lack electricity, phone lines, gasoline, etc. Nevertheless, Foreign Service Officers work hard to get information back to Washington as quickly as possible. This is rarely as quickly as the press is able to relay information. Foreign Service Officers cannot speculate; their information must be accurate. Often this means getting important information from the local government, which may or may not be immediately responsive. The CA headquarters in Washington, D.C., includes three victim advocate staff who work directly with U.S. citizen victims of crime in foreign countries.

Bureau of Diplomatic Security: The Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) is the security and law enforcement arm of the DOS. DS is responsible for providing a safe and secure environment for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. Diplomatic Security Special Agents are federal law enforcement officers who serve worldwide. All DS Special Agents have the power to arrest, carry firearms, and serve arrest warrants and other court processes. Operating from a global platform in 25 U.S. cities and 159 foreign countries, DS Special Agents play a vital role in protecting U.S. embassies and personnel overseas, securing critical information systems, and investigating passport and visa fraud. DS also works with other federal agencies, the intelligence community, international law enforcement agencies, and the private sector to prevent terrorism against U.S. citizens overseas and at home.

Office of Casualty Assistance: The Office of Casualty Assistance (OCA) in the DOS provides administrative assistance and ongoing support following the death or severe injury of direct-hire U.S. citizen DOS employees or their family member(s) serving abroad, or of DOS employees serving in the United States. OCA also offers support to all U.S. government employees serving under Chief of Mission authority and their family members, including Locally Employed Staff (LE Staff) who are victims of terrorism, mass casualty, or certain other critical incidents, as requested by the employee's agency. The officials in OCA serve as the primary liaison for families following a casualty, advocating for victims, assisting with benefits, return of remains and personal effects, providing resources and support, and other issues. OCA trains and manages the DOS's Bureau of Human Resources employees who comprise the crisis support teams. These teams are ready to be mobilized in the event of a mass casualty incident to provide support to injured or impaired employees and their families, and the families of deceased employees.



Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism: The primary mission of the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism (S/CT) is to forge partnerships with non-state actors, multilateral organizations, and foreign governments to advance the counterterrorism objectives and national security of the United States. S/CT takes a leading role in developing coordinated strategies to defeat terrorists abroad and in securing the cooperation of international partners. S/CT, if requested by the U.S. Ambassador, may respond to a terrorist incident to provide communications and other support to the embassy, but S/CT does not provide victims' assistance services.

### U.S. Department of Justice

FBI Counterterrorism Division: The FBI Counterterrorism Division (CTD) has investigative jurisdiction over terrorist acts committed within the United States and against American citizens and facilities overseas. The FBI CTD collects, analyzes, and shares critical information and intelligence with the proper authorities to combat terrorism on three fronts: 1) international terrorism operations both within the United States and in support of extraterritorial investigations; 2) domestic terrorism operations; and 3) counterterrorism relating to both international and domestic terrorism.

*“Bringing the terrorists to justice is a concern that never goes away.”*

*Victim Participant*

FBI Office for Victim Assistance, Terrorism and Special Jurisdiction Program: The FBI is responsible for identifying victims and fulfilling mandatory legal requirements regarding victim assistance. Terrorist attacks against American citizens are federal crimes and U.S. nationals who are victims of federal crimes abroad are entitled to the same rights and assistance from the FBI and Department of Justice (DOJ) that apply to victims of federal crimes occurring within the U.S. The Office for Victim Assistance (OVA) was established in December 2001 to expand and enhance the FBI's victim assistance efforts and is responsible for directing and coordinating the FBI's response to victims of terrorism, both domestic and international. OVA's Terrorism and Special Jurisdiction Program (TSJP) manages and coordinates assistance to terrorism victims. TSJP is comprised of four Victim Services Managers, a Forensic Operations Manager, a clinical psychologist, and is supervised by the OVA Program Director. The team has specialized experience dealing with injured victims, families of deceased victims, and hostage victims. TSJP also manages victim and family assistance efforts in the aftermath of mass casualty crimes to ensure support, guidance and development of a victim assistance response plan. TSJP developed the Victim Assistance Rapid Deployment Team (VARDT) to enhance the FBI's ability to respond to victims of domestic and overseas terrorism, criminal aviation disasters and other types of mass casualty crimes.



