

Statement by Ambassador Danny Danon Permanent Representative of Israel to the UN

President Muhammad-Bande,
Secretary-General Antonio
Guterres,

Thank you for your important
words and for your moral clarity in
the fight against anti-Semitism,

Her Excellency Ambassador
Norman-Chalet, Deputy
Permanent Representative of the
United States;

His Excellency Ambassador
Nebenzia, Permanent
Representative of the Russian
Federation,

It was an honor last week to co-
sponsor the opening of the
exhibition on the liberation of
Auschwitz here at the UN.

His Excellency Ambassador
Heusgen, Permanent
Representative of Germany –
thank you for your strong
commitment to the remembrance
of the Holocaust,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Honored Guests,

Veterans,

Distinguished Survivors,

On this International Holocaust
Remembrance Day – seventy five
years after the liberation of
Auschwitz – we are honored to
have Shraga Milstein and Irene
Shashar share their testimonies
with us. Thank you for coming.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the decades go by it becomes
harder for us to remember the
atrocities that took place and what
the victims had to endure. We are
the last generation to have the
privilege of learning about the
Holocaust from those who had to
endure its atrocities. And when
memory starts to fade, so does the
ability to believe that an event like
the Holocaust really occurred. It
becomes harder to believe that
being a Jew under the Nazi regime
was enough of a reason to rip
infants from their mother's arms; to
force communities in ghettos,
starve them, murder them in the
most cruel ways and then burn their
bodies in an attempt to destroy the
evidence and erase them from
memory. It becomes harder to
believe that people stood by as their
Jewish neighbors were stripped of
their rights and dignity. It becomes
harder to believe that governments
watched the Nazis legislate away
Jewish rights and their reaction was
to ban Jewish refugees from
reaching their shores. It is hard to



Ambassador Danny Danon, Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations.

Photo: UN Photo/Loey Felipe

believe that the human race is
capable of such evil. Because it is
hard to believe, this day of
International Holocaust
Remembrance must truly be that –
international. It cannot be an Israeli
day of remembrance or even a
Jewish day of remembrance. It
must be a day in which the entire
world remembers what can happen
when anti-Semitism festers. A day
in which the entire world
remembers that words are not
enough. When the Nazi regime
came into power in 1933 with an
anti-Semitic platform, no one
spoke up. When the Nuremberg
laws came into effect in 1935, they
were condemned by some, but no
real action was taken. Finally in
1938, the international community
convened the Evian conference, in
which the outcome was more
hollow words.

The leaders of the world may
have opposed anti-Semitism. They
may have even denounced it, but
that is all they did. And as we know,
that wasn't enough.

Last week, Israel hosted the
World Holocaust Forum where the
leaders of the world vowed – Never
Again. It was an inspiring event

and we truly thank the leaders for
their strong words against anti-
Semitism. But now is the time not
just for words. Now it is time to act
against anti-Semitism. Anti-
Semitism is a deadly disease that
must be eradicated. It is a disease
that feeds off hate, ignorance and
intolerance. It manifests itself in
different ways, such as xenophobia
and racism.

Like with any disease, the
international community must
work together to eradicate anti-
Semitism. It is not enough to say
that we want to eradicate it. We
must find a cure for those affected
by it today, and we must vaccinate
our populations so that no one will
have to suffer its fatal
consequences in the future. In order
to cure those affected today, each
state must fight anti-Semitism in its
society by punishing those who
spread it. Talking is not enough.
Zero tolerance policies must be
implemented through three steps.
First, legislation. New laws against
hate crimes and incitement must be
passed. Second, enforcement. It is
not enough to have laws banning
hate crimes, they must be enforced.
And finally, awareness. Leaders

must learn about the holocaust to
understand what anti-Semitism can
lead to. We are taking important
steps here at the UN. I have led
close to one hundred ambassadors
on missions to Poland Israel to
learn about the Holocaust and
become witnesses. In April we
will go together to march in March
of the Living. Additionally, Special
rapporteur on freedom of religion
Ahmed Shaheed's report on anti-
Semitism, which was presented in
this room to the General Assembly
a few months ago, makes important
recommendations in this regard. I
urge all countries to embrace the
report's recommendations and
implement them, including
adopting a definition of anti-
Semitism that defines denying the
right of the Jewish people to a state
in Israel as anti-Semitic. In order to
rid the world of the disease, we
must also vaccinate our societies.
The only vaccine against anti-
Semitism is education; education to
ideas such as compassion,
understanding and tolerance. We
must educate that "other" does not
mean inferior. We must educate
that to generalize is dangerous. We
must educate that disagreements
are never an excuse for violence.
We must educate that regardless of
a person's religion, ethnicity or skin
color he or she are still worthy of
human dignity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We will have the honor of hearing
from brave survivors today. Their
testimonies make it clear that
words are not enough. When
strong action isn't taken against
anti-Semitism, the disease can take
the lives of millions of innocent
people. Today I say to the survivors
and to the whole world, despite the
rising voices of anti-Semitism,
today the reality is different.

Today we have the state of Israel.
Today we have the Israeli Defense
Forces who keep us safe. Today, we
are able to protect ourselves. The
days of the Jewish people being
defenseless are over. On this
important day, we thank you for
condemning anti-Semitism. But we
also say it is not enough. It is time to
join us in taking action. We must
never forget what happened. And
we must ensure that it never
happens again.

Am Israel Chay!

Thank you