

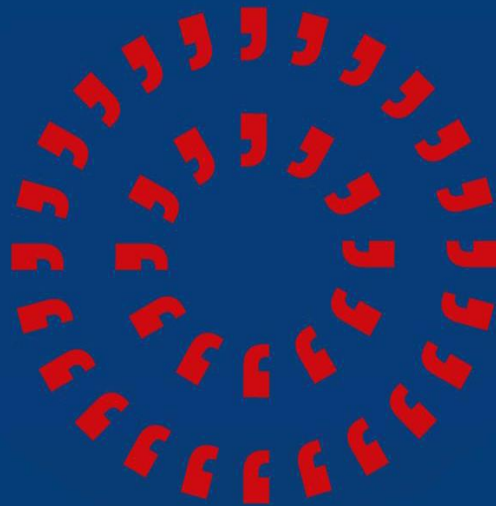


**Survivors**  
against terror



## Recognition and Memorialisation

*Proposing a national strategy for the commemoration of  
terrorist incidents and recognising the importance of  
remembrance in building long-term, societal resilience*



### Authors

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# Introduction

## Why is commemoration and recognition important?

What we remember matters. It reflects on us as a country. Whether it is the wearing of the Poppy in solidarity with our servicemen and women in the days approaching Armistice Sunday, or the efforts of organisations like the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust to ensure that we do not forget the awful atrocities that have claimed the lives of millions. At the personal level it might be the simple act of laying flowers at the final resting place of a beloved relative. The effort to ensure that we remember and recognise the events and people that have marked our lives defines us.

For people affected by terrorism – innocent civilians targeted entirely as proxies of the state – ensuring they are not forgotten, and that society does not forget what has happened to them and their families, can often be at the heart of their recovery. Commemoration and remembrance form a core, and often under-appreciated, aspect of survivor recovery.

Commemoration also forms part of our public memory, serving as a collective expression of togetherness and resilience in the face of a threat, in addition to raising awareness and educating future generations about the risks of terrorism. Where we do not effectively commemorate such incidents we risk falling victim to complacency, neglecting those affected and failing to recognise the threat that we continue to face from terrorism.

This report is based on the views and experiences of survivors, extensive research undertaken by one of those survivors - Travis Frain - and conversations with the Survivors Against Terror Memorialisation Working Group. As part of this we conducted a survey which 101 people affected by terror completed. The findings are shared in this report.

*“ I would like it to be a day of respectful remembrance, so we can all hold close our loved ones in a shared act of reflection and remembrance. I feel it should provide an opportunity to recognise the contributions they made to others including their families. Recognising the importance of the life they lived and contributions they made and legacies we hold dear, rather than mourning loss and it being a hugely sad occasion. ”*

Tunisia Attack, bereaved family member

## Who we are and what we do

Survivors Against Terror (SAT) was set up by people injured or bereaved by terrorism to tackle terrorism and the harm that it causes. Our objectives are three-fold:

1. Pushing for better support for survivors.
2. Advocating for policies that make future attacks less likely.
3. Helping the public play an active role in tackling terrorism.

We started our work in 2018 with a landmark study surveying nearly 300 survivors who had been affected by acts of terrorism both at home and overseas. The survey detailed the current gaps in support and their collective priorities and in turn provided us with the mandate for our work since, enabling us to develop a crucial “Survivors Charter”. The tenets of the Charter are:

1. Guaranteed proactive personal support
2. Guaranteed access to rapid psychological triage and services
3. Guaranteed immediate financial assistance
4. Guaranteed State Compensation Fund
5. Guaranteed legal support
- 6. Guaranteed Recognition**
- 7. Guaranteed Memorialisation**
8. Guaranteed comprehensive long-term support

In the aftermath of the Fishmongers’ Hall attack, during the general election campaign in late 2019, over 70 survivors of terrorism wrote an open letter called on a newly elected administration to commit to implementing a charter to guarantee the rights of survivors.

In response, on the 4th of December both the Conservative and Labour parties pledged to consult on the “Survivors’ Charter”<sup>1</sup>. In a press release issued on the 4th of December 2019 the Conservative party stated:

*“A Conservative Majority Government will ... consult on a Survivors’ Charter to ensure fast access to mental health support and compensation.”<sup>1</sup>*

Following the election, the then-Home Secretary Priti Patel announced that the Government would conduct an internal review into the state-provided support to victims of terrorism<sup>2</sup>, a review that would continue under five different Home Secretaries and four Prime Ministers.