National Security Division – Counterterrorism Section: The Counterterrorism Section (CTS), a unit within the National Security Division of the DOJ, has the primary mission of assisting in preventing and disrupting acts of terrorism anywhere in the world that impact on significant United States interests and persons. CTS's responsibilities include:

- investigating and prosecuting domestic and international terrorism cases, as well as matters involving torture, genocide, and war crimes that are linked to terrorists;
- investigating and prosecuting terrorist financing matters, including material support cases;
- participating in the systematic collection and analysis of data and information relating to the investigation and prosecution of terrorism cases;
- coordinating with U.S. government agencies (including the Departments of State and Defense, Homeland Security, and the Treasury; the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Intelligence Community) to facilitate prevention of terrorist activity through daily detection and analysis and to provide information and support to the field;
- formulating legislative initiatives and DOJ policies and guidelines relating to terrorism; and
- conducting training conferences, seminars and lectures on terrorism-related topics including substantive law, policy, procedure and guidelines for foreign and domestic law enforcement personnel, intelligence officials, the private sector, and the general public.

National Security Division – Office of Justice for Victims of Overseas Terrorism: The DOJ established the Office of Justice for Victims of Overseas Terrorism (OVT) in 2005 pursuant to Congress' directive contained in the 2004 Justice Department Appropriations Act. OVT's purpose is to ensure that the investigation and prosecution of terrorist attacks against American citizens overseas remain a high priority within the DOJ. The Attorney General further defined OVT's responsibilities including: monitoring the investigation and prosecution of terrorist attacks against U.S. citizens abroad; working with other pertinent DOJ components to ensure that the rights of victims of such attacks are honored and respected; and establishing a joint task force with the U.S. Department of State (the VTA Task Force). OVT staff consists of a Director, an Attorney Advisor, and three support positions.

Office of Justice Programs – Office for Victims of Crime: The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) was established by the 1984 Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) to oversee diverse programs that benefit victims of crime. OVC provides substantial funding to state victim assistance and compensation programs-the lifeline services that help victims to heal. OVC sponsors programs and initiatives that support victims of domestic and international terrorism as well as victims of global crimes such as child abduction and tourist-related crimes. Through its Terrorism and International Victims Assistance Services, OVC offers informational resources and services related to international crime victim issues, including developing programs to support victims of terrorism. Terrorism and International Victims Assistance Services programs include:



- The Crime Victim Assistance Emergency Fund (the Emergency Fund), which assists U.S. nationals and U.S. Government employees who become victims of terrorism and mass violence outside of the United States. Support under the Emergency Fund is provided via an interagency agreement with the FBI.
- The International Terrorism Victim Expense Reimbursement Program (ITVERP) authorized by Congress to reimburse eligible direct victims of acts of international terrorism that occur outside the United States for out-of-pocket expenses associated with the crime.
- The Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program (AEAP), which offers multiple avenues of assistance to victims and communities facing acts of terrorism and intentional mass criminal violence including crisis response, consequence management, criminal justice support grants, crime victim compensation, and consultant services for training and technical assistance. Assistance in each of these areas targets a specific phase in the aftermath of a crisis and is designed to meet the immediate and extended needs of victims and the community.



## VICTIM PERSPECTIVE MEETING

On May 28, 2009, the VTA Task Force sponsored a Victim Perspective Meeting inviting seven victims/survivors of past terrorist attacks to share their experiences with the VTA Task Force. In preparation for the meeting, the VTA Task Force disseminated six focus questions to invitees, asking them to identify:

- government actions that were helpful at the time of the incident and after the incident;
- additional help victims would have wanted;
- in what way the government response was most or least helpful;
- advice for the government on how to assist future victims of international terrorism;
- what victims want government employees who work with terrorism victims to know; and
- advice for future victims of international terrorism.

The victim attendees participated in a full-day meeting, focusing on these six questions. The victims' comments and views were documented and form the basis for this Summary Report.

