

Remarks by H.E. Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, President of the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies
and Gentlemen,

Some of us in this room know the horrors of the Holocaust better than anyone. Survivors of that immense tragedy and their family members understand better than anyone why we must preserve its memory.

And not just the memory of the ghettos, the deportation, the camps. The remembrances of all those whose lives were taken by senseless hate. The memory of those you knew. Those you loved. Those you lost. And those who could only live a tortured life when it was over.

And the memory of those who helped Jewish families in the darkest days, when it was not without risks to provide shelter and protect. Like my grandfather and grandmother.

It is my honour to welcome you all here today – in this institution, and in a hall, that was built to ensure that no one would ever see what you or your family had to see.

Yet, this year has begun amid new waves of antisemitism and Holocaust



H.E. Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, President of the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Photo: UN website.

denial across the world.

Like poison, they seep into our everyday lives. We hear them from politicians, we read it in the media.

We have seen pop culture leaders, whose massive reach can influence and enflame millions at the touch of a button, making antisemitic remarks and spewing hate.

Deliberate denials and distortions of basic facts threaten the human rights of all around the globe.

“Monsters exist, but they are too few

in number to be truly dangerous,” Primo Levi once wrote. “More dangerous are the common men – the functionaries ready to believe and to act without asking questions.”

The exhibit “Unmask the Stereotypes” on the ground floor offers a startling insight into how stereotyping, prejudice and hate led to the Holocaust.

The hate that made the Holocaust possible continues to fester.

And we can no longer ignore the

clear links between extremist ideologies spreading hate online and their real-life consequences.

With conflicts, wars and atrocity crimes that continue to devastate nations and communities, we have to push back against the tsunamis of disinformation crashing about the internet.

This is a responsibility that must be translated into action.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the Holocaust, people outside the camps could not believe what they were hearing. But when the Sonderkommando photographers risked their lives to capture the horrors of Auschwitz, when they smuggled the hard evidence of the atrocities out of the camp - the world could no longer deny what was happening behind the barbed wire.

Let us share their commitment to veracity. Let us channel their resolve. And let us reach for peace and justice for all.

Thank you.

Toda Raba. Shalom Elichem. [Hebrew for: Thank you. Peace be upon you.]

Remarks by Ambassador Richard Mills, US Deputy Representative to the United Nations



Ambassador Richard Mills, US Deputy Representative to the UN, addresses the Holocaust Memorial ceremony. Photo: UN website.

Thank you, Under-Secretary-General, thank you, Ms. Fleming, for bringing us together today. But most of all, thank you to all the survivors and family members present today to share their story of how the Holocaust impacted their lives and the lives of their families.

For survivors of the Holocaust, as we know, returning to home, returning to life as it had been before the War was tragically challenging. Some returned to find homes that had been destroyed, looted, or taken over by others. Others returned with the unease of knowing that

many of their neighbors and friends had colluded with the Nazis.

In late 1945, facing US Congressional inaction, President Truman issued a directive reallocating immigration quotas to displaced persons. Later, eventually 140,000 survivors were able to settle and find home in the United States.

In May 1939, Hans Fisher, a 94-year-old survivor who now lives in the United States, fled persecution on the MS St. Louis. That ship, famously known, carried 937 German Jews seeking refuge, but it was turned away from Cuba and my country the United States.

Mr. Fisher recalls the experience of reaching Cuba, where his father waited for him. It is beyond my conceiving how demoralizing it must have been for 11-year-old Hans to see Cuba, and his father, receding in the distance after negotiations to accept these refugees broke down. After the United States also refused to let passengers disembark in Florida, the ship returned to Europe, where many of the passengers lost their lives in the Holocaust.

Hans Fisher and his family were blessed and fortunate - they eventually did reunite in Cuba and settle in the United States.

In the United States, during the war, officials at the Department of State, that I serve today, prevented the entry of many

fleeing persecution into this country, the United States. As the Nazis began to systematically round up and execute Jews, the State Department made it harder and harder for Jews to be granted refuge in the United States. It is a stain on US diplomacy that haunts me and my colleagues still.

Today, many American descendants of Holocaust survivors inspired by their family's struggle and courage, dedicate themselves to public service, fighting to advance human rights globally. Our Secretary of State and our Ambassador to the Human Rights Council in Geneva both have relatives who were Holocaust survivors.

Today, as the speakers before me have said, Holocaust denial and distortion are on the rise, along with anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and nationalistic rhetoric. History shows as hatred directed at Jews rises, violence and attacks on the foundations of democracy are not far behind.

Unfortunately, the impact of these lies is magnified, as we have heard from others, via the Internet and via social media. This is why our commitments under the 2009 Terezin Declaration on Holocaust Era Assets and Related Issues to promote Holocaust education, remembrance, and research are so important.

The Biden-Harris Administration is committed - committed to securing a measure of justice for Holocaust survivors in the United States and around the world and honoring the six million Jews, as well as the Roma, the Sinti, the Slavs, the persons with disabilities, the LGBTQI+ individuals, and others persecuted and murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators.

We must confront rising antisemitism and stand united against tyranny, against lies, against hatred in all their forms. We must ensure that current and future generations learn the history and lessons of and from the Holocaust.

It is vital that we confront this problem at this moment. In New York City, where this is taking place, anti-Semitic hate crimes were up 125% in November of 2022.

Every day, we have a moral obligation to honor the victims, to learn from the survivors, and carry forth the lessons of last century's most heinous crime. We are continually and painfully reminded that hate doesn't go away - it only hides. And it falls to each of us to speak out against the resurgence of anti-Semitism and ensure that bigotry and hate receive no safe harbor. At home and around the world, we must create a sense of belonging so that everyone feels safe at home.

Thank you.