



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Sixty-fifth Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz

As delivered by Political Counselor Casey Christensen
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 28, 2010

Sixty-five years ago yesterday Soviet troops liberated the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz. Over the following few months America and our allies liberated concentration camps at Buchenwald, Dachau, and Treblinka among others, exposing the horrific, unimaginable, and even unspeakable crimes of the Nazi regime.

Millions of people were killed because of their religion. Many were killed because of their race, their sexual orientation, or their politics. Two-thirds of the Jews living in Europe were murdered in the cruelest and most humiliating ways imaginable. The tools of science and industry were perverted to create factories of death.

As the camps were liberated, American and allied commanders made sure the world would have a vivid understanding of the horrors perpetrated. General Eisenhower ordered the residents from nearby towns to tour the camps. He brought Congressmen and journalists to bear witness so that no one could ever deny what happened.

But their work, and our work, is not yet done. To this day there are those who insist the Holocaust never happened; their denial of the truth is baseless and grounded in anti-Semitism, racism and hatred. Eisenhower's task has not ended; it falls to us to make sure the horrors of the Nazi regime are never forgotten and never repeated.

The President of the United States named yesterday, January 27, 2010, a day of remembrance for the Sixty-fifth Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz. The United Nations has named January 27 the annual International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust. This should not only be a day of remembrance, but a day to remind us all that in this age we must not allow the rise of hatred and intolerance to threaten our very humanity. Nor should our efforts be limited to combating anti-Semitism, but rather we should seek to counter all manifestations of discrimination and intolerance, which, as our ministers reaffirmed in Athens, "threaten the security of individuals and societal cohesion," and which "may give rise to conflict and violence on a wider scale."

We highly appreciate ODIHR's targeted work in tolerance education, awareness raising, prevention of hate crimes and law enforcement training. We also fully support the valuable efforts of the CiO's Personal Representatives for Tolerance and Non-Discrimination including Rabbi Andrew Baker and his tireless work to counter anti-Semitism in the OSCE area.

We welcome Kazakhstan's choice to promote interfaith and intercultural tolerance as one of its highest priorities during its chairmanship and we hope all participating States will follow this call by redoubling efforts in implementing relevant OSCE commitments.

Today, as we remember the horrors of the Holocaust, we have the opportunity as well as the obligation to commit ourselves to resisting injustice and intolerance in whatever forms they may take to help give meaning when we say, "Never again."

Thank you, Mister Chairman.