



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS BY  
THE CHAIR OF THE IHRA**

As delivered by Minister Councillor Knut-Are Sprauten Okstad at the Permanent Council,  
Vienna, 1 February 2024

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

And a heartfelt thank you to Ambassador Gras for her address on behalf of the Croatian Presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. Norway is a member of IHRA and we highly value the work of the organization.

Mr. Chair,

In 1940, there were about 2,100 Jews living in Norway. The Holocaust hit our Jewish community hard. 773 Jews were deported during the Nazi occupation of our country. Only 35 of them survived.

Norway's remembrance of Holocaust is connected to our host city Vienna through Ruth Maier. She was a young Jewish woman from Vienna who had emigrated to Oslo after the incorporation of Austria into Germany in 1938. Her life was tragically cut short when she was killed in the gas chambers of Auschwitz in 1942, at just 22 years old.

Ruth Maier's diaries, describing her experiences of the Holocaust in Austria and Norway, were published in 2007, and she has since then been described as "Norway's Anne Frank". She was honored by having a park dedicated to her name in Vienna-Leopoldstadt in 2021. In Oslo, a stumbling stone has been placed outside of her house, as it has been done to commemorate thousands of victims of the Holocaust all over Europe.

The Nazis systematic, methodical attempt to annihilate entire ethnic groups is in its entirety difficult to comprehend. We are all obliged to never forget what happened. We must remember the victims, like Ruth Maier.

Mr. Chair,

There is no doubt that there is a need for sustained and increased efforts to combat antisemitism. It is not the responsibility of the Jews to combat antisemitism in our countries and communities, it is our shared responsibility.

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Norway is concerned that the war in Gaza exacerbates antagonisms in the society and is closely monitoring the situation to make sure the tense situation does not reduce the security of neither Palestinians in Norway nor Jewish Norwegians.

At the same time, we must strongly oppose any attempt by any participating state to instrumentalize the Holocaust and use twisted and wicked accusations of neo-Nazism and antisemitism for their own political and aggressive objectives. To be specific, we simply cannot accept Russia's instrumentalization of the Holocaust to legitimize its illegal and brutal aggression towards Ukraine. These accusations are baseless and fabricated and must be firmly condemned.

Mr. Chair,

The OSCE possesses a variety of tools to assist participating States in promoting tolerance and non-discrimination. Norway greatly appreciates and supports the work done by ODIHR and the three Personal Representatives. Let me once again thank the Personal Representative on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination Dr. Regina Polak and the Personal Representative on Combating Anti-Semitism Rabbi Andrew Baker for their constructive visit to Norway last September.

To conclude, I would like to express Norway's full support for the important work of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. We must never forget!

I thank you.