



# The Empire State Building Lights Up in Yellow for International Holocaust Remembrance Day



International Holocaust Remembrance Day was adopted by the United Nations in 2005 and has been held every January 27th since 2006. It is the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. The UN urges every member to honor the 6 million Jewish and 5 million other victims of the Nazis and to develop educational programs to help prevent future genocides. In commemoration of this special day landmarks across New York State and Connecticut were lit up in yellow the evening of January 27th including the Empire State Building shown above. Empire State Building photo: Gayle Pec, 3GNY. United Nations General Assembly photo: YouTube generated. For more photos please see centerfold.

## NYS & CT Light up in Yellow to Commemorate International Holocaust Remembrance Day

By Henry Levy

Every January 27th since 2006, the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp, the United Nations set aside a day dedicated to the memory of the six million Jews and five million other victims of Adolph Hitler's Nazi Germany.

If you were Jewish the Nazi's Final Solution had you targeted for extermination. Among the victims were 1.5 million children, those that were mentally ill, physically handicapped, gay, Romani, Serb or Slovene, Jehovah's Witness, Freemason, Ethnic Pole, Soviet POW, Spanish Republican or anyone who harbored or hid any of the above people.

A study by the Claims Conference in 2020 had shocking results.

Nearly 20% of Millennials and Gen Z in New York felt that Jews caused the Holocaust.

48% nationwide could not name a single Concentration Camp.

63% did not know that 6 million Jews were murdered and 36% thought it was 2 million or less.

NYS with the America's largest Jewish population ranked in the bottom 20% in Holocaust education knowledge.

In a survey of 3600 North American students from grades six through twelve by Canadian based Liberation 75, released just one day before International Holocaust Remembrance Day, last year, nearly 33 percent of students in elementary and high schools in the United States and Canada said they weren't sure if the Holocaust happened, or if it did, they thought it was "exaggerated or fabricated."

On January 27th, the United Nations Holocaust Outreach Programme dedicates two hours in the General Assembly for speeches by the Secretary General, President of the General Assembly, the Ambassadors from Israel, the United States and other countries and Holocaust survivors themselves to give testimony in the hope of preventing future genocides.

But is this really enough when the need to educate to stop hate is clearly necessary?

For just over a year a small coalition of like-minded organizations felt the necessity to make a bigger statement.

They decided to make a joint effort to light up New York State and Connecticut in yellow on January 27th to honor the victims of the Holocaust.

Looking at the photos on the preceding pages and the front page of the Jewish Post is proof of the success of their efforts.

Among the landmarks lit up and lighting ceremonies conducted are: The Empire State Building, One World Trade Center, Niagara Falls, Gov. Mario Cuomo Bridge, Kosciuszko Bridge, FDR Mid-Hudson Bridge, Grand Central Terminal, Albany Int'l Airport Gateway, NYS Fairgrounds, Empire State Plaza, City Hall, Nassau County's Executive & Legislative Building, Suffolk County's Dennis Building, Westchester County Center, NYC City Hall, Queens, Bronx,

Manhattan and Staten Island Borough Halls, MTA-LIRR - Gateway at Penn Station and others.

This year Governor Ned Lamont of Connecticut added Travelers Tower in Hartford, the State capitol's tallest building.

Many public officials as well as the team that coordinated this effort are in agreement that this will become an annual event.

Congratulations are in order to those "New York Goes Yellow" coalition members whose contributions made this possible.

They include Hindy Poupko, UJA-Federation NY, Scott Richman, ADL Dir. NY/NJ, Avi Posnick, StandWithUs Director, North East, Eric Post, American Jewish Committee LI Dir, Rabbi Joseph Potasnik, Exec. VP, New York Board of Rabbis Michael Cohen, Simon Wiesenthal Center, Eastern Director, Bill Tinglin, Tour for Tolerance, Mindy Perlmutter, JCRC-LI Exec. Dir., Howard Pollock, JCRC-NY Director of Community Affairs, Millie Jasper, Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center, Exec. Dir., Gayle Peck, VP & Founding Board Member, 3GNY, Gary Glick, Jewish War Veterans of America, NY Chapter, Alan Mindel, Chair, Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County, Rabbi Mark Golub, Jewish Broadcasting Service, Voices for Truth and Humanity, Board Members Jack Britvan, Angel Cepeda, Glen Landow, Noel Rabb, Andrea Bolender and Hank Levy, Jewish Post publisher.

