Help for victims of terrorism and their relatives
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Nobody expects to become the victim of a terrorist attack. Terrorism is not solely directed at individuals – it targets our society as a whole. This means that the state has a special responsibility, and offers practical, psychosocial and financial support as quickly as possible.

This information leaflet provides you with an overview of the existing support options, regardless of whether you are the victim or witness of an attack or whether you are the relative of a victim.

Don’t hesitate to get help!
You’re not alone!
1. Advice

You are not alone in this difficult situation. Various advice centres and contact points can help you – e.g. in choosing the right support schemes, making applications or finding psychosocial help.

The following persons or contact points offer support:

Throughout Germany:
Beauftragter der Bundesregierung für die Anliegen von Opfern und Hinterbliebenen von terroristischen Straftaten im Inland (Federal Government Commissioner for the Victims and Bereaved of Terrorist Offences Committed on National Territory)
Prof. Dr Edgar Franke
Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz (Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection)
Mohrenstraße 37, 10117 Berlin
E-mail: opferbeauftragter@bmjv.bund.de
Tel.: +49 (30) 18 580 - 8050

Berlin:
Zentrale Anlaufstelle für Betroffene von Terroranschlägen und Großschadensereignissen und deren Angehörige (Central Contact Point for victims of terrorist attacks and major emergencies and their relatives)
Salzburger Straße 21-25, 10825 Berlin
E-mail: zentrale.anlaufstelle@senjustva.berlin.de
Tel.: +49 (30) 9013 - 3150

Opferbeauftragter des Landes Berlin (Berlin State Commissioner for Victims):
Mr Roland Weber
Salzburger Straße 21-25, 10825 Berlin
E-mail: info@opferbeauftragter.berlin.de
Tel.: +49 (30) 9013 - 3454

Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania:
Beauftragter der Justiz für die Opferhilfe in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Justice Commissioner for Victim Support in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania)
Dr Jürgen Garbe
Haus der Justiz, August-Bebel-Straße 15, 18055 Rostock
www.mv-justiz.de/opferhilfe
E-mail: opferhilfe@mv-justiz.de
Tel.: +49 (381) 241 - 2000

Lower Saxony:
Stiftung Opferhilfe Niedersachsen
(Lower Saxony Victim Support Foundation)

The Lower Saxony Victim Support Foundation has 11 victim support offices throughout Lower Saxony.
The contact details for your nearest victim support office can be found at: www.opferhilfe.niedersachsen.de → Die Stiftung → Opferhilfebüros
E-mail: opferhilfe@justiz.niedersachsen.de
Tel.: +49 (441) 220 - 1111

North Rhine-Westphalia:
Die Beauftragte für den Opferschutz des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen
(North Rhine-Westphalia State Commissioner for Victim Protection)
Ms Elisabeth Auchter-Mainz
Reichenspergerplatz 1, 50670 Köln
E-mail: poststelle@opferschutzbeauftragte.nrw.de
Tel.: +49 (221) 399099 - 64

Rhineland-Palatinate:
Opferbeauftragter der Landesregierung Rheinland-Pfalz
(Victims’ Commissioner for the State Government of Rhineland-Palatinate)
Mr Detlef Placzek
Schießgartenstraße 6, 55116 Mainz
E-Mail: opferbeauftragter@lsjv.rlp.de
Tel.: +49 (6131) 967 - 100

Central Contact Point for Foreign Victims:
If you live abroad and have been the victim of a terrorist attack in Germany, you may be entitled to social compensation under the Victims Compensation Act (Opferentschädigungsgesetz) in Germany. To find out more, you can contact the specially created Central Contact Point below at the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs:

Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales
(Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs)
Zentrale Kontaktstelle - Referat SER 2
(Central Contact Point - Division SER 2)
Rochusstr. 1 , 53123 Bonn
E-mail: dub@bmas.bund.de
Tel.: +49 (228) 99527 - 0
www.bmas.de/opferentschaedigung

Victim support organisations:
Each federal state has numerous victim support organisations you can contact.

An overview of these organisations can be found on the Federal Justice Ministry’s website: www.bmjv.de/opferschutz (→ Opferhilfe und Opferschutz im Strafverfahren) or by going straight to the Online Database for Victims of Crime: www.odabs.org

As of: 22 November 2018
2. Psychosocial support

If you have been injured yourself, are close to a person who died or was injured in an attack, have witnessed an attack, or were on the scene as a first responder, it will take strength to come to terms with the incident.

People's reactions to such extremely stressful situations vary greatly and can also change over time. Support and understanding from family, friends and colleagues can be particularly helpful in coping with the high levels of stress after an attack.

