



Presentation: Supports and Experiences of Victims of Crime AdVIC – Advocates for Victims of Homicide

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

My name is Kamila, and I am here on behalf of AdVIC – Advocates for Victims of Homicide.

We are a organisation supporting individuals and families who have lost a loved one to homicide. Our work is grounded in frontline experience- working with families in the immediate aftermath of homicide and often for many years afterwards.

Today, I would like to make three brief points:

- The reality for families
- The gaps in the current system
- And the changes we believe are needed.

1. The Reality for Victims of Homicide

Families affected by homicide experience one of the most severe forms of trauma and bereavement. The impact is shaped not only by the loss itself, but by the sudden and violent circumstances of the death, media attention, and prolonged engagement with criminal justice processes.

In our experience, the effects are deep, complex and long-lasting. Many people experience trauma, anxiety, depression, prolonged grief, and significant disruption to family life, work, education, and relationships. Children and young people can be particularly affected.

Yet access to long-term, trauma-informed counselling and psychosocial support remains limited. Support is often short-term, inconsistent, or unavailable when it is most needed.

Families must also navigate a complex system involving An Garda Síochána, the courts, compensation processes, and support services- often without clear guidance or a single point of contact. At a time of extreme distress, families are effectively left to coordinate their own support.

We consistently see:

- A lack of coordination between services
- Inconsistent communication at different stages of the process
- Financial Strain
- Significant stress caused by navigating complex systems alone

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme is another source of stress. Families frequently experience the process as slow, complex, and impersonal. Delays and procedural barriers can add further strain during already devastating time.

2. From our work, three system gaps are clear:

First, there is no single body with overall responsibility for the victim experience.

Second, support is inconsistent depending on location and service provider.

Third, services are fragmented rather than coordinated.

3. Based on these experiences, we would ask the Committee to consider two key actions:

First, establish an independent Victims' Commissioner to provide oversight, accountability, and a clear national voice for victims.

Second, significantly improved supports for families bereaved by homicide, including access to long-term counselling, better coordination between agencies, a clear pathway for families, and reform of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme.

Families affected by homicide cannot be expected to navigate trauma and complex systems alone. With the right structures and supports, we can provide a more effective and humane response.

Thank you,