There is one important caveat underlying this Summary Report. All of the acts of international terrorism discussed at the Victim Perspective Meeting occurred in 2003 or earlier, before the FBI Office for Victim Assistance (OVA), Department of State's Consular Affairs Victim Assistance Program, and the Office of Justice for Victims of Overseas Terrorism (OVT) were established. Accordingly, some of the unmet needs identified by the invitees have been addressed by programs established in recent years. The needs that have not been met have been identified and will be thoroughly addressed by VTA Task Force member agencies and will be placed on future Task Force agendas for study and action.

This Summary Report addresses three overarching concerns shared by all the victim invitees: (1) the great need for immediate, coordinated government assistance in the aftermath of the crime; (2) that victims commonly value timely and regular communication with government officials, as well as accessible and updated information regarding rights and case status initiated by the government; and (3) that victims and family members want "honest and forthright" information from the government. In addressing these three common concerns and in sharing the programs that the U.S. government now has in place for assisting U.S. victims, the VTA Task Force member agencies recognize that more can and should be done to enhance our support. The concerns that were shared but not mentioned in this Summary Report will be placed on the agendas for discussion at future VTA Task Force meetings.



*“The short term question is: How do I function from day-to-day? The long-term question is: Who is going to investigate and punish this evil act?” Victim Participant*

*Concern #1: The great need for immediate, coordinated government assistance in the aftermath of the crime.*

As a direct result of the establishment of the FBI OVA and coordination between the OVA and the DOS, most significantly the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA), many of

the concerns voiced by victim invitees about the immediate response have since been recognized and are being addressed. The following step by step synopsis of the current U.S. government response to U.S. victims of overseas terrorism describes the services and assistance now provided.

In the immediate aftermath of an act of terrorism, the DOS typically identifies U.S. victims and contacts families with an initial notification of status, either with staff at the embassy/consulate or in the Washington, D.C., headquarters office. Typically the Office of Casualty Assistance (OCA) provides assistance and ongoing support to U.S. citizen federal employees and those U.S. government employees serving under the Chief of Mission authority. The DOS will put into place a 24/7 Crisis Task Force to provide appropriate and timely response when large numbers of U.S. citizens are involved in a terrorist attack overseas.

The FBI TSJP receives notification of a new incident involving an American citizen overseas internally from the FBI Legal Attaché or investigating division and/or from the DOS. Through coordination with DOS staff at the embassy and in Washington, D.C., the next of kin is contacted to explain the FBI’s role. TSJP staff may engage an FBI victim assistance specialist in the local area where the victim or family member lives for in-person support.

If the American citizen is deceased, TSJP provides condolences, discusses the autopsy and return of remains process, and assesses the immediate needs for support and assistance to the family. Alerts are given to the Armed Forces Medical Examiner (OAFME), Dover Port Mortuary, Evidence Response Team, and an FBI-contracted funeral home to help expedite the return of remains to the next of kin. The family is routinely provided updates regarding the process and the expected timeframe of events to come. If personal effects are removed from the victim during the autopsy, TSJP works closely with the Evidence Response Team and FBI Field Office to coordinate the cleaning and return of the item(s) to the next of kin. If the family has requests for information, TSJP acts as the



liaison to the case agents, OAFME, DOS, and other agencies as necessary. The OVA has access to emergency victim assistance funds to help families with emergency travel and crisis counseling. Support is also provided by seeking financial assistance for funeral and burial expenses. The TSJP team member assigned to the case will serve as the point of contact for case updates and ongoing support throughout the duration of the investigation.

In the event an American citizen is injured as a result of a terrorist attack, TSJP will contact the victim and/or next of kin to advise them of the FBI's role, assist in coordinating medical evacuation, provide referrals for medical care, and assess immediate needs for support and assistance. TJSP will coordinate with the DOS or the U.S. Department of Defense to determine the most appropriate means for transporting the victims to a safe environment. Emergency victim assistance funds may be used for travel, family travel or lodging, if no other sources are available. If necessary, TJSP is able to coordinate with the victim's employer. Once the victim returns home, TJSP will work with a local FBI Victim Specialist to provide local support and resources to the victim. Throughout this process, TJSP will also coordinate referrals for community resources for medical care, counseling, crime compensation, and provide case updates and ongoing support for the duration of the investigation.

