

**EMBARGO: 15 MARCH, 6:00pm in Jerusalem; 11:00am in New York**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**REMARKS AT INAUGURATION  
OF THE HOLOCAUST HISTORY MUSEUM AT YAD VASHEM  
Jerusalem, 15 March 2005**

President Katsav,  
Prime Minister Sharon,  
Minister Livnat, [of Education]  
Mr. Amrami, [Director-General, Yad Vashem]  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the Government of Israel and Yad Vashem for inviting us to this ceremony.

The Holocaust occupies a unique place in the history of the United Nations.

The very name of the Organization was coined to describe the alliance fighting to end the Nazi regime.

In April 1945, just days after delegates gathered in San Francisco to draft our Charter, the death camp at Dachau was liberated.

Hitler's death, the end of the war in Europe, the first newsreel footage of emaciated camp survivors – these were the daily dispatches that framed the work of the framers.

Worldwide revulsion at the genocide – at the systematic murder of six million Jews and millions of others -- was also a driving force behind the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Our global mission of peace, freedom and human dignity was literally forged in fire – in fact the most awful fires humankind has ever seen.

As Aharon Appelfeld wrote recently, “Such a colossal crime can be committed only if you mobilize the darkest dark of the soul.”

Today, our most fundamental task is to remember loved ones lost, cities and cultures destroyed, to ensure that their fates are recorded and that they are never forgotten.

It is also to ensure that no such horror happens again anywhere.

But our work for remembrance is also a yearning for wisdom.

And it is an attempt to project forward, to future generations, a different vision of human existence.

The United Nations has a sacred responsibility to combat hatred and intolerance.

A United Nations that fails to be at the forefront of the fight against anti-Semitism and other forms of racism denies its history and undermines its future.

That obligation binds us to the Jewish people, and to the State of Israel, which rose, like the United Nations itself, from the ashes of the Holocaust.

And it binds us to all people who have been, or may be, threatened with a similar fate.

The United Nations must remain eternally vigilant.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The number of Holocaust survivors who are still with us is dwindling fast.

Our children are growing up just as rapidly. They are beginning to ask their first questions about injustice. What will we tell them?

Will we say, "That's just the way the world is"?

Or will we say instead, "We are striving to change things – to find a better way"?

Let this museum stand as testimony that we are striving for a better way.

Let Yad Vashem inspire us to keep striving, as long as the darkest dark stalks the face of the earth.

Thank you very much.