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STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS BY THE
PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE

Delivered by Minister Counsellor Henrik Malvik at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 26 January 2023

Thank you Mr. Chair

We join others in welcoming the President of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and thank her for her lucid address to the Permanent Council and the strong message conveyed.

Mr. Chair,

In 1940, there were about 2,100 Jews living in Norway. The Holocaust hit our Jewish community hard. 773 Jews were deported from Norway. Only 35 of them survived.

Norway will not forget, we are committed to remembering the lessons from the Holocaust and we are unwavering in our fight against antisemitism, together with the Jewish community in Norway. At the same time, we strongly oppose any attempt by any participating State to instrumentalize the history of holocaust and use twisted accusations of neo-Nazism and antisemitism for their own political and bellicose objectives.

Mr. Chair,

Norway has become a diverse society, and the government aims to protect this diversity. Hostile attitudes towards certain groups represents a threat to society and democracy. Both distant and recent history shows that antisemitism has indeed existed in Norway. The terrorist attacks in Norway in 2011 and 2019 clearly show the link between antisemitism and right-wing extremism.

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Every five years the Norwegian Centre for Holocaust and Minority Studies presents a survey on the attitudes of Norwegians towards Jews and other minorities. Since 2017, the surveys show a significant decrease in social distance from and dislike of Jews, while the prevalence of prejudices has remained stable. Results show that Muslims tend to have more negative experiences than Jews, but far more Jews than Muslims evade showing their religious affiliation out of fear of negative attitudes.

Mr. Chair,

The OSCE has many tools for assisting participating States in addressing tolerance and non-discrimination. The responsibility however lies with us, the participating States. For my government, it is important to emphasize that it is the responsibility of society at large to combat antisemitism.

The Norwegian Action Plan Against Anti-Semitism includes several components, including teaching about antisemitism in schools, enhancing knowledge through research and highlighting the breadth of Jewish culture.

It is a broad approach, because we know knowledge breaks down prejudice.

To conclude, I would like to express Norway's full support to the important work of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

Thank you.