TSJP Victim Services Managers also have specialized experience with interacting with families and victims of hostage cases. Upon notification of the incident, contact is made with the next of kin to explain the FBI's role and to assess the immediate needs for support and assistance. Along with coordinating for a Victim Specialist to accompany the Hostage Negotiators when meeting the family members, Victim Services Managers assist with the preparation for repatriation, reunification, and post captivity support. Emergency funds may be used for travel, family travel and lodging. Additionally, TSJP routinely coordinates resources and provides services to victims by:

- providing victims with information on their rights and limitations of those rights when crimes occur in another country,
- providing information on and referrals for compensation and services from agencies and organizations,
- documentation or verification of injury to support applications for insurance, crime compensation programs, or other benefits,
- coordinating services between the FBI, DOJ, and DOS, and
- providing intervention with employer and/or creditors, whenever appropriate.



***Concern #2: Victims commonly value timely and regular communication with government officials, as well as accessible and updated information regarding rights and case status, initiated by the government.***

During the U.S. investigation, the FBI keeps victims informed of investigatory information. Once charges are filed in the United States, the Victim/Witness Coordinator at the U.S. Attorney's Office prosecuting the case is responsible for ensuring that the rights contained in the Crime Victims' Rights Act of 2004 (CVRA) are upheld and afforded to victims. The FBI OVA usually continues to provide assistance and services during a prosecution.

During a foreign investigation both the FBI OVA and the Office of Justice for Victims of Overseas Terrorism (OVT) will keep victims apprised of information about the foreign investigation whenever possible. If the case is tried in a foreign court, OVT will assist in identifying the rights afforded victims within that foreign judicial system, assist victims in asserting their rights, and provide criminal justice proceeding information when that information becomes available. OVT has obtained funding from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) to assist American terrorism victims in attending foreign criminal proceedings. OVT also develops websites to provide victims with information on foreign prosecutions.

Task Force members take note of the unanimous view of the victim attendees that the government should initiate contact and should maintain contact even when there is nothing new to report. The Task Force will continue to discuss and explore innovative measures to strengthen communications in the future by enhancing efforts to identify victims, obtain victim contact information, and affirmatively provide updates to interested victims. The FBI OVA, U.S. Attorneys' Offices, and OVT strive to maintain contact with victims and family members and, as programs and information become available, to disseminate information in a timely manner.

***“We need to go to the people who suffer the consequences of terrorist acts. Don’t wait for them to come and ask for help. We need each other to cope, to heal, and to search for justice.” Victim Participant***



***Concern #3: Victims and family members want “honest and forthright” information from the government.***

Task Force member agency staff who work with victims and families strive to ensure that only verified, accurate information is presented to victims. If specific information about an investigation or prosecution cannot be shared with victims at a particular time, then victims should be advised of the general reasons for not sharing that information. Task Force members take note of the strongly held view and will discuss ways of ensuring that all government staff working directly with victims are trained about this concern.

***“Victims want and need the truth, not sugar-coated, pumped-up hype that puts a positive spin on everything. They want to know how justice will be served.” Victim Participant***



## ADDITIONAL VICTIM CONCERNS

Some of the concerns identified by the victim invitees have been addressed by government programs established in recent years. Others would benefit from Task Force study. Listed below are victim invitee concerns VTA Task Force agencies have already addressed or are in the process of addressing. The VTA Task Force looks forward to continued progress on these important concerns.

