



OVC Fact Sheet

January 2002

Terrorism and International Victims Unit

With advancing technology, widespread use of the Internet, increased international tourism, and overseas job opportunities, issues of violent crime and mass victimization have become a major concern for agencies serving victims in the United States and abroad. In addition, the threat of terrorism against Americans worldwide has increased in recent years. New types of weapons of mass destruction such as chemical and biological agents pose significant challenges for those charged with responding to victims of terrorist attacks. In response to these emerging issues, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) created the Terrorism and International Victims Unit (TIVU).

TIVU is responsible for developing programs and initiatives to help victims of terrorism, mass violence, and crimes that have transnational dimensions, such as trafficking of women and children and international child abduction. TIVU coordinates OVC resources and funding for victims of terrorism and transnational crimes and administers a new compensation program for victims of international terrorism. TIVU also seeks to further integrate crime victim issues into international discussions.

Services to Victims

TIVU provides the following services to victims of crime:

- Provides information and benefits to U.S. nationals and Federal Government employees who are victims of terrorism abroad. Victims are given assistance in accessing services, which may include traveling to trials and briefings, and obtaining information on the criminal justice process.
- Makes OVC resources available to assist victims of terrorism, from the crisis response stage to posttrial proceedings.
- Serves as OVC's liaison to the U.S. Department of State and other federal agencies responsible for providing information and assistance to U.S. citizens victimized abroad and information regarding victim assistance resources to U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide.
- Serves as OVC's liaison to foreign embassies and consulates in the United States to provide information on victim assistance resources when foreign citizens are victimized in the United States.

- Helps fund efforts to recover children abducted and taken outside U.S. borders.

Compensation and Assistance Resources

TIVU provides the following resources to compensate and assist victims of crime:

- TIVU administers the International Terrorism Victims Compensation Program, which allows U.S. nationals and Federal Government employees who become victims of terrorism abroad to apply to a single federal office to obtain compensation. In fall 2000, the 106th Congress passed the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, which provides aid for victims of terrorism and expands OVC's authority to respond to incidents of terrorism outside the United States. In essence, the program seeks to address the unique needs and circumstances of international terrorism victims.
- More and more countries are developing programs that provide

compensation to victims of crime. In response, TIVU is working with the U.S. State Department to update and maintain an *International Crime Victim Compensation Program Directory*. The directory, which was created to link victims abroad to available resources, lists crime victim compensation programs in various foreign countries. Available programs, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and compensable expenses covered by the responding countries and the United States are described in the directory. It is available from the OVC Resource Center at 1-800-851-3420 (TTY 1-877-712-9279) and via OVC's Web site at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/intdir.

- TIVU administers the **Anti-terrorism and Emergency Assistance Program for Terrorism and Mass Violence Victims**. OVC developed guidelines to implement the victim assistance and compensation provisions contained in the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act of 1997; the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000; the USA Patriot Act of 2001; and the Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations Act of 2002. Under these guidelines, funding is available to provide compensation and assistance to victims of acts of terrorism or mass violence within the United States and assistance to U.S. citizens and government employees who are victims of terrorism and mass violence abroad. Funding may be used to provide a wide range of services and respond to the immediate and ongoing challenges of serving victims in the aftermath of terrorism and mass violence.

Programs and Initiatives

TIVU is involved in a number of programs and initiatives with other federal agencies and nonprofit organizations to enhance the assistance provided to victims of terrorism, mass violence, and international crimes. The following is a list of TIVU's programs and initiatives:

- **Federal Interagency Protocols for Responding to Victims of Terrorism**. OVC, through TIVU, has taken a leadership role in developing a federal protocol to ensure a more effective and timely response to victims of terrorism. Terrorism crimes tend to involve large numbers of victims and may include employees of various federal agencies, tourists, business representatives, and foreign nationals. Coordination within the Federal Government to respond to victims' needs and facilitate access to emergency relief and ongoing services is crucial. Recent international terrorist attacks against the United States highlighted many of the unique and complex problems in organizing an appropriate short- and long-term response to victims of international terrorism and victims of terrorism within U.S. borders.
- **Training and Technical Assistance**. TIVU and the Emergency Services and Disaster Relief Branch of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are developing training for mental health services providers on assisting victims of terrorism and mass violence. CMHS, which already delivers training and technical assistance to mental health services providers on working with natural disaster victims, conducted an assessment of current research, literature, and practices regarding the mental health needs of terrorism victims. CMHS is incorporating the information and programs that address criminal mass victimization into existing training programs and will train victim assistance providers on the mental health needs of terrorism victims.
- TIVU and the Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) are collaborating to provide training and technical assistance to enhance the capacity of first responders to deal effectively with victims of domestic and international terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction. The initiative will include the development of educational materials and a national training and exercise program to help first responders support victims of terrorist incidents.
- **Criminal Crisis Response Initiative (CCRI)**. TIVU provides funding to the Jefferson Institute for Justice Studies (JIJS) in Washington, D.C., to develop CCRI, a community-based assessment and planning process to help states and local communities design and implement a strategic plan for responding to victims of criminal mass violence. Thus far, JIJS has identified communities that have existing response plans, developed a community action plan and program implementation guide, and started working with communities nationwide to help them develop crisis response plans.
- **Oklahoma City Bombing**. OVC, through TIVU, continues to support the efforts of Oklahoma City as the community recovers from the April 19, 1995, bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, which killed 168 people and injured more than 850 others. Most recently, TIVU coordinated with the Federal Bureau of Prisons to provide support to the victims during Timothy McVeigh's execution. As other

issues arise, TIVU will coordinate with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Oklahoma and various appropriate agencies.

- **Federal and Nongovernmental Agency Coordination.** TIVU works closely with a number of other federal agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), U.S. Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Attorneys' Offices, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Office for Domestic Preparedness, and National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), to enhance existing services and develop initiatives to help victims of terrorism. In addition, TIVU is developing working relationships with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the American Red Cross on issues surrounding victims of domestic and international terrorism.
- **International Parental Abductions.** The U.S. Departments of Justice and State have a cooperative agreement with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) to track kidnaped children taken across international borders and to help their parents obtain lawful custody under the Hague Convention's treaty on international child abductions. To assist in this effort, TIVU makes funding available to NCMEC to help parents with inadequate resources travel abroad to retrieve their children and return to the United States.
- **International Trafficking of Women and Children.** OVC is working in a number of areas to address the needs of victims who are trafficked across U.S. borders for exploitative purposes. OVC staff serve on several departmental task forces that are working on issues related to the international trafficking of women and children.

- **United Nations Crime Commission and Other International Bodies.** TIVU staff participate in the annual United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna, Austria. The United States cosponsored resolutions to foster implementation of the 1985 United Nations Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power. In addition, OVC took the lead in coordinating the development of the *United Nations Handbook on Justice for Victims* and the accompanying *United Nations Guide for Policy Makers* on implementing the principles set forth in the declaration in countries around the world.
- **Conference Activities.** TIVU sponsors and participates in numerous conferences to highlight the issues surrounding victims of terrorism and international crimes. Such activities have included
 - A symposium on **Journalism in the Face of Terrorism**, which sought to improve the accuracy and clarity of information transmitted to victims and the public after a terrorist attack. Symposium attendees included leading journalists and government officials.
 - A conference on **International Terrorism, Victims' Rights, and the Lockerbie Trial**, which assessed the international cooperation in prosecuting terrorism in the Pan Am Flight 103 Lockerbie criminal trial and in providing victims' rights and services.

International Visitors

TIVU provides technical assistance and briefings to visitors from around the world who are interested in victim assistance efforts in the United States.

OVC recently hosted internship programs for two attorneys, from Japan and Israel, who were studying victims' rights and services in the United States. The primary goal of these internships was to allow the interns to identify promising practices and model programs that could be replicated in their countries. OVC, through TIVU, will continue to host internship programs and conduct briefings for foreign visitors.

Terrorist Acts

OVC has supported victims and families of the following terrorist attacks:

- **Attack on America.** In response to the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, TIVU has played a key role in OVC's response to victims and their families in New York, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. As of the date of this publication, TIVU has been involved in the creation of the OVC Victim and Family Assistance Telephone Center which, among other things, houses a toll-free number for victims to call for various forms of assistance. TIVU has also participated in the development of a new DOJ/OVC Web site for victims which provides assistance and helpful information, including investigative updates, official messages, Web links, news releases, and publications. Additionally, TIVU is actively involved in coordinating with other federal and nongovernmental agencies in responding to victims and their families. TIVU will continue to coordinate services and assist those affected by these tragic events and future terrorist attacks.
- **The Bombing of Pan Am Flight 103—The Lockerbie Criminal Trial.** Pan Am Flight 103 exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, on December 21, 1988, killing 270 people from 21 nations. In recent years, OVC established a unique