**Though the review formally finished in February 2023, it remains unpublished and unimplemented as of writing this report.**

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<sup>1</sup> “Boris Johnson pledges new law to force venues to protect people from threat of terror attacks”, *Evening Standard*, via: <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/boris-johnson-pledges-new-law-to-force-venues-to-protect-people-from-threat-of-terror-attacks-a4303881.html>

<sup>2</sup> “Government signals new funding to support victims of terrorism”, *Security Matters*, available at: <https://securitymattersmagazine.com/government-signals-new-funding-to-support-victims-of-terrorism>

## **What was proposed in the “Survivors’ Charter”?**

### **Recognition**

Recognition of loss is important for everyone who has experienced loss. It is even more true when the loss is sudden or traumatic. Often that recognition may come from friends, family and communities. For survivors of terror attacks – who are targeted not because of who they are but as proxies for the state – state recognition is particularly important.

Other countries already do this. In France they have created a National Medal of Recognition for Victims of Terrorism and in Spain they have created a Royal Order of Civil Recognition for Victims of Terrorism; in the UK we propose an addition to the system of Queen’s honours that would recognise the sacrifice of those injured or bereaved.

This would mark an important change in the way in which we as a society view those affected. Following the guidelines established as good practice in France and Spain, in the first instance these honours should be awarded posthumously to those who have been killed in an act of terrorism, demonstrating to their families solidarity expressed by the British state. In the second instance, these honours should be awarded to eligible persons injured in the attack.

### **Memorialisation**

As set out above, commemoration and remembrance form a core, and often under-appreciated, aspect of survivor recovery. As part of this we recommend the creation of a National Day of Remembrance and Tribute to Survivors of Terrorism. This would mark an important change in the way in which we as a society view those affected. Marked by annual events the National Day would serve as a symbolic and long-lasting recognition of the fact that victims of terrorism are often targeted as emblematic of the British state, and not as individuals. As set out below, such a day is supported by 97% of terror attack survivors.

In addition, at present anniversaries provide a recurrent and repeated source of difficulty for many survivors. Too often the confusion over who is responsible for organising commemorations and memorials - whether national or local government, law enforcement, or elected officials - and the disparities that therefore emerge between attacks in different areas leads to further distress for survivors, and a situation where some attacks, and those affected, have failed to be commemorated. By consulting on the creation of a permanent physical monument or memorial in honour of all British victims of terrorism we can ensure that all victims of terrorism receive formal recognition, regardless of the scale, motive, or methodology behind the attack which they were involved in. Furthermore, it would act as a physical focal point of remembrance for memorial events, fulfilling a purpose not dissimilar to a cenotaph.

## **Why do we need a ‘National Day’ of Remembrance and Tribute to Survivors of Terrorism?**

In an IPSOS Mori survey of the British public in November 2023, eight in ten Britons felt it remained of importance to participate in activities of Remembrance for the servicemen and women who have given their lives in conflicts past and present<sup>3</sup>. As we move towards a new age of international instability, where civilians are increasingly targeted by state and non-state actors seeking to terrorise the general populace, it is important that we recognise and remember those people who have been targeted as a proxy for our country, our values, and our way of life.

Currently, a “National Day” in recognition/ remembrance/ tribute/ commemoration is already observed in one shape or form in each of the countries listed below, leaving the United Kingdom significantly behind the curve. We now have the unique opportunity to learn from what worked and did not work in the implementation of these days in other nations, ensuring that any such date observed in the UK is both effective, sensitive and respectful of all involved.

Examples of similar commemorative dates in relation to terrorism, as observed in other countries, include:

- European Day of Remembrance of Victims of Terrorism. Observed by the European Parliament and Commission. 11<sup>th</sup> March
- National Day of Tribute to Victims of Terrorism. Observed by the French Republic and the Kingdom of Spain. 11<sup>th</sup> March
- National Remembrance Day for Victims of Terrorism. Observed by the Federal Republic of Germany. 11<sup>th</sup> March
- September 11 National Day of Service and Remembrance. Observed by the United States. 11<sup>th</sup> Sept
- National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism. Observed by Canada. 23<sup>rd</sup> June
- International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism. Observed by the United Nations General Assembly. 21<sup>st</sup> August

*“ Combating terrorism encompasses everyone. Forgiveness is central to my faith, but civil justice is also important. Reminders by leaders of the importance of every life, the value of each person, grows as our world becomes more fractured and mean. ”*

Nairobi Attack Survivor

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<sup>3</sup> [Eight in ten say it is important to mark Remembrance Day but one in four Gen Z say it's not very important | Ipsos](#)

When handled in a sensitive, considered and appropriate manner, the act of commemoration can bring together a wide cross-section of society, with communities and individuals interacting with one another in a manner conducive to healing and understanding. Instead of focusing on the horrific circumstances which bind them together, people affected by terror are provided with a chance to connect with one another and provide mutual assistance and peer support.

