

# PALABRAS DE S.M. EL REY EN EL INTERNATIONAL LEADER'S FORUM CON OCASIÓN DEL DÍA INTERNACIONAL DE CONMEMORACIÓN DEL HOLOCAUSTO

Jerusalén (Israel), 22.01.2020

It is a great honour—and I am humbled—to take the floor this evening when we gather for tomorrow's 5th World Holocaust Forum; a remarkable assembly of world leaders committed to memory, to a just cause and to a moral obligation. Thank you President Rivlin, and thank you for your wise words, always a source of inspiration. I am sure each one of us here would have thoughts to express in this historic event; I will only modestly try to condense some of them.

75 years later the world does not forget, the world still remembers and commits to be vigilant. This is what this impressive gathering here today has decided to state with firmness and clarity.

Our great Jewish thinker Moses Maimonides, born in Sefarad, in the city of Cordoba, wrote in those Middle Ages, following the steps of other outstanding thinkers: "All the great evils which men cause to each other originate in ignorance". Indeed Humanity has suffered its darkest hours when millions of innocent lives of many walks-of-life and countless communities have been made to disappear abruptly by blind, perverse and ignorant hatred.

Because there is no greater evil than that which stems from ignoring that all women and men are equal, and that every single human being is endowed with the greatest dignity. People cannot show greater recklessness than when they think they are above others, when they feel entitled to discriminate, to condone intolerance or to promote resentment against others for political gain, religious extremism, or racial hatred.

We can find the remedy to such malicious and immoral disregarding of the dignity of "the other", first-and-foremost, in the example of those who have suffered from its murderous enmity. I am sure Prof. Bauer and Dr. Kantor will speak to us on this matter a million times better than I ever could; and tomorrow at Yad Vashem we will have the honour to meet some of the survivors of the death camps.

For decades, these men and women have enlightened us on the importance of keeping alive the memory of their terrible experience. Forgetting the Shoah, would not only dishonour the memory of millions of victims, but would also be extremely dangerous.

However, we know well that, in spite of all the painstaking effort by those who gave us—or still do so today—their personal testimony (or from their relatives), of all the powerful inspiration this brings to us, remembrance alone is unfortunately not enough. We also know that barbarism can grow when least expected, even amidst advanced technology and culture. We are never fully safe from it, and in different degrees, we still see it today hitting hard in different parts of our world. We just cannot look the other way; we need to persevere in implementing, teaching and living-by, the principles and values of the International Bill of Human Rights.

We have come today, Mr. President, not only to show our respect for survivors and our repugnance for what happened—not that long ago—in Auschwitz-Birkenau and many other places.

We are also here—perhaps primarily—to show our unyielding commitment in bringing all the necessary efforts of our respective countries in order to fight the ignorant intolerance, hatred and the total lack of human empathy that permitted and gave birth to the Holocaust. Because preventing those civilizational sicknesses, is a collective but also an individual responsibility. There is no room for indifference in the presence of racism, xenophobia, hate speech and antisemitism.

Disturbingly, we are currently witnessing a surge of hideous attacks on Jews in several parts of the world. So many times in History animosity against Jews has shamefully proven to be a symptom and a crude example of intolerance and aversion towards the different others.

Having a precious, rich and complex Jewish past and a vibrant Jewish community, Spain decided to create a solid framework of rules and initiatives to fight relentlessly against antisemitism and every form of xenophobia and racism. There are, of course, many more Nations—both present here and others—that are making similar efforts and progress; but, while I remain optimistic, I know—we all know—that we will always need to persevere together so that those words we have repeated so many times, "never again", remain our guiding and unwithering principle.

NEVER AGAIN, LEOLÁM LO OD.