<b>Victim Concern</b>	<b>What is Being Done?</b>
<b>Who qualifies as a victim, and what qualifies as an act of terrorism?</b>	Definitions exist and are available in the “Glossary” section of this document.
<b>Produce a booklet of applicable regulations, definitions, and stipulations regarding rights as a victim of terrorism.</b>	OVT and OVA are updating current resources, which may be found on the OVA website.
<b>Provide frequent communication with survivors and family members throughout the process.</b>	As of 2003, the newly established offices of CA, OVA, and OVT are coordinating efforts to provide timely, relevant communication.
<b>Consideration of the elimination of time limits for financial assistance, to include lifetime support, and expansion of eligible family member categories.</b>	The Task Force is aware of this important issue and is discussing how to best address the concern.
<b>Assistance in dealing with media.</b>	Advice from the FBI Public Affairs Office and an informative brochure are accessible to victims through the OVA website.
<b>Help to navigate income tax issues.</b>	The Task Force takes note of this issue and will study it to determine if any policy recommendations are appropriate.
<b>Improve communication between state and federal assistance programs.</b>	The Task Force takes note of this concern and is discussing how to best address it.
<b>Seek and provide participation for U.S. citizens and American institutions in international terrorism victim movements with the European Union and other foreign governmental bodies.</b>	OVT is pursuing this long-term objective, aspiring to encourage more significant recognition of victim needs worldwide.
<b>Survey victims to determine if needs have changed over time.</b>	The Task Force will consider this suggestion.
<b>Establish and support regular victim meetings.</b>	OVT hosted the first Victim Perspective Meeting in Washington, D.C. on May 28, 2009, and hopes to sponsor more in the future.



## ADVICE TO FUTURE TERRORISM VICTIMS

The following are some of the statements that were shared by the victim invitees when asked: *What advice would you give to future victims of international terrorism?* The VTA Task Force found these and other statements very powerful and helpful. The best way to disseminate this insight will be discussed in future VTA Task Force meetings.

- Ask for and accept help.
- Keep records because personnel in both the U.S. and foreign governments turn over often.
- In all relationships, whether personal or professional, a victim's family member should never burn bridges, no matter how frustrating the situation becomes.
- Remember the other victims involved in your incident. Do nothing in seeking help for your loved one that would harm other victims or hinder efforts to protect them.
- Balance your approach in reacting to information reported in the news. Don't distress over reports in the media. However, if three sources agree on something, use it as a starting point to ask questions of people in charge.
- Protect your own physical and mental capacity. Do what is necessary to stay sane. Eat, sleep, and stay healthy.
- Do all you can, when you can, in the moment, because one day you will need to close that door. When that time comes, you will know, and you can move on with a clear conscience.



## CONCLUSION

The goal of the Victim Perspective Meeting was to understand more about international terrorism victim needs and concerns by hearing directly from those victims. The information confirmed the need for existing programs and provided ideas for future enhancements. During the meeting, Task Force members identified topics for further VTA Task Force study and action. OVT will ensure that these topics are placed on future VTA Task Force meeting agendas.

From all accounts, both meeting participants and the victim invitees benefited from attending the meeting. The meeting provided VTA Task Force members with a better understanding of how the U.S. government can enhance its support for American victims of international terrorism. The opportunity to meet with American victims of international terrorism also provided valuable information for Task Force agencies to use in planning agency resource allocation. The meeting also provided invitees the opportunity to learn about improvements in the U.S. government response to victims since their attacks. Several victim invitees indicated that this new information was validating for them to learn.

We hope that this is the first of many Task Force meetings with victims of international terrorism. The voices of U.S. citizens who have been victimized by acts of international terrorism are vital to the development of victim assistance efforts of the U.S. government. Any procedures or policies developed for American victims of terrorism, without victim input, would be incomplete. Thus, the VTA Task Force hopes to continue to reach out to this constituency through similar meetings in the future.

*“We seek the insights of victims to improve our service and to accomplish our mandated objectives.”*

*Heather Cartwright, Director, OVT*



## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS IN THIS SUMMARY REPORT

AEAP	Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program (DOJ)
CA	Bureau of Consular Affairs (DOS)
CTD	Federal Bureau of Investigation Counterterrorism Division (FBI)
CTS	Counterterrorism Section (DOJ)
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOS	Department of State
DS	Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DOS)
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation (DOJ)
OVA	Federal Bureau of Investigation Office for Victim Assistance (DOJ)
ITVERP	International Terrorism Victims Expense Reimbursement Program (DOJ)
OAFME	Office of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner
OCA	Office of Casualty Assistance (DOS)
OVC	Office for Victims of Crime (DOJ)
OVT	Office of Justice for Victims of Overseas Terrorism (DOJ)
S/CT	Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism (DOS)
TSJP	Terrorism and Special Jurisdiction Program (FBI)
TTAC	Training and Technical Assistance Center (DOJ)
VARDT	Victim Assistance Rapid Deployment Team (FBI, DOJ)
VOCA	Victims of Crime Act
VTA	Victims of Terrorism Abroad Task Force