*“ That we all stand together against hate.  
We as victims/survivors are strong together. ”*

Manchester Attack Survivor

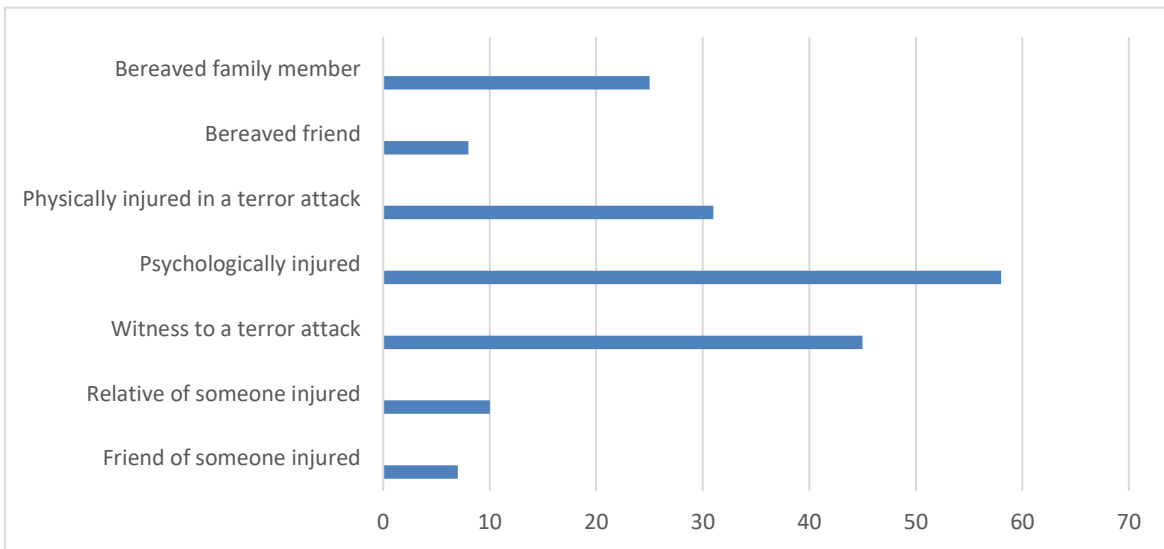
In addition to those directly affected by terrorism, a National Day of Service in Remembrance of Victims of Terrorism would also yield significant opportunities for us to highlight the important work being conducted by our Law Enforcement and Security Services and shine a light on the actions individual members of society can undertake to keep one another safe from violent extremism. This may manifest itself in public safety campaigns in the weeks approaching the 'National Day', similar to the British Transport Police's *See it. Say it. Sorted.* or Counter Terrorism Policing's *Action Counters Terrorism* communications campaigns. The testimonies of victims of terrorism could be used to help spread awareness of initiatives intended to prevent and counter violent extremism, and to explain to communities and education providers how they can spot the telltale warning signs that someone is being radicalised.

## Research Findings

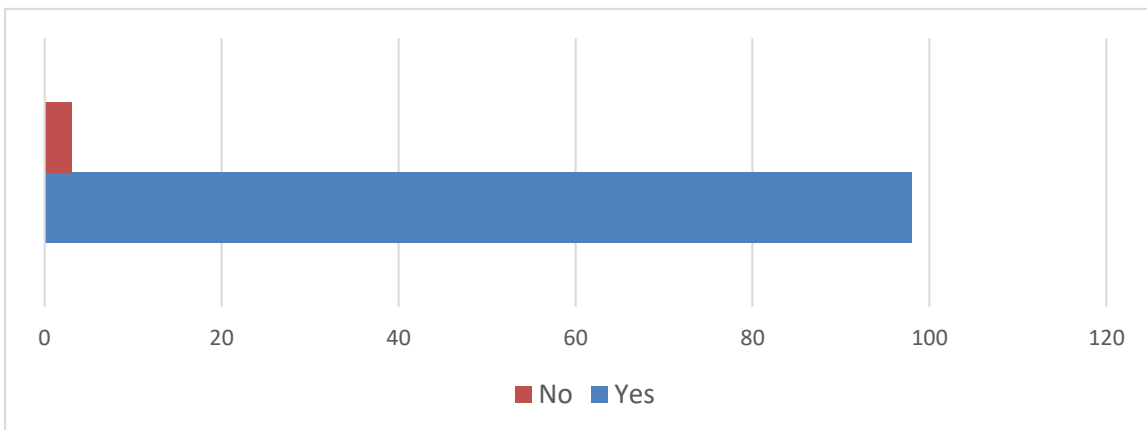
In addition to working closely with a group of survivors, speaking with senior policymakers, politicians, counterterrorism officers, and counter-extremism practitioners in preparation for this report we also conducted a survey of over 100 British people affected by terrorism. This builds upon a body of research already conducted in the development of our earlier comparative report and Survivors' Charter, published in March 2022.

