

HONOURING VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

Guidance on preparing a memorial event in the aftermath of a terrorist attack

INVOLVE VICTIMS

From the very beginning of the preparation phase, involve victims; listen to their ideas, ask for their help and guidance, determine the content of the memorial with - and for - the victims.

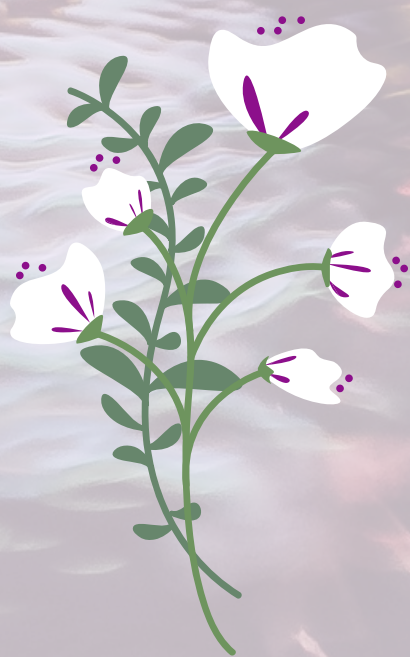


TIMING

As a general rule, allow at least 6 months to prepare. If you are planning a memorial close to the event, do so only when all funerals have been held. Keep the formal segment of the memorial relatively short e.g. 45 mins - 1 hour. Make victims' associations leading/key partners for anniversary events.

COORDINATION AND PARTNERS

Coordination of a memorial event may involve different actors and groups. Think about partners who can assist with: security and safety of participants, communication and invitations, logistics, preparation, psychological support, catering and transport.



SUPPORTING VICTIMS

Support for victims should be available at any time of the process: through the preparatory phase, during and after the event. Psychosocial supporters should be visible and approachable during the whole event. The support can take different forms: peer support, professional support services or psychological counselors.



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MEMORIALS

Exploring the various approaches to commemorating victims of terrorism

PHYSICAL

Physical memorials are among the most common ways to commemorate victims of terrorism. Statues, sculptures, engraved plaques, fountains, buildings and gardens are among the various monuments created to remember, honour and pay respect to victims.

LOCATION: Often physical memorials are at the site of the attack (9/11 Memorial, Atocha Station), it can also be a public space easily accessible by all. Accessibility, safety, maintenance, and the surrounding environment (noise/light/neighbouring buildings) are very important factors when considering the location of a physical memorial.

MESSAGE: Physical monuments carry social and political implications. They convey implicit and explicit messages that are of significance for victims, family members, and the general public. Images, statements, citations, names of victims can be found on physical memorials to remember, honour and pay respect to victims. Messages usually transcend social, cultural and political differences, and promote respect and remembrance.



SPONTANEOUS

Rapid public responses meet the need to physically express grief, unity and solidarity. In this form of memorial, there are no rigid rules; timing is flexible, messages vary, and methods of remembering (silence/ protests/ music and arts/ prayers) may all come together in a single memorial. Typically, there is no or too little coordination, as these are grassroots, citizen-lead actions.



REMEMBRANCE DAY

Establishing a national, European or international day of remembrance is an annual sign of solidarity with victims, deceased victims and their families and friends, as well as the wider community. This may also act as a day which promotes peace over violence.



ONLINE

Online memorials are virtual spaces dedicated to commemoration. Whether a dedicated website, social media post or blog, online memorials allow individuals to share in the grieving process from distance, and permit continued acts of commemoration long after formal events have ended. Online memorials have little environmental impact and can also act as a platform for In Memoriam donations and fundraising.



VICTIMS' GROUPS

Surviving victims, family members, friends and the wider community establish victims' groups and organisations as a way to collectively remember, practice peer support and raise awareness.



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