

**The Address of Petr Fiala,
Prime Minister of the Czech Republic,
on the occasion of the Holocaust Remembrance Day
and the Day of Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity
Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic
26th January 2024**

Mr. President of the Senate,

Mr. President of the Federation of Jewish Communities,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We commemorate the International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the Day of Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity, coinciding with the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp on tomorrow's date in 1945.

The Holocaust stands as the most significant crime in modern European history, claiming the lives of millions, including Jews, Roma, individuals from diverse minorities, opponents of the Nazis, and countless others.

These were individuals guilty of nothing, who paid with their lives simply for being different. Whether at home in this country or elsewhere in Europe, one day, inexplicably, they vanished.

It is crucial that we remember their fates, and I express gratitude to all—states, institutions, museums, and individuals—endeavoring to do so.

The Holocaust stands as a pivotal milestone in our history for generations worldwide. It urgently reminds us of the existence of both good and evil in humanity, emphasizing the constant need to strive and prevent the latter from overtaking our society.

The experience of the Holocaust forged a universally accepted social agreement. The ethos of the entire post-war world was built upon the resounding slogan: NEVER AGAIN.

It was an urgent slogan, universally comprehensible. It signified that we had absorbed the lessons, recognizing the peril of pointing fingers and blaming others for our own challenges.

How short-sighted it is to unleash hatred and turn a blind eye when individuals cease to be treated as human beings.

Regrettably, that ethos appears to be waning. The resounding slogan NEVER AGAIN is gradually fading, drowned out by other slogans. These alternative voices manifest in the hateful anti-Semitic chants during anti-Israel demonstrations across Europe, ignited by the recent surge of bewildering violence in Israel.

Daily, on social media, we recklessly encounter calls for the elimination of various ethnic groups.

We should be concerned. The increasing anti-Semitism and ethnic hatred serve as a litmus test that something is amiss in the Western world.

It arises when people start to forget the crucial historical lesson that evil is always in close proximity, capable of resurfacing among us at any time.

Hence, acts of violence must not be tolerated.

We must endeavor to engage in conversations with individuals who may be ensnared by animosity, those lacking a comprehensive understanding of history, or those yet to recognize the repercussions of embracing aggression as a commonplace or preferable stance.

It is our shared duty to safeguard the vulnerable and combat hatred, unwaveringly, each day.

Thank you.