**The results of the survey are presented here.**

### How were you affected by the attack?



### Would you like to see the UK observe a National Day of Remembrance for all victims of terrorism?

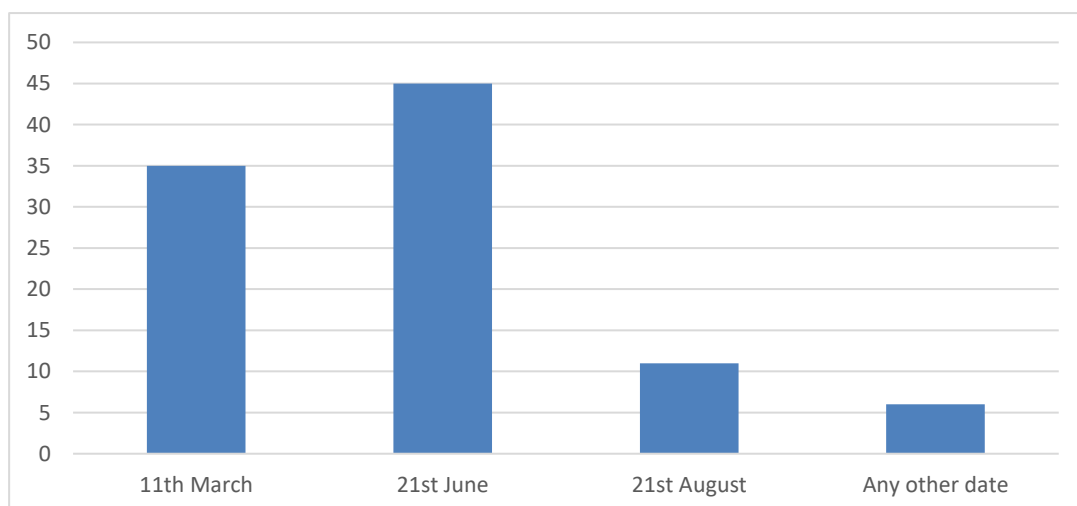


Of the 101 people surveyed, **97.1% of the British victims of terrorism supported the introduction of a 'National Day' in the United Kingdom.**

Next, we asked participants to identify a potentially suitable date for the National Day to be observed each year. We provided three possible options, identified through the research we had conducted, in addition to providing participants with an opportunity to suggest their own

date and provide the rationale for this. These dates were provided as follows:

- **11th March:** is the European Union's Remembrance Day for victims and survivors of terrorism. It is the anniversary of the Madrid Train Bombings, the largest terrorist attack in European history. The 11th March is also observed domestically by France, Spain, and Germany as their national days of remembrance, following the establishment of the EU-wide event.
- **21st June:** This day is not currently the anniversary of any terrorist attack. Its significance as the longest day of the year also makes it a fitting time to remember the experiences of many victims, often described as the *longest day of their lives*. As there are no terror attacks related to this day, it helps ensure that the national day does not favour any single event or group (or type) of victims. It observed as the 'Day of Reflection' in Northern Ireland.
- **21st August:** Observed by the United Nations as their International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism. It has been observed annually for six years and has been varyingly marked by events at the UN HQ in New York, online webinars, and communications by member states, and statements on social media.



