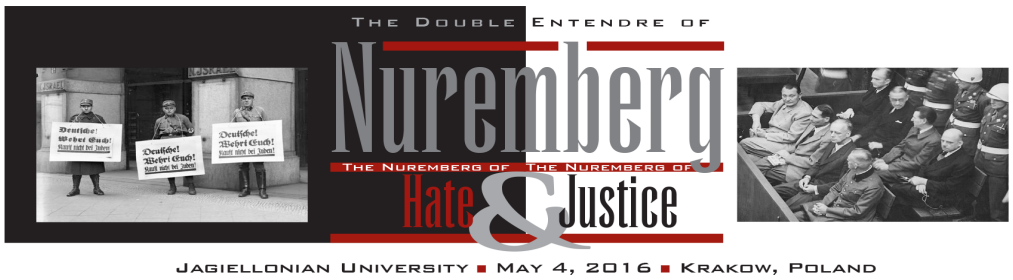

THE "NEVER AGAIN" DECLARATION

WHEREAS genocide is the most insidious and destructive threat known to humankind – the ultimate crime against humanity – a horrific and unspeakable act whereby state-sanctioned incitement transforms hatred into catastrophe;

WHEREAS the Holocaust manifested genocidal horrors too terrible to be believed but not too terrible to have happened;

WHEREAS on December 9, 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (the "Genocide Convention") having now the force of customary international law;

WHEREAS on December 10, 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, in the wake of the "barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind;"

WHEREAS the 20th Century which adopted the *Genocide Convention* – and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* – was also the century of multiple preventable genocides and mass atrocities, continuing also into the 21st Century;

WHEREAS indifference and inaction have led to such mass atrocities and genocides;

WHEREAS the dangers of genocide and mass atrocity shall never cease unless the lessons of genocides past are both heeded and acted upon;

We, Parliamentarians, Political Leaders and Representatives of Civil Society from around the world,

HEREBY AFFIRM:

Honorary Chairman PROFESSOR ELIE WIESEL Nobel Prize Laureate and Holocaust Survivor
Symposium Co-Chairs IRWIN COTLER | ALAN DERSHOWITZ
SPONSORED BY
March of the Living
Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights
Jagiellonian University in Krakow
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO Chair for Holocaust Education
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Jagiellonian University in Krakow

1. The danger of forgetting – "Le devoir de mémoire" – the imperative of remembrance

Mass murder is not a matter of abstract statistics. Unto each person there is a name; each person has an identity; each person is a universe. Whoever saves a single life, it is as if he or she has saved an entire universe.

And so, the abiding imperative which we must imbibe and act upon: We are each, wherever we are, the guarantors of each other's destiny.

2. The danger of state-sanctioned incitement to hate and genocide – the responsibility to prevent

The Holocaust did not begin in the gas chambers – it began with words.

The Holocaust succeeded not only because of the industry of death, but because of the Nazis' state-sanctioned ideology of hate. It is this teaching of contempt, this demonizing of the other, this is where it all begins. Incitement to genocide is not merely a warning sign of preventable tragedy; it is itself an international crime prohibited in the *Genocide Convention*. We have a responsibility to recognize, address, and redress this crime against humanity.

3. The danger of antisemitism – the responsibility to combat

The oldest and most enduring of hatreds.

If the Holocaust is a paradigm for radical evil, antisemitism is a paradigm for radical hatred. From 1940 to 1945, 1.3 million people were murdered at Auschwitz – of whom 1.1 million were Jews. Let there be no mistake about it: Jews died at Auschwitz because of antisemitism, but antisemitism did not die at Auschwitz. As we have learned only too well, while it begins with Jews, it does not end with Jews. We have a responsibility to prevent and combat this insidious hatred.

4. The danger of Holocaust denial – the responsibility to repudiate false witness

The ultimate Orwellian inversion: the Holocaust denial movement whitewashes the crimes of the Nazis as it excoriates "the crimes" of the Jews.

The Holocaust denial movement – the cutting edge of antisemitism old and new – is not just an assault on Jewish memory and human dignity; it constitutes an international conspiracy to cover up the worst crimes in history. It is our responsibility to unmask the bearers of false witness – to expose the immorality of the deniers as we protect the dignity of their victims; and to guard against Holocaust inversion – the Nazification of Israel and the Jewish people – itself a form of Holocaust denial.

