

Welcome by Petr Papoušek
Chairman of the Federation of Jewish Communities in 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

Dear survivors,
Mr. President of the Senate,
Mr. Prime Minister,
Dear Ministers, Senators,
Your Excellencies, members of the diplomatic corps,
Dear Chief Rabbi,
Dear Mr. Cardinal,
Dear Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Foundation for Holocaust Victims, dear guests and television viewers.

Welcome to today's commemorative gathering, organized for the nineteenth time by the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic and the Foundation for Holocaust Victims in honor of Holocaust Remembrance Day and the Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity. My sincere thanks to President Vystrčil for graciously accepting the patronage and providing us with the opportunity to convene once again in these distinguished premises of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic.

79 years ago, the Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated. As we approach its 80th anniversary next year, it is disheartening that Jews, our relatives, family members, and children, do not feel secure in today's world, including Europe. The Hydra of anti-Semitism has surged dramatically since the days of Covid, reaching alarming levels today. We gather here to remember and construct a memory vital for our future and security. My gratitude extends to the Prime Minister and our Government for their support of the Holocaust Memorial Fund and other institutions dedicated to these concerns. Even in the minutest details, how we conduct ourselves as individuals and as a society holds significance. Evil must be confronted at its inception to prevent its manifestation in the final solution witnessed at the Auschwitz concentration camp.

I now invite the President of the Senate, Mr. Vystrčil, to deliver his opening remarks.