



United States Mission to the OSCE

On the Occasion of the Commemoration of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Courtney Austrian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 28, 2021

Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you Ambassador Küchler for your presentation.

The United States joined the world community in commemorating *International Holocaust Remembrance Day* on January 27. President Biden marked the solemn occasion, stating: “we must pass the history of the Holocaust on to our grandchildren and their grandchildren in order to keep real the promise of “never again.” That is how we prevent future genocides. Remembering the victims, heroes, and lessons of the Holocaust is particularly important today as Holocaust deniers and minimizers are growing louder in our public discourse. But the facts are not up for question, and each of us must remain vigilant and speak out against the resurgent tide of anti-Semitism, and other forms of bigotry and intolerance, here at home and around the world.”

International Holocaust Remembrance Day marks the anniversary of the 1945 liberation of the Auschwitz death camp where Nazis systematically killed Jews, Roma, and Sinti, as well as others targeted for murderous reprisal, in furtherance of their genocidal plans. As we remember the horrors of the Holocaust, which will forever stain the history not only of the 20th century but also of humankind, it is also fitting that we honor those who pierced that darkness with the light of their compassion and courage.

Today, in keeping with Sweden’s Chairpersonship of the OSCE, I recall the humanity and heroism of Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat who served as First Secretary at the legation in Budapest in the summer of 1944. By that time, almost 400,000 Jewish Hungarians had been forced at gunpoint onto cattle cars to Auschwitz. Wallenberg understood that he had a moral obligation to fight that unspeakable evil, and he worked tirelessly, often risking his own life, to save others from certain death.

He established safe houses, hospitals, soup kitchens, and nurseries for Jews throughout Budapest. He issued thousands of Swedish protective passports to the remaining population of Jewish Hungarians to help them escape. After the war, he was taken into Soviet hands. To this day, the Wallenberg family has not received an accounting of his fate. By Act of Congress, Raoul Wallenberg was made a citizen of the United States.

And on *International Holocaust Remembrance Day* of all days, we must confront the chilling fact that anti-Semitism has not been relegated to the history books. The OSCE has reported the growth of anti-Semitism—and anti-Semitic violence—in this region for nearly two decades. Since the onset of the pandemic alone, there has been an alarming surge in anti-Semitic attacks, blood-libel, and scapegoating. The *Anti-Defamation League* reports that an incredible 37 percent of Jews in the United States have been the targets of anti-Semitic attacks in the last five years. Raoul Wallenberg’s inspiring example reminds us all of the imperative to take a stand against anti-Semitism and other

forms of hate and injustice and to recommit ourselves and this organization to take decisive and sustained action.

Remembering Holocaust victims and honoring those who survived means committing to action— action to promote historically accurate Holocaust education and commemoration; action to protect the facts in the face of growing Holocaust distortion and trivialization; action to combat rising anti-Semitism wherever and whenever it occurs. The United States condemns anti-Semitism in all its ugly manifestations. We reject it in word and deed, including by aggressively investigating and prosecuting hate crimes. We embrace the *International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's* working definition of anti-Semitism in its entirety and call on other participating States that have not yet done so to do the same.

The working definition remains an indispensable tool for combatting anti-Semitic hatred in our societies, and we commend ODIHR for putting the definition into practice.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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