

Closing remarks  
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Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on  
Human Rights and the Fight against Terrorism  
Vienna, 14-15 July 2005



Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come to the end of a couple of very full days.

The UK has demonstrated over the past few days that resolve in the fight against terrorism best translates into smart and efficient operations by investigators, forensic and other experts.

Where resolve translates into the application of crude and brute force, it unfortunately risks breeding more terrorism, rather than fighting or preventing it.

That is also why the question on how the global fight against terrorism is being conducted by states is of collective concern. If one state abuses its authority to crack down on legitimate opposition, to stifle freedom of expression, freedom of religion and freedom of association, it affects all of us, around the globe.

It is not just that terrorists and explosives travel around the world and cross many borders it is also that ideas – unfortunately including the most destructive ones – flow freely and easily.

As the events in London last week and the revelations on the perpetrators have frighteningly revealed, metaphors of “us” and “them” do not really fit to the complex situation we actually face.

This regards also the debate about victims of terrorism. In the final analysis, we are all victims. The victims of the London attacks all had one thing in common: they were just random people, like any of us, who were targeted precisely for that reason. When we therefore also include, in our discussions in the OSCE, the perspective of victims of terrorism, we do this not for some remote abstract group disconnected from societies, we are talking, at least potentially, about our own personal security.

The human rights challenges involved – many of which we have discussed here over the past two days - are only a reminder of how complicated the challenge is. What is not needed is “rallying around the flag”; and it will take more than “resolve” to adequately address that challenge. What is needed is effective and intelligent international cooperation including a wide range of professionals and agencies. This is especially true for the cooperation between governments and civil societies, as the last session highlighted.

We must reinforce the common goals of those who point to the importance of upholding human rights, and those who want to pursue the fight against terrorism and the pursuit of terrorists with the fervor it deserves. Many who have spoken over the past days have recalled the importance of ensuring that the basic tenets of our free societies – democracy, human rights and the rule of law – must not be sacrificed in the fight against terrorism, as that would, as it were, play into the hands of the very terrorists we fight.

Right. But how do we do that realistically in practice? That is a question to which this meeting has started to provide answers. It will require joint efforts, and clear thinking, to move ahead on this challenge. I really hope that this meeting – much more topical these days than any of us could have wished it be – contributed to developing what the OSCE can do concretely in this regard.

I therefore encourage participating States to endorse and implement the recommendations that have come out of the three working sessions. These recommendations are the results of constructive discussions among OSCE delegations, expert government representatives and civil society.

I also encourage a good preparation for following up concretely on these recommendations at the HDIM in September in Warsaw. ODIHR will be ready to strengthen our capacity to support our participating States and civil society in their activities. Finally, I would like to thank the ODIHR staff, especially the human rights department, who have worked so hard to make this meeting the success that it has been.

I am grateful that Terry Davis was able to be with us at the beginning of the meeting. It demonstrates that relevant international organizations complement each other's work and work jointly to address these challenges.

In the end, it is the wisdom and strength of democratic governments around the world which will determine whether what we are trying to preserve will prevail.