



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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Statement on Commemoration of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day

As for delivery by the Delegation of Ukraine
to the 1129th meeting of the Permanent Council,
26 January 2017

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of Ukraine joins previous speakers in warmly welcoming Ambassador Mihnea Constantinescu, Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his important presentation.

The Holocaust is a horrible chapter in the human history. The memory of this horrible and inhumane tragedy resonates deeply in the Ukrainian society as 1.5 million Ukrainian Jews fell victims to the Holocaust. 60% of Ukraine's Jewish population perished.

Every year, like many other countries, Ukraine commemorates on January 27 an International Holocaust Remembrance Day, established by the UN General Assembly Resolution 60/7 adopted on November 1, 2005.

Last September Ukraine commemorated 75 years since the Babi Yar tragedy. The remembrance events were held at the national and local levels in close co-operation with the Jewish organizations and with broad involvement of the representatives of international community, civil society and academia.

The President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko emphasized at the commemoration event the particular significance "for the entire humanity to remember the roots and bloody facts of the Holocaust, for this remembrance to be a warning for modern and future generations about the perils of hatred, bigotry, racism and intolerance".

In Ukraine preservation of this memory will be served by the initiative to establish the First Memorial Center of Holocaust Victims "Babi Yar". The Memorial will be erected in Kyiv on the site of mass extermination of Jews, Ukrainians, Roma and members of other nationalities in 1941-1943.

This memorial will be a significant and symbolic addition to many other Holocaust remembrance monuments built throughout Ukraine - from Kyiv to illegally occupied by Russia Sevastopol in Crimea, from Donetsk to Lviv. Many of them were opened in the last two years (Berehove, Bilky, Uzhhorod in Zakarpattia oblast, Rava Ruska in Lviv oblast, Kysylyn, Ostrozhets, Prohid, Bakhiv in Volyn oblast, Balta, Odesa, Tarutino in Odesa oblast and many others).

Distinguished colleagues,

The International Holocaust Remembrance Day is a good opportunity once again to reaffirm our commitment to human rights. It is of paramount importance to ensure that all people may enjoy equally and without discrimination the human rights and fundamental freedoms to which we all have committed to.

Ukraine firmly condemns any attempts to deny the Holocaust, war crimes and crimes against humanity as well as manifestations of intolerance, incitement of hatred, harassment or violence against persons or communities, wherever they occur and regardless of which groups they target.

The Holocaust tragedy is also a powerful global reminder about the danger of war and the value of peace.

Today's debate in the Permanent Council takes place at a challenging time, when Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea and on-going aggression in Donbas amply demonstrate that blatant breach of international law by one country inflicts grave damage to democratic stability, human rights and peace in the country under attack and in the entire Europe. Just as before in the past, the most glaring violation of human dignity, cases of persecution and discrimination take place in the situations of occupation.

Enforced disappearances and killings of Crimean Tatars, labelling different ethnic representative bodies as extremist, attacks on and expulsion of priests, attempts to erase the ethnic and national identity of large groups of the population are symptomatic of the extent of systematic pressure and repressions in the occupied Crimea.

We cannot and must not close our eyes to the plight of the people under illegal Russian occupation. Ambassador Constantinescu cited today Elie Wiesel, the survivor of Nazi concentration camps and a prominent intellectual who sadly passed away last year. Let me also highlight his thoughtful words expressed when accepting the Nobel Peace Prize: "We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never tormented".

It remains imperative to seek that Russia restores its respect to the OSCE principles and commitments which will entail restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Chairman,

Ahead of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day it is important to remind ourselves of our common duty to ensure that the lessons and memory of the past are never forgotten and that our collective efforts in fighting anti-Semitism and any form of violence, intolerance or hatred ultimately succeed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.