

Fecha:

Responsable:

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**SPEECH BY THE SPANISH MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON THE  
OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE MUSEUM OF THE  
HOLOCAUST AT JERUSALEM  
(JERUSALEM, 16<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2005)**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is for me a pleasure to represent the Spanish people and their Government on such a significant occasion, in which the memory of the Holocaust is revitalised with the opening of this Museum at Jerusalem.

This space makes present, in the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the heartbreaking emotion, the feelings deeply moved by horror and the strength of the memory so that the Shoah's drama is never repeated in the History of Mankind.

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This new Museum of Jerusalem, which projects knowledge of the Holocaust, reveals the reality of the daily lives and the microcosms of 6 million persons, including one-and-a-half million children, who were humiliated, persecuted, tortured and assassinated by Nazism.

The memory of the experience of this deep pain and of this tragic episode is reflected in this place, which breaks away from the dynamics of data and statistics to take shape in the faces of men, women and children, with their names and surnames, whose dreams were shattered and lives cut short. This space must be understood as an open invitation to the world to recover the time of reflection.

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Spain has officially held, for the first time in its history, the Day of the Holocaust this year, to commemorate the life and suffering of the Jewish people. Its incorporation to our calendar has been the result of an attitude of solidarity and of a commitment to the future, in order for the lacerations caused by persecutions and genocides never to occur again.

Now, two generations after the apocalyptic attempt to wipe out all Jewish life from the face of Europe, it is a most imperative responsibility for each and every one of us to foster understanding to overcome ethnic and religious differences. Our democracies should remain vigilant. Forces of darkness still haunt our best endeavours. One should always bear in mind that the brutality that so often in the past hit the Jews grew often on what was at the time the very heart of the civilized world.

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For the seeds of democracy to bear fruit, the fruit of strong societies that devote their resources for the prosperity of the many and not for the rejection of the few, not only hope and good intentions are needed. Democracy will only prove a lasting achievement if we are brave enough to decisively confront its enemies.

The international community must stay alert vis-à-vis any sign of anti-Semitism and intolerance, whilst preparing and endowing itself with the necessary resources, to act against this and other types of discrimination that may appear currently or in the near future.

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From Jerusalem, I invite you to participate and join in with the effort carried out by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Spanish Government to make a success of understanding the “Conference on anti- Semitism ad other forms of intolerance”, due to be held on the next 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> June at Cordoba, Maimonides’s birthplace, where, last year, some International Rabbinic Days commemorated the 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his death.

We can and, indeed, must understand the Holocaust as Primo Levi states: “to know where it is born and to be on guard. If understanding is impossible, knowledge is necessary, since what has happened could occur again, consciences can be seduced and clouded again: ours included.”

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Let me conclude by using the wise words of Rabbi Dom Sene Tob, an Spanish Jewish from the XIIIth century: “There is no better gift than good for it quiets poverty as much as solitude”.

Thank you.