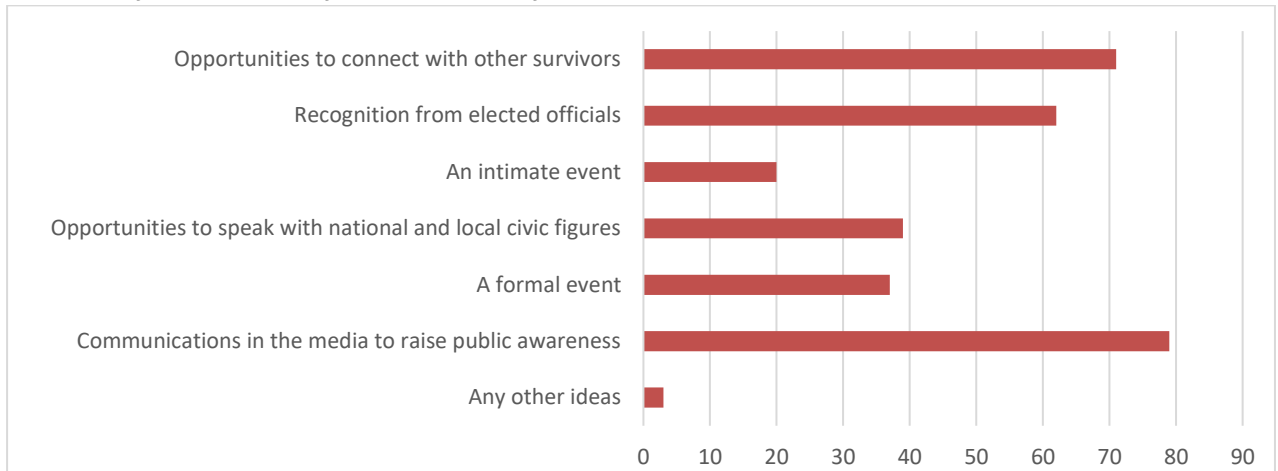
As evidenced by the breakdown above, **the 21<sup>st</sup> June arose as the favoured option amongst the victims of terrorism surveyed.**

With the rationale for the inception of a 'National Day' established, it is important to understand what such a date would look like in practice, and how we can ensure that the voices of victims, and their best interests remain at the heart of any such national commemoration. We have the benefit of learning from our international partners to understand what did and did not work, and how we can mitigate these issues should the UK choose to adopt and observe this date. During the course of this research we have heard numerous examples from victims in other countries, highlighting the need to ensure that the implementation of these events remains sensitive, respectful, and effective.

We asked our participants a number of questions to understand what a 'National Day' may look like in practice, to assist in the implementation of these plans.



## Practically, how would you like this day to unfold?



79 of the 101 people thought communications in the media to raise public awareness was important, followed by 71 people wanting an opportunity to connect with other survivors. 63 people wanted recognition from elected officials.

*“ I think it is an opportunity to call for efforts to support and intervene early where radicalisation occurs and ensure preparedness for further events such as those we witnessed. My concern would be that we recreate the trauma for victims if this is not done sensitively. ”*

Westminster Bridge Attack. Witness

When asked: **Are there any themes that you feel would be important to address in a ‘National Day’?**

The responses were resoundingly united in desiring themes around connectedness.

Unity  
Peace  
Remembrance and respect  
Education  
Improving support for victims  
Tolerance  
Interfaith relations

Further responses included:

Supporting people involved in other terrorist attacks

Remembrance and reconciliation

Remembering the children affected by terrorism

That we all stand together against hate. We as victims/survivors are strong together

I don't think it should have officials as it then becomes about them not the people who have been affected

Support for bereaved/survivors, well being, life after trauma, community engagement

Creation of a place or monument that signifies the losses and a place for remembrance

Peace and hope. A sense of belonging. Post traumatic growth. Togetherness. Connections.

Peace, living together, tolerance

Human unity, world peace, education

Unity and inclusion

Tolerance

Updated support options for those affected by terrorism. Sharing methods of connecting with other victims, raising awareness on social media.

When asked: **Do you think that there should be a permanent, physical or living memorial/monument to all victims of terrorism?** The responses were

- **78%** of people said **Yes**
- **5%** people said **No**
- **17%** were **Not sure**

Two people highlighted that there is already a memorial to victims of overseas terrorism at the National Arboretum. Survivors felt that there needed to be a cohesive and encompassing tribute to all people affected by terrorism as currently there are many tributes to individual attacks, and this can feel excluding to people, particularly when a larger-scale attack may overshadow many smaller-scale individual incidents; despite all of the victims involved requiring that same recognition and support.

