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THE PRIME MINISTER



**STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER GUY VERHOFSTADT  
ON THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF YAD VASHEM.**

**JERUSALEM, 16 MARCH 2005.**

Whenever I think of the Holocaust, I see that same photograph in my mind's eye. A young boy in Auschwitz. Wearing short trousers and a cap on his head. His hands up. There is nobody around him. He is standing alone, totally alone, staring into the barrel of a gun.

His picture is burnt into my brain. I feel as if that young boy is looking at me with uncomprehending eyes. He asks me: "What is going on? Where are my parents, my brothers, my sisters? How can people do such things? What did I do wrong?".

These are questions I cannot answer. Something that cannot be comprehended. It looks most like a disease. A mental disease that rots away conscience. The disease of racism, of anti-Semitism, of xenophobia.

The boy seems to be asking me if I can't quickly cure this disease. And ensure that nobody in the world ever points a gun at him, at children again. We are unable to give any assurance. But I promise him that as long as I live I will do all I can to ensure that it never happens again. My country has developed an action-plan against anti-Semitism and has applied for membership of the International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. The 27<sup>th</sup> of January is from now on also in Belgium the official remembrance-day of the Holocaust. But above all, I will take my children to Auschwitz, to Yad Vashem, to other Holocaust museums to let them look into those same uncomprehending eyes, delivering one single message: "In the name of tolerance we will never again tolerate the intolerant".