

PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA TO THE UN, GENEVA

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

17TH SESSION (30 May-17 June 2011)

AGENDA ITEM 3: Panel on Victims of Terrorism

(01 June 2011)

Statement by India

As a co-sponsor of the Council decision that mandated this panel, we would like to express our deep appreciation to everyone who has made this panel discussion possible today.

2. It is an initiative that is not only timely, but also overdue. It is an initiative that seeks to restore some of the balance and perspective that one often felt to be missing for quite sometime now, even though human rights do constitute one of the four pillars of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. And this is highly ironic, given that the international community has been discussing terrorism for nearly 75 years now, going back to the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism adopted by the League of Nations in 1937. We seem to have spent bulk of this time debating the political and emotional content of the term "terrorism" in the backdrop of the broader political dynamic of the day. It is only relatively recently that we have progressed to using this term in a pejorative sense in general, as also stating unambiguously that, regardless of whether it is committed by State or non-State actors and irrespective of its motivations, any act of terrorism is a violation of human rights - the most important among them being the right to life -

fundamental freedoms and democracy. It is, therefore, time that we started talking of the *human rights* of *victims* of terrorism in our broader discourse on terrorism, as distinct from restricting it mainly to those of the alleged perpetrators of terrorism. In this context, we take positive note of the case often made by the victims of terrorism, as indeed from within the precincts of the International Criminal Court itself, for delegitimizing terrorism and making it a crime against humanity.

3. We are all aware of the debate on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. All of us are also conscious of the various concerns and motivations underpinning that debate. We believe that we should be equally mindful of how, even when a cause may be just, the use of terrorism as a means to achieve that cause often becomes self-sustaining owing to vested interests and ultimately fails the cause. Therefore, while we grapple with this issue in New York, we should not allow that to become an obstacle in addressing some genuine human rights concerns about the *victims* of terrorism. It is about time that we recognized violence for what it is worth and started moving beyond platitudes of solidarity for those affected by such violence.

4. In conclusion, Mr. Chair, we would like to pledge our support for continuing the work on broadening the international consensus on addressing the human rights of the victims of terrorism. We look forward to hearing the views of our panelists on this and related questions.

Thank you for your kind attention.
