

ASOCIACIÓN DE VÍCTIMAS DEL TERRORISMO (AVT). SPAIN (TERRORISM VICTIMS ASSOCIATION OF SPAIN)

The Terrorism Victims Association (AVT) was founded in Spain back in 1981 as an assistance organization with a national scope aimed to help those hit by terrorist barbarity. AVT is the first association of its kind to be incorporated in the world. Let us not forget that Spain is the European country that has suffered more from terrorism. From 1968 until 2007, more than 1206 individuals have been murdered by terrorist groups in our country, 17.000 more have suffered injuries or consequences of suffering a terrorist attack and it is impossible to measure how many people have lived or actually lives a life of terror and menace.

The AVT task, through 26 years of hard work has been of paramount importance to achieve - through constant claim and demand- important political, social and judicial measures aimed to promote and foster the memory, dignity and justice owed to the victims of terrorism.

AVT aims at:

- To unite the families of victims of terrorism in order to, through public collective demand, claim for rights and justice.
- To assist both material and psychologically those victims in need, either direct victims or familiars of victims of terrorism in any of its means and manifestations.
- To cooperate and collaborate in those activities seeking the benefit of the victims of terrorism.
- Promote public acts, seminars, conferences and any other activities aimed to contribute the spirit of solidarity towards the victims.
- Impersonate as a party in court proceedings either civil or administrative caused by terrorist actions.

The Spanish Ministry of Interior honored the AVT with the Declaration of Public Utility in 2004; other entities, both public and private, have awarded the works of AVT with different honors and distinctions such as the Order of Constitutional Merit and the Gold Medal of Navarra, Galicia and Madrid among other.

During the last years and more so after the terrible consequences derived from the march 11, 2004 terrorist attack in Madrid, the population attended by AVT has considerably increased.

AVT is structured through territorial delegations coordinated from the Central Offices located in Madrid (Autonomous Region with the highest percentage of victims of the terrorism stain) in order to provide adequate attention according to the increasing needs of the collective of victims.

Central Offices are articulated departmentally as follows:

- **Psycho/Social:** This department maintains a direct relationship with affected families, and facilitates information, counsel and orientation. The work method involves the prevention of situations either conflictive or pathological, investigation and valuation of victim demands and direct intervention in situations of need, as well as the follow up on the above. Parallel to both, investigation and treatment, there are different Programs on heath and leisure, formative and cultural Programs as well as those of job search assistance, and psychological and psychopaedagogical orientation. The psycho-social department of AVT coordinates the accompaniment of the victims to the court hearings celebrated at the Audiencia Nacional, aimed to both, support the victims and stimulate volunteer action.
- **Economic/Finance:** This department raises funds in order to finance the creation and development of the different programs attending the needs of the victims of terrorism. The department is also in charge of the management of awarded subsidies coming from the administrations and entities, both national and international, public and private.
- **Legal/Administrative:** This department aims joining as acting party the prosecution of terrorist crime within the figure of Public Accuser in the Spanish legal system. The department also acts as counsel for the victims on the different administrative issues originated by a terrorist attack (Damage compensation, pensions, insurance payments, etc) so no victim of terrorism lacks assistance on the exercise of their rights.
- **Press:** This department is the vehicle of communication of AVT. It is in charge of the relationship with the media in order to let the public know of the position of the victims. In doing so, it aims the social sensitizing towards the terrorist phenomenon. AVT organizes and collaborates in every act done in the benefit of the victims of terrorism.