

SPEECH 1: STATEMENT ON HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Today, on Yom HaShoah, we solemnly remember the six million Jews and the millions of others murdered by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

On this day, we honor the memory of the millions of individuals – the mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, friends and neighbors – who lost their lives during a time of unparalleled depravity and inhumanity. We reaffirm our ongoing responsibility as citizens and as a nation to live out the admonition, “Never forget. Never again.” And we commit ourselves to preserving the memories of those who lived through the horrors of the Shoah, so that their experiences are not forgotten by our generation or by our children or grandchildren.

We also honor those who survived the Holocaust, many of them spared from death because of the righteous individuals who risked their lives to save Jews and other victims from Nazi persecution. The stories of these survivors and their protectors remind us to confront persecution wherever it arises, and that silence can be an accomplice to evil. They remind us of our duty to counter the rising tide of anti-Semitism, bigotry and hatred that threaten the values we hold dear—pluralism, diversity, and the freedoms of religion and expression.

Today, and every day, we stand in solidarity with the Jewish community both at home and abroad. We stand with those who are leaving the European cities where they have lived for generations because they no longer feel safe, with the members of institutions that have been attacked because of their Jewish affiliations, and with the college students forced to confront swastikas appearing on their campuses. And we call upon all people of good will to be vigilant and vocal against every form of bigotry.

When we recognize our interconnectedness and the fundamental dignity and equality of every human being, we help to build a world that is more accepting, secure and free. This is the best way to honor the legacy we recognize on Yom HaShoah and to fulfill our responsibilities to repair our world from generation to generation.