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On this United Nations International Holocaust Remembrance Day, words may ease the pain, but they may also dwarf the tragedy. For the Holocaust is uniquely evil in its genocidal singularity, where biology was inescapably destiny, a war against the Jews in which, as Nobel Peace Laureate Elie Wiesel put it, "not all victims were Jews, but all Jews were victims."

This year, in the immediate aftermath of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the international Magna Carta of human rights born out of the ashes of the Holocaust, and the Genocide Convention - the "Never Again" Convention which has tragically been violated again and again - we should ask ourselves: What have we learned, and what must we do?

#### Lesson 1 - THE IMPORTANCE OF HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE

The first lesson is the importance of remembrance itself. For as we remember the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust - first defamed, demonized and dehumanized, as prologue or justification for genocide, then murdered - we have to understand that the mass murder of millions is not a matter of abstract statistics. For unto each person there is a name - unto each person there is an identity. Each person is a universe. As both the Talmud and Koran teach us, whoever saves a single life, it is as if he or she has saved an entire universe - just as whoever has killed a single person, it is as if they have destroyed an entire universe. And so the abiding imperative: that we are each, wherever we are, the guarantors of each other's destiny.

#### Lesson 2 - THE DANGER OF STATE-SANCTIONED INCITEMENT TO HATRED AND GENOCIDE: THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PREVENT IT

The enduring lesson of the Holocaust and the genocides that followed is that they occurred not simply because of the machinery of death, but because of a state-sanctioned ideology of hate. This teaching of contempt, this demonizing of the other - this is where it all begins. As the Canadian Supreme Court recognized, in words echoed by the international criminal tribunals in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the Holocaust did not begin in the gas chambers - it began with words. These, as the courts put it, are the chilling facts of history. These are the catastrophic effects of racism.

Sixty years later, these lessons not only remained unlearned, but the tragedies have been repeated. For we were all bystanders during a growing state-sponsored hate in the Balkans, Rwanda and Darfur that took us down the road to genocide. ( )

#### Lesson 3 - THE DANGERS OF SILENCE, THE CONSEQUENCES OF INDIFFERENCE: THE DUTY TO PROTECT

Indeed, the genocide of European Jewry succeeded not only because of a culture of hate and an industry of death, but because of crimes of indifference and conspiracies of silence. And we have witnessed an appalling indifference and inaction in our own day which took us down the

road to the unthinkable - ethnic cleansing in the Balkans - and down the road to the unspeakable - the preventable genocides in Rwanda and Darfur. No one can say that we did not know. We knew, but we did not act in Rwanda, just as we know and do not act in Darfur, ignoring thereby the lessons of history, betraying the people of Darfur, and mocking the **Responsibility to Protect** doctrine.

And so, it is our responsibility to break down these walls of indifference, to shatter these conspiracies of silence - to stand up and be counted and not look around to see who else is standing before we make a decision to do so; because in the world in which we live, there are few enough people prepared to stand, let alone be counted. Indifference always means coming down on the side of the victimizer, never on the side of the victim. ()

#### Lesson 4 - COMBATING MASS ATROCITY AND THE CULTURE OF IMPUNITY: THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BRING WAR CRIMINALS TO JUSTICE

If the last century - symbolized by the Holocaust - was the age of atrocity, it was also the age of impunity. Few of the perpetrators were brought to justice; and so, just as there must be no sanctuary for hate, no refuge for bigotry, there must be no base or sanctuary for these enemies of humankind. In this context, the establishment of the International Criminal Court must be seen as the most dramatic development in international criminal law since Nuremberg. But it requires active support to prevent it from being another opportunity for impunity.

One need look no further than the case of Ahmed Haroun, the Sudanese Minister of the Interior indicted for his direct role in the war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated in Darfur, who was then cynically rewarded for this indictment by being appointed Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs and made responsible for hearing the human rights complaints from the very victims he had assaulted.

#### LESSON 5 - THE TRAHISON DES CLERCS

Nazism succeeded, not only because of the "bureaucratization of genocide," as Robert Lifton put it, but because of the trahison des clerics - the complicity of the elites: physicians, church leaders, judges, lawyers, engineers, architects, educators and the like. As Elie Wiesel put it: "Cold-blooded murder and culture did not exclude each other. If the Holocaust proved anything, it is that a person can both love poems and kill children." ()

#### CONCLUSION

We should reaffirm today that never again will we be indifferent to racism and hate; that never again will we be silent in the face of evil; that never again will we ignore the plight of the vulnerable; that never again will we acquiesce in the face of mass atrocity and impunity. We will speak and we will act against racism, against hate, against anti-Semitism, against mass atrocity, against injustice - and against the crime whose name we should shudder even to mention: genocide. ()

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