High Commissioner Statement on International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust

January 27, 2016

Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16989&LangID=E

The Holocaust will forever remain a terrible scar on the human conscience. Its hideous reality of planned and deliberate mass murder must lead us to deep reflection on the roots and spread of such violence.

Discrimination and hatred swelled, and became enflamed. Hate speech incited violence. Groups of women, men and children – Jews, Roma, Slavs, disabled people, political dissidents and others – were singled out as enemies, and deemed somehow less than human. They were  humiliated, persecuted, attacked. And then the transportations began, with large numbers of people openly transported to concentration camps and killing centres.

This sickening process of escalating prejudice was resisted by many brave individuals. But at every stage of this massive crime against humanity, millions of others  assisted, supported, or shied away from protesting the steps that led to genocide.

Today, as we commemorate the victims of the Holocaust, I hope that all of us can reflect on the need to continue to combat racism and religious or ethnic intolerance in every form, and with all our might. This is our solemn duty to the memory of the victims: to demonstrate civic courage, and responsible governance. We must prevent future acts of genocide by meeting the challenge that humanity still faces today – the task of learning to live together, as equals, in dignity, and with respect.