



DEATH PENALTY FOR TERRORISM

14th World Day Against the Death Penalty

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Contrary to popular belief, victims of terrorism and their loved ones do not all demand the death penalty to compensate for the pain caused by an act of terrorism. Some believe, on the contrary, that executing a terrorist will bring no fair retribution and that the cycle of violence must be broken. This note was prepared by the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, with the help of the AfVT (French Association of Victims of Terrorism) and the International Federation of Associations of Victims of Terrorism.

Why some victims of terrorism are against the death penalty

► The refusal to join the cycle of violence by acting like the terrorists

“To kill terrorists is to fall into the vicious cycle of violence by acting as they do” **Elisa GUTOWSKI, victim of the hostage situation at the Hypercasher in France**

“Killing terrorists would create more hate than anything else. If they have children, it would create more orphans such as me.” **Anaëlle ABESCAT, victim of a terrorist attack in Saudi Arabia**

“Death is not the solution. Death cannot be an answer to death. There are solutions, but the death penalty is easier.” **Laura TREVISAN, victim of a terrorist attack in Nigeria**

► The necessity to serve justice first and foremost

“The thing that helped me the most is recognition, which was achieved by identifying the culprits, in particular, and which took over ten years” **Yohanna BRETTE, victim of the UTA DC10 terrorist attack**

“Even if the terrorists were found someday, I wouldn’t want them to be executed. The terrorists still haven’t been caught, so the main question for now is whether they will be caught. But I want the investigation and the trial to be carried out in compliance with international legal standards. Regarding justice, I’d like more support and counselling, which I got from organisations. However, there wasn’t enough follow-up regarding legal proceedings. I feel as if the French legal system is failing me, which is hard to take.”

Julien ALTOUNIAN, victim of a terrorist attack in Cairo

“The attack was never claimed by any group. I’d like to know who is responsible, but I can’t accept killing a terrorist.” **Khatchig GHOSN, victim of a terrorist attack in Lebanon**

► The death penalty is not revenge

“There is no revenge in executing the terrorist. If there were, the only way it could be achieved would be to execute him yourself. However, the execution is not carried out by the victims.” **Nethanel COHEN SOLAL, victim of a terrorist attack in Israel**

“I lost my uncle in the Hypercasher terrorist attack, so the terrorist is dead. However, I would have liked him to be alive to confront him.” **Elisa**

► **Death brings no comfort**

“I always thought I’d feel better once Kadhafi was dead. But when I found out, it gave me no solace. Deep down, nothing changed. The death penalty itself does not serve justice nor does it quench the desire for revenge.” **Yohanna**

“The terrorists who killed my father were sentenced to death in Saudi Arabia, but that brought me no comfort. The trial happened much later and my family wasn’t even made aware of it. We found out through the media... I just wanted to know how people could resort to doing such things” **Anaëlle**

► **Executing a terrorist is granting him the recognition he craves**

“The terrorist is given martyr status when he dies, and that is what he wants.” **Julien**

“As soon as the terrorist is subjected to torture, he becomes a victim, and the true victims are robbed of their status. This isn’t the case during a fair trial, where victims are put at the forefront.” **Nethanel**

« It’s important not to forget the victim. There is much talk about terrorism and terrorists, but not enough about the victims. There are many people affected beyond the victims.” **Khatchig**

► **The importance of values and preserving one’s humanity despite the pain**

“Being a victim of terrorism does not change who we are fundamentally, so if someone is already against the death penalty, that will not change.” **Nethanel**

“I’ve always been against the death penalty. I’ve never been tempted to say “they killed my father, they must die.” **Anaëlle**

What we, victims of terrorism, need first and foremost:

- Recognition and to reconnect with our humanity
- Truth and justice after fair investigation and trial
- Long-term legal and psychological support

Acknowledgements:

This note was compiled by the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (www.worldcoalition.org/fr) in partnership with the AfVT (French Association of Victims of Terrorism) for the World Day Against the Death Penalty taking place on 10 October, 2016. To find out more about the World Day: www.worldcoalition.org/fr/worldday and about the AfVT : www.AfVT.org



Member of the European Network of Victims of Terrorism
Member of RAN (Radicalisation Awareness Network) and
co-leader of RAN-VVT (Voice of Victims of Terrorism)
Member of the International Federation of Associations of
Victims of Terrorism – FIAVT

Through their words and their actions, victims of terrorist attacks fight for the abolition of terrorism, with respect for Human rights and international law.