5. The perils of indifference and inaction in the face of mass atrocity and genocide – the responsibility to protect

Indifference and inaction always mean coming down on the side of the victimizer, never on the side of the victim.

In the face of evil, indifference is acquiescence, if not complicity in evil itself. For years now, we have known, but have yet to act, to stop the slaughter of the innocents in Syria, ignoring the lessons of history and mocking the Responsibility to Protect Doctrine. What makes the Holocaust, and more recently the genocides in Rwanda and in Darfur, so unspeakable is not only the horror of the genocides – which are horrific enough – but that these genocides were preventable. The international community cannot be bystanders to such horror – we must act.

6. The danger of impunity – the responsibility to bring war criminals to justice

Impunity only emboldens and encourages the war criminals and war crimes.

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. Accordingly, just as there must be no sanctuary for hate, no refuge for bigotry, so, too, there must be no base or sanctuary for these enemies of humankind.

7. The danger of "la trahison des clercs" – the betrayal of the elites - the responsibility to speak truth to power

The Holocaust was made possible not only because of the "bureaucratization of genocide", but because of the complicity of the elites - doctors, lawyers, judges, educators, faith leaders, engineers, architects, and the like.

Holocaust crimes then, were the crimes of the Nuremberg elites. It is our responsibility, to speak truth to power, and to hold power accountable to truth. The double entendre of Nuremberg – The Nuremberg of hate and the Nuremberg of justice – must be part of our learning as it is part of our legacy.

8. The danger of assaults on the vulnerable and powerless – the responsibility to intervene

It is our responsibility to give voice to the voiceless, to empower the powerless.

The vulnerability of the powerless and the powerlessness of the vulnerable are dramatized so painfully at Auschwitz by the remnants of shoes and suitcases, the crutches and hair of the murdered. Indeed, it is revealing that amongst the first group targeted for killing were the Jewish disabled, reminding us yet again of the need to prevent and combat injustice.

9. The danger of violence against women – the responsibility to prevent and protect

Significant numbers of the world's population are routinely subject to rape, assault, torture, starvation, humiliation, mutilation and even murder simply because they are female.

Horrific crimes against women have not only accompanied genocide or been in consequence of it, but have in fact been perpetrated in pursuit of it. Seventy years after the Holocaust, this lesson remains to be learned – and acted upon – whether we speak of the horrific crimes against women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or Syria, or elsewhere.

10. The danger of mass atrocities against children – the responsibility to prevent and protect

The destruction of millions of universes, of generations murdered and never to be realized.

If there is an atrocity that belies understanding, it is the willful exploitation, maiming and killing of a child – the most vulnerable of the vulnerable. The Nazi genocide was the genocide of millions of children, and 1.5 million children perished in the Holocaust of European Jewry. We have yet to learn from this most horrific of horrors, let alone act upon it; millions of children the world over continue to be subjected to arbitrary detention, torture, enslavement, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment, execution, and recruitment as "child soldiers" incited to terrorize and kill others.

11. The danger of the bystander community –the responsibility to remember and pay tribute to the rescuers

The righteous among the nations, of whom the Swedish non-Jew, Raoul Wallenberg - characterized as the greatest humanitarian of the 20th Century - is metaphor and message.

Raoul Wallenberg demonstrated how one person with the compassion to care, and the courage to act, can confront evil and transform history.

12. The imperative to respect the legacy of survivors of the Holocaust and other genocides

The legacy of light that emerges from the darkest of hatreds.

We must remember – and honour – the survivors of the Holocaust and other genocides, the true heroes of humanity. For they witnessed and endured the worst of inhumanity, but somehow found, in the depths of their own humanity, the courage to go on, to rebuild their lives as they helped build our communities.

WE REMEMBER, AND PLEDGE:

Never again will we be indifferent to incitement and hate;
Never again will we be silent in the face of evil;
Never again will we indulge racism and antisemitism;
Never again will we ignore the plight of the vulnerable; and
Never again will we be indifferent in the face of mass atrocity and impunity.

WE WILL SPEAK UP AND ACT against indifference, against racism, against hate, against antisemitism, against mass atrocity, against injustice, and against the crime of crimes whose name we should even shudder to mention: genocide.

Declared and adopted at the International Legal Symposium at Jagiellonian University in Poland, on "The Double Entendre of Nuremberg: the Nuremberg of Hate and the Nuremberg of Justice," May 4, 2016."