## CONTACT INFORMATION FOR AGENCIES WITH VICTIM SERVICES

**Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA),  
Department of State**  
Phone Number: 1-888-407-4747  
Webpage: <http://travel.state.gov>

**Office of Casualty Assistance (OCA),  
Department of State**  
Phone Number: 202-736-4302  
E-mail: [oca@state.gov](mailto:oca@state.gov)  
Webpage: <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c23120.htm>

**Office of Justice for Victims of Overseas  
Terrorism (OVT), Department of Justice**  
Phone Number: 1-877-738-0153  
E-mail: [nsd.ovt@usdoj.gov](mailto:nsd.ovt@usdoj.gov)  
Webpage: <http://www.justice.gov/nsd/ovt.htm>

**Office for Victims of Crime (OVC),  
Department of Justice**  
Webpage: <http://www.ovc.gov/contacts.html>

**Office for Victim Assistance (OVA), Federal  
Bureau of Investigation**  
Phone Number: 1-866-828-5320  
E-mail: [victim.assistance@ic.fbi.gov](mailto:victim.assistance@ic.fbi.gov)  
Webpage: <http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/victimassist/home.htm>



## GLOSSARY

For purposes of the VTA Task Force scope of responsibility, the following definitions apply. The definition of “victim” is based on the federal victims’ rights laws governing the rights and services that the U.S. government is responsible for providing to crime victims in federal criminal cases. The definition of “international terrorism” is based on the U.S. criminal code definition of the crime. We note that there are numerous definitions of “international terrorism”, and that the State Department operates under a different definition than the Department of Justice. Most significantly, the State Department definition requires any act of international terrorism be premeditated, while the criminal code definition does not.

### Victim:

A “victim” is defined as a person who has suffered direct physical, emotional, or pecuniary harm as a result of an incident that could be investigated and/or prosecuted as a U.S. international terrorism crime (based on 42 U.S.C. § 10607(e)(2)).

- A. *Institutional victims:* An institutional entity other than a governmental entity can be considered a victim. In the case of a victim that is an institutional entity, an authorized representative of the entity should be identified as a point of contact for the victim.
- B. *Co-victims:* In the case of a victim who is under 18 years of age, incompetent, incapacitated, or deceased, one of the following will be considered the victim: a spouse, a legal guardian, a parent, a child, a sibling, another family member, or another person designated by a court. More than one co-victim can be identified, but one co-victim should be designated as a family spokesperson absent exceptional family circumstances necessitating multiple points of contact.
- C. *Emotional injury:* A person will be considered a primary victim in the absence of physical injury only if that victim was directly and proximately emotionally injured by the crime. The term “proximate” is intended to encompass only those individuals in the “zone of danger” of an attack. Examples include the recipient of threats, the intended victim of an attempted violent crime, a person who was in the proximity of a terrorist attack but suffered only minor or minimal physical injuries, any person who was an operator/crew/passenger in a vehicle (including an automobile, bus, plane, or other transport) that was the target of a terrorist attack. A victim need not prove emotional injury, it will be presumed from proximity to the attack.
- D. *Hostages:* A person being held as a hostage will be considered an incapacitated primary victim. Accordingly, family members will be considered co-victims as defined in paragraph B.



E. *U.S. Nationals*: This Task Force is charged with providing assistance to the U.S. National victims of international terrorism.



**International Terrorism:**

(1) the term “international terrorism” means activities that-

(A) involve violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the United States or of any State;

(B) appear to be intended-

(i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population;

(ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or

(iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and

(C) occur primarily outside the territorial jurisdiction of the United States, or transcend national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear intended to intimidate or coerce, or the locale in which their perpetrators operate or seek asylum.

18 U.S.C. § 2331.

