

From one victim to another: AfVT's meetings with victims to prepare a trial

The AfVT is an association making by victims of terrorism to the victims of terrorism. Its main goal is to give psychological and judiciary advices to victim of terrorism. But, one of its main goal is also to share experiences directly with victims. That's why the association organized few meetings with victims. But, the AfVT wanted to go further in this way. Consequently, the AfVT created a project from one victim to another.

I. What is a meeting from one victim to another?

The idea of this project is victims who experienced a trial can be share it with victims who are going to.

The victims who experienced a trial, called by the association "big witnesses", answered to all questions asked by victims and share their experience of trial in order to prepare them to the trial. For example, the big witness can share, how it feels to be a civil party, to testify in front of everyone or to hear people talking about your relatives or yourself.

II. The born of the project

With the trial of the January 2015 terrorist attacks, the AfVT wanted to institutionalize meetings to prepare victims of terrorism to a trial. The AfVT didn't want to create meetings where a lesson was taught as in school but wanted real exchange where victims who experienced of a trial, share it with victims who are going to.

Because a lot of victims hurt by the terrorism attack in January 2015, and this audience was so mediatic, the AfVT thought it was necessary to explain to victims of terrorism how the justice works and prepare them to testify.

III. Meetings: a place of free speech for the victim

We wanted to give our members a time of free speech about all the questions and they could have that a lawyer wouldn't be able to answers as : "*had you a psychological assistance during the audience*"? Or "*how react to mediatic pression daily*"? Or again, "*May I say every what i want during my testify*"? Or, "*is it important to heard the defense plead*"?

If you would like to hear Michel Catalano, one of our witness talk about the meetings please listen to this interview: <https://www.europe1.fr/emissions/linterview-de-thomas-lequertier/michel-catalano-imprimeur-membre-de-lassociation-afvt-association-francaise-des-victimes-du-terrorisme-4065067>

IV. Benefits of these exchanges

These exchanges are very important to victims but also for our big witnesses.

For victims going to a trial. The main benefit is a better preparation to all aspects of audience. But another benefit of these meetings is to create a special bound with the other participants. With these meetings, the victim doesn't feel alone anymore in the courtroom but sees familiar faces when she enters and can have a break with them.

For our big witness who experienced of trial. It's another manner to help victims and it's assuredly a step to the resilience way.

V. The continue of the project

We decided to continue this project for the November 13 attacks. Even if the sanitary crisis imposes a social distance, our association decided to continue these meetings from victim to victim online.

If the intention of these meeting is to prepare victim before the audience, our association decided to continue these meetings after the beginning of the audience and after the verdict in order to debrief it.

The municipality of Paris joined to AfVT's project and offered, especially during the trial of 13 November, a room in city hall of Paris, where the AfVT can organized its meetings from victim to victim for victims of 13th November 2015.