**“ My preference would be a living memorial. Something that embodies the changes survivors go through over time and grows or evolves with them.**

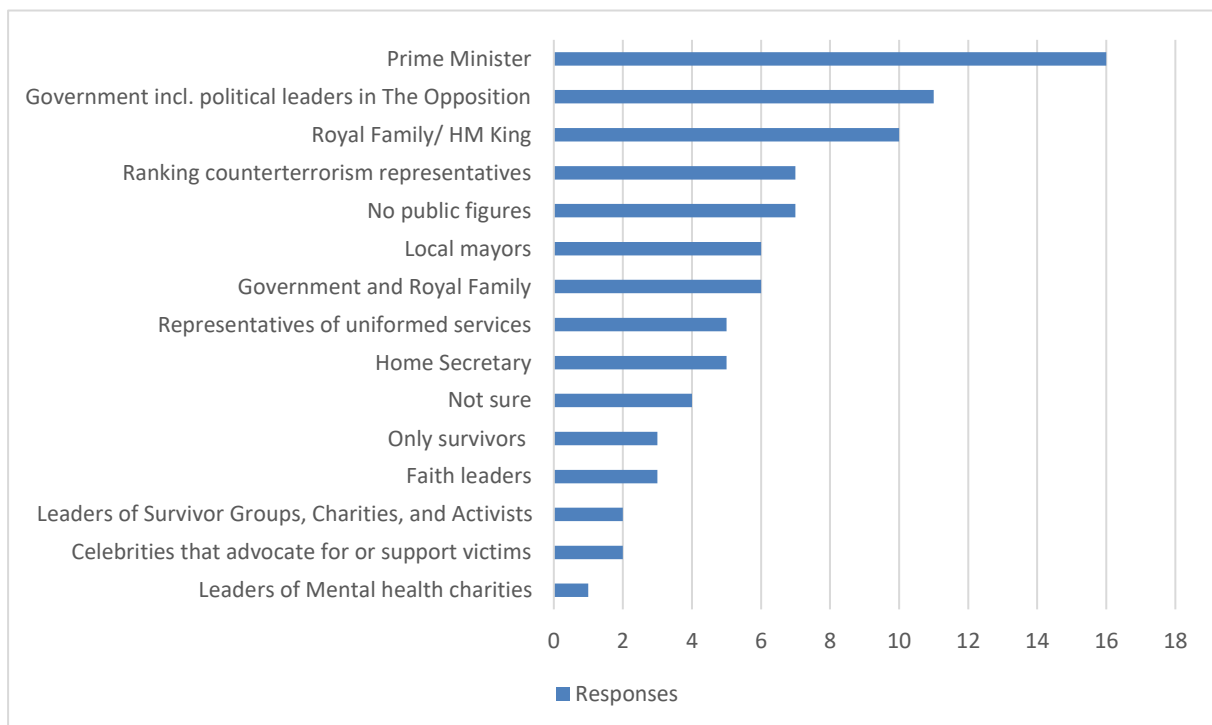
**If physical, could there be multiple sites? For example if a monument is chosen or a tree planted could there be several that are sited in different locations for accessibility across the UK.**

**Also if physical, could this be sensory and provide a calm or comforting space?**

**Bearing in mind the extent of psychological trauma experienced by so many victims and survivors, a space could be created that could benefit visitors in a real and perceptible sense.** ”

Injured in Manchester Arena Bombing

**Which public figures, if any, do you feel should participate in/be represented or be present at any such event?**

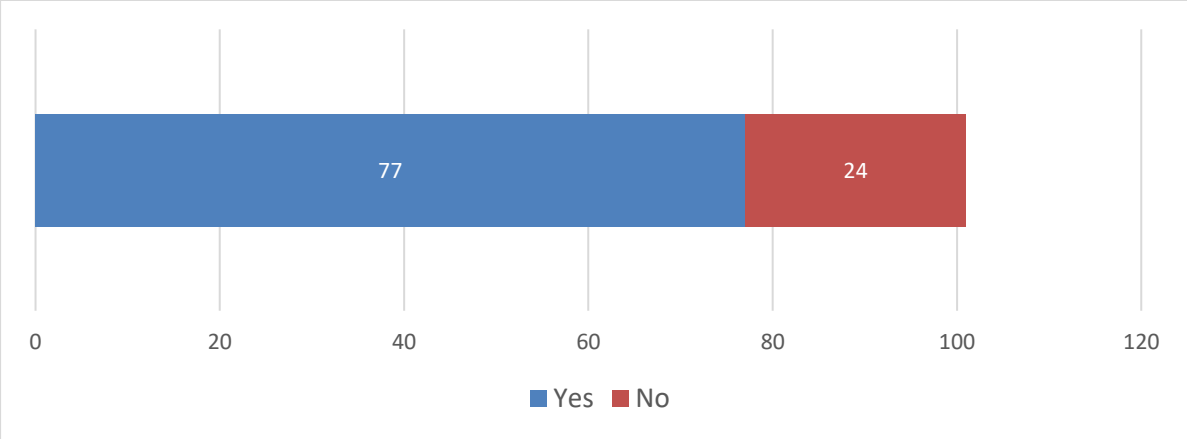


This question was the hardest to interpret as participants were able to select multiple options and express their own written comments in an open response box. Regardless, the data indicates a clear picture of which figures survivors and victims would like to be there specifically survivors felt people who represent should be in attendance – both politicians and members of the Royal Family.