But sometimes it may be advisable to seek professional help. There are a number of organisations all over Germany that can offer you support in the form of one-to-one counselling sessions or group therapy. These services are usually provided free of charge. Experienced counsellors and a wide range of psychosocial support services – also specifically aimed at victims of terrorist attacks – can be found at the victim support organisation WEISSER RING e.V. at: www.weisser-ring.de

In addition, churches throughout Germany offer emergency pastoral counselling sessions and support groups to help cope with loss and traumatic experiences. Aside from religious organisations, assistance is also provided by regional counselling centres and crisis support services in your local community or town, as well as by various bereavement and self-help groups. The association Bundesverband Trauerbegleitung e. V. can help you choose the right kind of support: www.bv-trauerbegleitung.de
E-mail: info@bv-trauerbegleitung.de

Help is also available from out-patient trauma centres which, as well as offering immediate psychological care, can also assist you in getting further psychological and psychotherapeutic support. These out-patient trauma centres are provided by the federal states under the Victims Compensation Act. The services they offer are free of charge.

An overview of the out-patient trauma centres in the respective federal states can be found at: www.bmjv.de/opferbeauftragter

Specific information and behavioural recommendations for adults, children and young people on how to cope with stressful events can be found in multilingual leaflets available on the website www.bbk.bund.de/NOAH. There you will also find an emergency information sheet containing advice for parents on how to talk about terrorist acts with their children.
3. Financial support

Various types of financial support are available. The following section provides an initial overview of possible benefits you may be able to claim.

a) Hardship compensation

If you have been physically or mentally injured by a terrorist act, or if you have lost a close relative, you may be entitled to financial assistance created specifically for victims of terrorist violence, known as hardship compensation. This hardship compensation can only be granted upon request, which means you need to apply for it.

Contact points, application forms and further information can be found on the Federal Office of Justice’s website at: www.bundesjustizamt.de → Bürgerdienste → Härteleistungen/Opferhilfe

Bundesamt für Justiz
(Federal Office of Justice)
Referat III 2 – Opferhilfe –
(Division III 2 – Victim Support –)
53094 Bonn
Tel.: +49 (228) 99 410 - 5288
Fax: +49 (228) 99 410 - 5591
E-mail: opferhilfe@bfj.bund.de

b) Social benefits under the Victims Compensation Act

The Victims Compensation Act grants victims of violent crime – and thus also victims of terrorism – a wide range of social benefits, such as:

- provision of medical treatment and health care
- pensions
- survivors’ benefits for widows and widowers, registered same-sex partners, orphans and – in exceptional cases – parents of the victim
- funeral allowance and bereavement payments

Foreign tourists who are not EU citizens may have limited benefits.

Claims submitted under the Victims Compensation Act are reviewed by the respective pension offices of the federal states. In order for benefits to be approved, the application must be submitted within one year of the attack taking place. An overview of the pension offices in the respective federal states is available on the website of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs: www.bmas.de (→ soziale Sicherung → soziale Entschädigung → Opferentschädigungsrecht → Landesversorgungsbehörden)
c) Compensation fund for claims arising from motor vehicle accidents
(Verkehrspofherhilfe e. V.)

If a terrorist attack was carried out using a motor vehicle, you may be eligible for
compensation under the Compulsory Insurance Act (Pflichtversicherungsgesetz). In such
cases, you should file your claims with Verkehrspofherhilfe e. V. (VOH).
The association Verkehrspofherhilfe is an institution of German motor liability insurers. The
VOH provides compensation on the basis of compensation law, and compensates direct
victims and their surviving relatives for personal injuries or property damage they have
suffered.

Verkehrspofherhilfe e.V.
Wilhelmsstraβe 43 / 43 G, 10117 Berlin
E-mail: voh@verkehrspofherhilfe.de
Tel.: +49 (30) 2020 - 5858
Fax: +49 (30) 2020 - 5722

d) Benefits under the statutory accident insurance scheme
(Accident insurance funds (Unfallkassen) and employers’ liability insurance associations
(Berufsgenossenschaften))

If you were carrying out your professional activity or trying to help others after a terrorist
attack and were injured in the process, you may be entitled to benefits under the statutory
accident insurance scheme. This could include coverage of treatment costs and costs of
medical rehabilitation, as well as payment of a pension.

The statutory accident insurance scheme covers people who provide help (first aiders and
emergency helpers), paramedics, firefighters as well as certain volunteer workers.
Responsibility for providing cover lies with the accident insurance fund of the region
where the attack took place. If kindergarten children, school pupils or students have
become victims of a terrorist attack during an educational visit, this responsibility lies with
the accident insurance fund of the region where the school or higher education institute is
situated. People who were working at the site of the attack or were on their way to work
should contact their respective employers’ liability insurance association.
An overview of the (fire service) accident insurance funds and employers’ liability
insurance associations can be found on the website of the association Deutsche
Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung (DGUV) at: www.dguv.de/de/bg-uk-lv/index.jsp

To find out more about possible benefits and your respective accident insurance agency,
you can call the DGUV’s helpline. Answers to your questions can be obtained by calling
the free number +49 (800) 60 50 40 4. If you are unable to call this 0800 number, the
service centre will be happy to call you back. In order for them to return your call, please
send an email to: info@dguv.de with your telephone number and the best time to reach
you.
Help in choosing the right support schemes and in submitting applications can be obtained from the persons and contact points referred to at the beginning of this information leaflet (under “1. Advice”).