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The following are comments from those responsible for the success of New York & Connecticut Goes Yellow on International Holocaust Remembrance Day:

It is said, "When we arrive in the next world, and are asked by our loved ones, 'What did you do after we left you?', we will answer, 'We never forgot you'" The kindling of lights on International Holocaust Remembrance Day is an affirmation of remembrance and responsibility. We promise to those taken from us that the words 'Never Again' are written not with a question mark but an exclamation mark! **Rabbi Joe Potasnik, Exec. VP, The New York Board of Rabbis.**

"The Jewish Community Relations Council of Long Island was honored to work with a wonderful group of colleagues as we commemorated International Holocaust Remembrance Day by lighting up New York in yellow. We did this in memory of all those who were murdered and those who survived the Holocaust. Elie Wiesel stated, 'To forget would be not only dangerous but offensive; to forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time.' Thank you to our government officials and community partners for remembering. We must always remember and never forget." **Mindy Perlmutter, Exec. Dir., JCRC-LI.**

"At StandWithUs, an international education organization that fights

antisemitism, we feel that Holocaust education and remembrance are critical to preventing anti-Jewish bigotry and other dangerous forms of hate. It is especially important for our students, the leaders of tomorrow. This is why StandWithUs continues to build its Holocaust Education Center with a user-friendly toolbox of educational materials and programs for teens and young adults. You can see more at their website: <https://www.standwithus.com/holocaustctr>. **Avi Posnick, Regional Director NE & New England.**

"UJA-Federation of New York is committed to ensuring that Holocaust survivors can live out their lives with dignity, comfort and support. This campaign was an important effort to bring awareness to Holocaust Remembrance Day and we are grateful to all the community partners for their work to light up iconic New York institutions." **Hindy Poupko, UJA-Federation of New York.**

The Simon Wiesenthal Center is proud to partner with the "New York State and Connecticut Go Yellow" campaign to ensure that history's greatest crime, the Holocaust, is never forgotten. On this day, we join together to honor the victims of the Shoah and bring attention to the rise of today's anti-Semitism in the US and around the globe. **Michael Cohen, Eastern Director, SWC.**

Holocaust Remembrance Day is commemorated each year on January 27 to mark the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau and it's a day to remember and honor the six million Jewish people and millions of others who perished in the Holocaust. The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center imparts the lessons learned from the Holocaust to the students through carefully planned educational programs and events so that today's young people will stand up to evil and make strong moral choices. We are grateful to Westchester County Executive George Latimer for standing with the Westchester Jewish Community in recognizing this solemn day by joining dozens of other New York State landmarks in the New York Goes Yellow campaign by lighting the panels at the County Center yellow. **Millie Jasper, Exec. Dir., Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center.**

American Jewish Committee is proud to join the New York State and Connecticut Go Yellow Campaign to increase awareness of International Holocaust Remembrance Day. As efforts to distort or deny the Holocaust become more and more prevalent in our country and abroad, all people of good will must come together to recognize the systematic murder during the Holocaust of six million Jews and five million other innocents. The lessons of the Holocaust are universal and are a warning amongst an atmosphere of increased hate, that all Americans must stand together against intolerance and bigotry. **Josh Kramer, Director, AJC NY; Myra Clark-Siegel, Director, AJC Westchester-Fairfield; Eric Post, Director, AJC Long Island.**

As grandchildren of Holocaust survivors, 3GNY is honored to be part of the Light Up NY & CT initiative to commemorate International Holocaust Remembrance Day. On Friday, January 27th, we gathered for Shabbat as a community to connect over our shared history to and affirm our commitment to educating future generations. We are proud to carry on this important legacy and to honor our grandparents by bringing more light into the world. **Gayle Peck, Vice President and Founding Board Member, 3GNY.**

"The Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County (HMTTC) appreciates its involvement with the NY and CT Go Yellow campaign for International Holocaust Remembrance Day. As Long Island's only Holocaust museum focused on combatting antisemitism and hate through education, we're proud to stand up and stand together for this important initiative." **Alan Mindel, Esq. Chair, HMTTC.**

As a global Partner, working together to highlight and stop hatred, antisemitism, and racism is doing God's work in seeking peace and making our world a better place to live and enjoy. **Bill Tinglin, Tour for Tolerance.**

"At ADL, we know first-hand that education and awareness are critical ways to fight antisemitism and all forms of hate. We are grateful to the many iconic New York State and Connecticut sites which were bathed in yellow light, bringing awareness to all that it was International Holocaust Remembrance Day. You stood in solidarity with people around the world who recommitted themselves to never again let hate get out of hand." **Scott Richman, ADL Regional Dir. NY/NJ.**

"Voices for Truth and Humanity was proud to play a part in New York Goes Yellow, the bathing of landmarks throughout New York State in yellow light on International Holocaust Remembrance Day in memory of the millions of innocents slaughtered during the Holocaust. In their memories we say Never Again. It is vital that we establish a curriculum in our public schools on the lessons of the Holocaust, slavery, and all genocides to insure that future generations will be neither victims of hate, nor bystanders." **Glen J. Landow, Executive Board Member.**

"Today we pause to remember and honor the more than 6 million innocent Jews and other innocent people murdered by Nazi Germany and others. As we light the dome of the county building yellow, we pledge to do everything we can to end hate and anti-Semitism, and to never let what happened in the Holocaust happen again." **Nassau County Executive, Bruce Blakeman.**

"We remember the millions murdered in the Holocaust and recommit ourselves to keeping their memories alive. New York will continue to welcome everyone with open arms and to fight against antisemitism that still plagues our world. We will never forget." **NYS Governor, Kathy Hochul.**