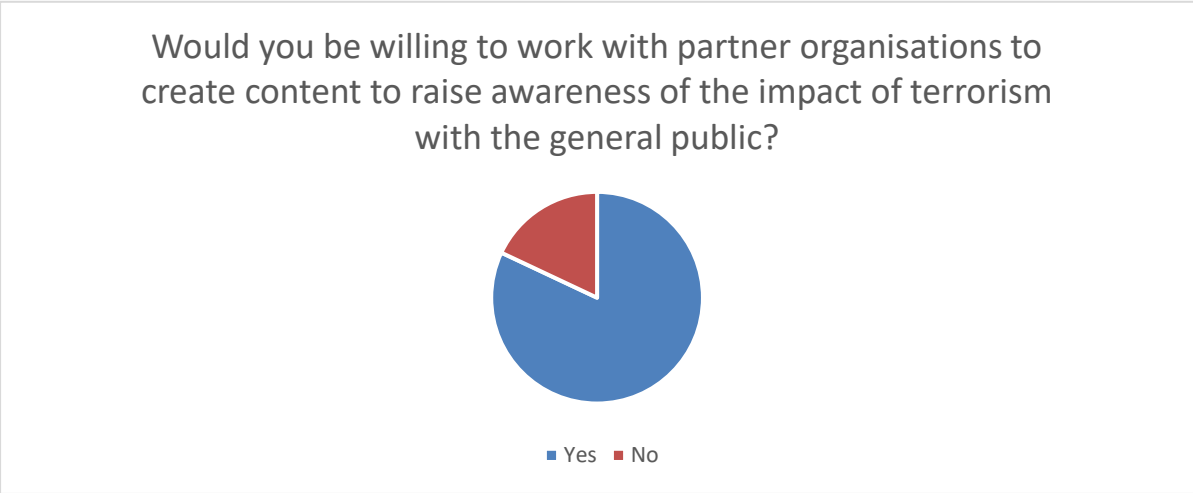
*“ I would like mostly people affected by terrorism to be there, those who have made activism careers around it or around any sort of activism, those who are in a position to educate people about terrorism prevention and radicalisation. Elected officials in government would also be great as they are law makers that can use the events as opportunities to learn about what laws need to be made or laws the people want made, in order to prevent further events or impact of events, and then advocate for those as an official in government. ”*

Injured in the Manchester Arena Bombing

**If we were to hold an in-person consultation on this topic, would you be interested in attending?**



The resounding majority of people were interested in attending an in-person consultation. This is a clear indication that survivors and victims are keen to shape and be part of discussions around how a ‘National Day’ will look.



We were keen to consult our focus group of victims on their thoughts around the use of a

National Day for the purposes of educating the public on counterterrorism. Of those surveyed, **82% of victims stated their willingness to work with partner organisations to support efforts to raise awareness of terrorism with the general public to mark the observing of a national day**, providing a valuable resource for counter-extremism practitioners working in this space if such a date is established.

## The Case for a National Day

### Supporting Victims and Fostering Societal Resilience Against Terrorism

Collective trauma, whether of natural (e.g. earthquake, flooding) or human-made causes (e.g. terrorism, plane-crash), have the capacity to affect an entire community and the nation at large. As seen after countless attacks in Britain and overseas, spontaneous acts of memorialisation often arise almost immediately following an incident – and these appear to be of great importance not just to the group of victims directly impacted, but also to the wider community and geographical area, in addition to the wider country. After the Manchester Arena attack, for example, floral tributes flooded St. Peter's Square and Victoria Station in Manchester, whilst millions of pounds in donations were raised by the millions of sympathetic people across the country, and indeed across the world. Those victims, rightly, felt the arms of the country wrap around them in solidarity with the horrific incident they'd experienced.

Lower profile attacks, those with smaller numbers of injured and killed, and attacks in quick succession to one another, may all lead to less public attention that, in some cases, may result in a memorial not even being established to mark them.

Commemoration, when organised and managed correctly, can have a clear and tangible positive impact on those most intimately affected<sup>4</sup>. On a personal level, it allows for a moment each year where victims can take stock of the progress they have made in their recovery, to recognise how much time has passed since their attack, and allows an opportunity to dedicate at least one day per year to rightly pay tribute to those who lost their lives. On a more practical level, commemorative events allow victims an opportunity to connect with each other and provide peer-to-peer support, check in with one another, and foster a supportive community over the years following an attack.