partnership with the Scottish government to ensure that the Pan Am Flight 103/Lockerbie families received information and assistance. The trial against two Libyan defendants in a Scottish court in the Netherlands began in May 2000. With OVC assistance, family members were able to travel to the trial and/or watch its proceedings via closed-circuit television at various remote sites in the United States and the United Kingdom. In addition, OVC conducted pretrial and posttrial briefings in the United States and the United Kingdom. OVC set up an international toll-free telephone line that provided updated information regarding the trial and linked family members to available assistance. OVC provided a grant to the Syracuse University College of Law to create and maintain a secure Web site to provide victims' families with information about and analysis of the criminal trial. The Web site contained background information on the case, summaries of daily trial proceedings, legal analysis, information on victim services, and an interactive component to facilitate questions and answers for family members. OVC also contracted with Research Planning, Inc., to handle logistical arrangements for victim travel, prepare a trial information guide for families, and help OVC document and assess the various services provided to victims.

- **Khobar Towers Bombing.** Following the bombing of Khobar Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, on June 25, 1996, OVC ensured that the survivors of the 19 military service members killed in that attack were aware of compensation and assistance benefits. OVC, in conjunction with the FBI, the Department of Defense, and the U.S. Air Force, hosted two briefings for the surviving family members and established a toll-free hotline in the U.S.

Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia to provide information to the families and other victims about the case and the status of the alleged terrorists.

- **East Africa Embassy Bombings.** Following the simultaneous bombings of two U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, 1998, OVC transferred funds to the U.S. State Department to help with emergency needs of victims and their families. OVC funded and helped organize a 2-day briefing for victims and their families in Washington, D.C. OVC staff also helped troubleshoot problems victims were having coordinating benefits and assistance and used the OVC grantee and subgrantee networks in the states to locate assistance for victims in their communities or home state of residence. OVC provided technical assistance to and continues to fund a victim/witness position in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York to act as a point of contact for family members and victims to receive trial information. OVC also ensured mental health services for the victims attending the trial through an agreement with the New York University School of Medicine.
- **Bombing of the U.S.S. Cole.** OVC provided technical assistance and funding to the FBI and the U.S. Navy in responding to the victims and family members of the October 12, 2000, bombing of the U.S.S. Cole in the port of Aden, Yemen, which killed 17 sailors and injured 39 others. This support included developing a Web site and a briefing book, a toll-free telephone number, and victim-sensitive correspondence. OVC also provided financial assistance to cover expenses for a facility, transportation, lodging, and per diem for victims' families to attend a briefing in

Norfolk, Virginia, the U.S.S. Cole's home port.

- **Aviation Disasters.** OVC has provided ongoing support to Canada in its victim assistance efforts to prosecute those responsible for the June 23, 1985, bombing of Air India Flight 182, which left 329 dead, including 22 Americans. OVC also provided assistance and consultation regarding victims' issues to NTSB following the crash of Egypt Air Flight 990 off the coast of Nantucket Island, Massachusetts, on October 31, 1999, which killed 217 people.

OVC Resource Center Response to International Crime Victim Issues

The Office for Victims of Crime Resource Center (OVCRC) is a clearinghouse for victim-related information, including terrorism and international crime victim issues. OVCRC produces, collects, maintains, and disseminates information and resources for victim service providers and allied professionals. OVCRC recently expanded its international outreach by establishing a link to international resources on the National Criminal Justice Reference Service home page at www.ncjrs.org. In addition, OVCRC provides publications and resource materials for a number of international conferences related to victims of crime.

The following publications are available on OVC's Web site:

- *Coping After Terrorism: A Guide to Healing and Recovery*
- *International Crime Victim Compensation Program Directory*
- *Responding to Terrorism Victims: Oklahoma City and Beyond*

- *United Nations Handbook on Justice for Victims and United Nations Guide for Policy Makers*
- *Child Sexual Exploitation: Improving Investigations and Protecting Victims—A Blueprint for Action*
- “International Perspectives in Victim Services,” chapter 18, *New Directions from the Field: Victims’ Rights and Services for the 21st Century*

- “Special Topics—International Issues in Victim Assistance,” chapter 21, *National Victim Assistance Academy Text*

For more information about OVC’s Terrorism and International Victims Unit, please call 202-307-5983 or visit OVC’s Web site at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc.

The Office for Victims of Crime is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

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