

The New Holocaust History Museum, Yad Vashem
Jerusalem, 16 March 2005
Mr Jan Petersen, Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs

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President Katsav, Prime Minister Sharon, Excellencies,

We are paying tribute today to the millions who perished in the
Nazi concentration and extermination camps.

We are keeping them in our thoughts and expressing our
solidarity with the survivors.

We must never forget. We must remember and learn from what
happened in the Holocaust.

The 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi extermination
camps was commemorated in the Special Session of the UN
General Assembly earlier this year and in the memorial services
at Auschwitz. Two generations have passed since the end of the
Second World War. The horrors of the Holocaust are still close
enough in time for survivors to tell new generations about what
they experienced.

The final solution of the Nazi regime was also applied to the
Jewish community in occupied Norway. Of the 767 Jews

arrested and deported from Norway only 26 returned. A whole community was lost. A rich cultural heritage was severely depleted.

We must keep the memories of Holocaust alive, let them speak to our societies today. We must do whatever is in our power to prevent future holocausts from ever happening again.

We must continue to fight anti-Semitism and discrimination in our own societies. New generations must be made aware of what happened 60 years ago. We have to ensure that our schools can tell the Holocaust story.

The adoption of the Declaration on Holocaust by the Stockholm International Forum five years ago was a milestone, and committed us to promoting education about Holocaust in our schools and communities, and raising awareness in society as a whole. Thousands of Norwegian school children are now visiting the former extermination camps in Germany and Poland. Their knowledge of the past makes them better equipped to recognise the signs of anti-Semitism and better equipped to stop it.

Together with Israel and 18 other countries, Norway works actively in the Task Force for International Cooperation on

Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research on raising international awareness.

In 2001 the Centre for Studies of Holocaust and Religious Minorities in Norway was founded. This is a national institution in the field of Holocaust research, documentation, information and education. Its establishment was part of the restitution by the Norwegian Government for the economic losses and suffering of the Jews during the Second World War.

In our own efforts we are looking to Yad Vashem and Israel – as a leader in Holocaust education, commemoration and documentation. We are looking to you for inspiration and further co-operation.

On behalf of Norway, I congratulate Yad Vashem on its new Holocaust History Museum. I would like to thank you for the invitation to this memorable event and to express my thanks to the Government of Israel.