

United States Mission to
the United Nations

Remarks at the United Nations Holocaust Memorial Ceremony

Ambassador Cherith Norman Chalet
Acting Deputy Permanent Representative
U.S. Mission to the United Nations
New York, New York
January 27, 2020

AS DELIVERED

Mr. Secretary General, President of the General Assembly, Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: It is a privilege to be here with you today as we offer our reflections and prayers, honoring the victims of the Holocaust and observing that 75 years have now passed since the horrors of Auschwitz. We especially welcome the Holocaust survivors here today. On a day like today – a day that rightly calls for education and remembrance of what the Jewish people suffered during the Second World War – we are reminded that the phrase “never again” has not ceased to carry urgent meaning. For while we remember the liberation of Nazi Germany’s deadliest extermination camp, we must also acknowledge that in too many places since, too many groups of people have suffered from targeted violence and oppression, and still suffer from them today.

In the blur of activities that consume the time of the United Nations and the work of individual governments, we rarely stop to reflect on what “never again” demands from us. But it is essential that we do so. Of course, “never again” demands that we take seriously our responsibility to remember and tell the story of the Holocaust: how it is that human beings could countenance such shocking inhumanity; the peoples whose lives were destroyed or unalterably changed as a result; and why we cannot allow anyone to distort or deny the truth of what occurred. In saying “never again,” we affirm our commitment to preserving the historical record, and to honoring the victims of the Holocaust. What it also means is that we must be vigilant in combatting the alarming rise in antisemitism that we see around the world, and that we must be persistent and intentional about informing younger generations of what came before. This task is especially urgent, as young people today are increasingly unaware of what the Holocaust was and the antisemitism in which it was rooted.

As we know, the Nazi regime did not limit its campaign of terror to Jewish men, women, and children. The disabled and infirm, Slavs, Roma, and other ethnic and minority groups were subjected to fates. And in truth, when we look around the world, we have since seen many groups of vulnerable

people suffer unthinkable violence and oppression, from the victims of Stalin, Pol Pot, and Mao, to the genocide against the Tutsis and the ethnic cleansing of the Bosnian Muslims. Even today, we see minority groups singled out by their governments for human rights abuses.

To combat these abuses – whether they emerge from antisemitism or some other disease of the human heart – collective remembrance and collective action are required. If we fail to remember to the depravities of Auschwitz, of Dachau, and of Buchenwald; if we do not teach our children about the world's inaction as a trickle of violence became a flood; if we cease to identify the ways in which the poison of antisemitism and dehumanization of "the other" continues to harm members of the human family; then we will forget what must be done to fight for those who are marginalized in the world today.

For our part, the United States is resolute in its commitment to speak out against antisemitism, fight for the dignity of all people, and work alongside the nations of the world such so that "never again" is not merely a call to action, but the outcome of our decision to act on behalf of the weak and the vulnerable. May we never forget the victims of the Holocaust and all other victims of Nazi persecution, whom we honor and remember today, and may their memories ever be a blessing. Thank you.

###

This is the official website of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

