

New Directions from the Field:

Victims' Rights and Services for the 21st Century

Recommendations for International Victim Assistance

The recommendations below, which appear in the May 1998 *New Directions* Report, have been reformatted for replication and distribution.

The United States is visited by millions of foreign nationals each year, and citizens of the United States travel and live in virtually every part of the world. Yet there is no where in the world that is immune from crime and victimization. According to recent international crime surveys, it is estimated that no more than 10 percent of crime victims worldwide receive assistance from a specialized victim service agency. Crime and victimization have become transnational, and countries must look beyond their national boundaries to share information, technology, and resources to assist victims. To address this critical need, the following recommendations to establish or enhance international victim services are set forth by the field:

1. The United States should continue to play a leadership role in the area of international victim assistance.
2. International standards of victim assistance and victim rights should be established, including standards for criminal justice and allied professionals who work with crime victims.
3. An international network of information, dissemination, training, and technical assistance on victim rights and assistance should be established.
4. Cross-cultural and multinational research on victimization, violence, and victim assistance should be promoted.
5. International reciprocity in the provision of victim compensation, restitution, and other assistance in cases involving foreign nationals should be promoted.
6. Standards and procedures should be developed to address criminal cases involving foreign crime victims.
7. Communities with large numbers of tourists should establish special programs to assist international tourists who are victims of crime.
8. An international victim care corps under the auspices of the United Nations or an alternative body should be established.
9. The Federal Government should develop a coordinated plan of action to respond to the needs of U.S. citizens who are victimized abroad. The State and Justice Departments should examine whether an ombudsman is needed to ensure effective information and services for these victims.
10. The Federal Government should create a support group for victims of terrorism abroad.
11. The Federal Government should make every effort to fully implement the Federal Protection for Battered Immigrant Women and Child provision of the Violence Against Women Act, including mandatory training for all Immigration and Naturalization Service and asylum officers and others who work with immigrant populations.