



Secretary-General

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LATTER-DAY TRAGEDIES SHOW ‘POISON OF GENOCIDE’ STILL FLOWS, SAYS SECRETARY-GENERAL

IN MESSAGE FOR INTERNATIONAL DAY TO COMMEMORATE HOLOCAUST VICTIMS

Following is the text of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s video message for the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, observed today:

Mr. President of the General Assembly, Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the United Nations.

I especially thank filmmaker Steven Spielberg for attending this observance. His ShoahInstitute for Visual History and Education has done landmark work in preserving survivor testimony. I would also like to recognize Mrs. Rena Finder, a Holocaust survivor whose name was on Oskar Schindler’s famous list.

Every year, on the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp, we gather in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. We recall the suffering of millions of innocent people and highlight the perils of anti-Semitism and hatred of any kind. This year, we focus on journeys through the Holocaust, and I recall a recent journey of my own.

Last November, I walked through the infamous “*arbeit macht frei*” gate at Auschwitz-Birkenau. I will never forget my visit. I saw the horrific remnants of the machinery of genocide, as well as moving images of European Jewish life in the 1930s — weddings, family meals, rituals, simple daily life — all extinguished through systematic murder, unique in human history. I saw the barracks where Jews, Roma, Sinti, homosexuals, dissidents, prisoners of war and persons with disabilities spent their final days in the most brutal conditions.

The United Nations was founded to prevent any such horror from happening again. Yet, tragedies from Cambodia to Rwanda to Srebrenica show that the poison of genocide still flows. We must be ever vigilant against bigotry, extremist ideologies, communal tensions and discrimination against minorities. And we must teach our children well.

Standing near the crematorium at Auschwitz, I felt deeply saddened by all that had happened within. But, I was also inspired by all those who liberated the death camps for all humanity.

Let us join forces today on a shared journey to a world of equality and dignity for all.

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