



**REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**  
***PRESIDENT***

**SPECIAL ASSEMBLY**  
**"REMEMBERING THE PAST, SHAPING THE FUTURE"**

ADDRESS BY  
H.E. MR. BRANKO CRVENKOVSKI  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

**Israel, 16 March 2005**

Distinguished Mr. President Katsav  
Distinguished Excellencies,  
Distinguished citizens of Israel,  
Jewish from the Diaspora,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Nothing can be compared to the sufferings of the Jewish people during one of the most obscure periods of mankind – the years of the Holocaust. Now, 60 years after the end of the monstrous crimes, the civilized world is still unable to fully perceive the consequences of the crimes that have marked for eternity the history of mankind as a dark shadow.

The size of the crimes are unimaginable since they resulted with: loss of lives and unparalleled sufferings – but it also planted the germ of evil, which has never stopped threatening humanity until today appearing under different forms in different circumstances.

This is why the responsibility we hold is even greater and we must never allow for the atrocities to be trivialized and for the Holocaust evidence to be put under question.

We are all very well aware that the memory must be preserved and thus let no one repeat these crimes.

The position of the civilized world can be nothing but clear and unambiguous: the Holocaust is an unprecedented crime in the history of mankind and consists of a systematic slaughter of 6 million Jews and millions of other people who together with them have been tortured and murdered only because they belonged to a different religion, race and nation, political and other affiliations – only because they were different.

In this time when throughout the world intolerance towards the other who is different is taking a preoccupying size, it is our duty to warn continuously and openly on the global threat, but also to act concretely as much as we can in our respective countries.

No Head of state or Government, politician or citizen present here today can be exempted from this responsibility.

Tolerance is a fundamental characteristic of civilized societies and modern world and a measurement for our humaneness, which directly depends on the level of respect of other's rights. Of course, tolerance does not imply that we must always agree with someone's views of life and world, it implies the possibility to achieve a qualitative cohabitation and coexistence of different cultures, nations and religions, regardless of our personal stand or approach to a given issue. We have to offer to others the same understanding we expect for ourselves. In this respect we must always start from our own.

The Republic of Macedonia, the country I come from, is a multi ethnic and multi religious civil state and it is precisely tolerance, mutual respect and understanding which are the core of its survival and development. These are values that should be eternally preserved and protected by all mankind through the memory of the Holocaust tragedy.

Unfortunately, in the course of the Second World War, the Macedonian Jews, together with many other Macedonian citizens, have shared the terrible fate of their people.

On March 11, 1943, 7200 Macedonian Jews were sent by the occupying forces to the death concentration camp Treblinka – and none of them ever returned. As many as 98% of the Jewish population in Macedonia lost their lives during Second World War.

These appalling figures never stopped living in the minds of the citizens in Macedonia. The memory of these people stayed alive - and we are proud to say here that 230 descendants of the Holocaust victims today are respected representatives of the Jewish community, which has preserved its religion, culture and tradition. This is one of the five religious communities incorporated in the Constitution of our country.

The citizens of Macedonia never did and never will forget their Jewish fellow citizens. The restitution of the property to the Jewish community in Macedonia has been completed and the property, which after the Second World War was nationalized by the regime in that time, has been returned to the members of this community. In sign of deep respect to the victims, the Macedonian Parliament adopted a special law stipulating that all the property of the Jews in Macedonia that have no legal heirs will be allocated to the Holocaust Fund in Macedonia. These funds will be used as of this year with the start of the construction of the

Memorial Centre dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust with the clear message that this tragedy must never ever happen to anyone or anywhere.

Six million victims of the Holocaust are not a number. These are six million authentic tragic destinies whose sufferings must never be forgotten. The commemoration of the victims and the clear identification and condemnation of the criminals remain to be among the most important moral obligations of mankind.

The memory of the Holocaust should bring us together in our strive to preserve freedom and minority rights throughout the world and prevent outburst of new violence and terror because this is the only way to educate new generations to be tolerant and to care for each other. The words of Primo Levi: "We cannot understand the Holocaust, but we can and we must understand where it came from and we must know how to protect ourselves" remain a principal in the fight against the residues of this evil. We are human beings and we have the same rights and we must learn to respect the right of the other to be different from us and let him preserve and develop his/her identity.

This is the only way to deserve our place among the righteous, and to prove that we have learned the terrible lesson from the Holocaust and try and provide our children with the future they deserve.

Toda raba.