

International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust

Memorial Ceremony, General Assembly Hall

28 January 2015

Remarks by H.E. Mr. Denis G. Antoine permanent representative of Grenada to the United Nations and Vice-President of the sixty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly, delivered on behalf of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa, the President of the General Assembly

H.E. Mr. Reuven Rivlin, President of the State of Israel,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,

It is an honour for me to join you on this International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust to deliver a statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

We are gathered here today to pay tribute to the millions of victims of one of the darkest chapters in the history of humanity: the Holocaust. Most of us in this room have learned about the Holocaust in history books. Yet, behind the historical accounts are countless personal tragedies, broken lives, decimated families, parents and children torn apart.

On this International Day, we remember and honour the memory of these victims. As we hear the poignant accounts of the survivors, we are called to reflect on the root causes of such unspeakable atrocities.

We have a collective responsibility to draw the lessons of the Holocaust and pass them on to the present and future generations. When the General Assembly proclaimed this International Day in 2005, Member States reaffirmed that the Holocaust “will forever be a warning to all people of the dangers of hatred, bigotry, racism and prejudice”.

In this regard, I commend the work of the Holocaust Outreach programme, which celebrates this year its 10th anniversary. Through its global network of partners, the Programme has contributed to raising awareness of the history of the Holocaust among younger generations.

Excellencies,

Seventy years ago, as the world was coming to grips with the full magnitude of the horrors of the Holocaust, the United Nations was founded to rid future generations from the scourge of war. We have a duty to ensure that such a tragedy as the Holocaust never happens again. Yet, as recent events have shown us, we must remain ever vigilant. In many corners of the world, mistrust, intolerance and racism are fuelling violence and hatred and tearing communities apart.

Last week, the General Assembly held a meeting to address concerns of a rise in anti-Semitic violence worldwide. Member States strongly condemned anti-Semitism and all other forms of intolerance and prejudice. We also heard calls for increased dialogue and understanding among different cultures and religions.

To further exchange of views on this important matter, I will convene a High-level thematic debate on Promoting Tolerance and Reconciliation in April. The meeting will provide an opportunity to Member States and other stakeholders to discuss how we can enhance dialogue and understanding and counter the threat of extremism and radicalization.

Distinguished guests,

As we honour today the life and legacy of the victims of the Holocaust, may the lessons of the past; the dangers of indifference, the roots and ramifications of prejudice and the importance of individual and collective responsibility guide our steps, to prevent such acts of intolerance and hate from ever happening again.

I thank you for your attention.