*“ When we come together, despite being affected by different attacks, we resonate with each other. The understanding and support between us all is phenomenal. If we had our day, a day for us to come together, we could gather strength and be heard. It would stop us feeling alone and know we all matter. Being heard is crucial, it gives us meaning and empowers us after facing such a nightmare experience. ”*

Bereaved, Brighton Bombing

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<sup>4</sup> [Commemoration Matters | Public Opinion Quarterly | Oxford Academic](#)

## Conclusion and Recommendations

In the preparation of this report and as part of our efforts to campaign for the establishment of this 'National Day', we have spoken to a number of politicians and policymakers across the political spectrum. We feel there is a real consensus building towards a coalition of support for this proposal.

There is a resoundingly positive response from people affected by terrorism to have a cohesive and inclusive 'National Day'. It is important to understand what such a date would look like in practice, and how we can ensure that the voices of victims, and their best interests, remain at the heart of any such national commemoration. As mentioned prior, we have the benefit of learning from our international partners to understand what did and did not work, and how we can mitigate these issues going forward should the UK choose to adopt and observe this date. During the course of our research we have heard numerous examples from victims in other countries, highlighting the need to ensure that the implementation of these events remains sensitive, respectful, and effective.

From our research, and many discussions with all members of the working group, it is clear that there is great appetite from people affected by terrorism to have proactive discussions with government around how this day will look. Responses strongly show that whilst it is important for there to be dignitaries, that the day itself should also hold space for people to connect, remember and unite. It is also clear from survivors that media reportage around the day is important too.

*“ Updated support options for those affected by terrorism. Sharing methods of connecting with other victims, raising awareness on social media ”*

**Therefore our first recommendation** is that government works to institute an annual **National Day of Remembrance and Tribute to Survivors of Terrorism**. From the evidence gathered and from the survey results above, it is clear that there is overwhelming support for a National Day of Remembrance. **Any such day should be created in direct cooperation and collaboration with victims and survivors**. A strong majority of people affected by terror would like to be involved in an in-person consultation, and have clear ideas on how the day should look. The proposal from our group of research participants favoured the 21<sup>st</sup> of June as the front runner for the day, a date that has been proposed following a long period of research to identify its suitability.

**Our second recommendation** is that survivors and victims should be consulted on the creation of a permanent physical monument or living memorial in honour of all British victims of terrorism. This way we can ensure that all victims of terrorism receive formal recognition, regardless of the scale, motive, or methodology behind the attack which they were involved in. Furthermore, it would act as a physical focal point of remembrance for memorial events, fulfilling a purpose not dissimilar to a cenotaph.

**Our third recommendation** is that we propose an addition to the system of Royal Honours that would recognise the sacrifice of those injured or bereaved in terror attacks. This could be comparable to the Elizabeth Cross and Elizabeth Emblem currently awarded in the UK, and even more closely to the French National Medal of Recognition for Victims of Terrorism and Spanish Royal Order of Civil Recognition for Victims of Terrorism. These honours should be awarded posthumously to those who have been killed in an act of terrorism, demonstrating to their families solidarity expressed by the British state, and awarded to eligible persons injured in the attack.

*“ I would like to see a living memorial that reflects the support identified by all survivors. Something that can stand the test of time and help those affected and future victims and survivors. It could be a hub for survivors that supports with virtual connections providing a one stop shop but that also can accommodate us for meetings. Something similar but smaller in size and cost to the Peace Foundation in Warrington but for UK and overseas victims that is based somewhere central to aid access. Perhaps Government and private funding could finance it. It should be a place where government services and agencies are contactable and provide drop ins, including the VTU which is staffed but again is providing little support for victims and survivors again. ”*

Bereaved, Brussels Attack

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## Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those individuals and organisations whose cooperation and assistance contributed to this research, and without which the producing of this report would not have been possible. We would also like to thank the following people, all of whom have contributed actively as members of the SAT Memorialisation Working Group:

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Stuart Murray    Gary Furlong    Michelle Hussain  
Ruth Leney    Sandra Loining Larsen    Stephen Noone  
Suzanne Atkins    Tina Tomlinson*

Finally, we pay tribute to the many other survivors of terrorism who kindly offered to share their story to be quoted in the Survivors' Charter and to the many dedicated members of the Survivors Against Terror network who offered their time and assistance to consult on the development of this document.

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