

Jordan



PERMANENT MISSION OF H.K. OF JORDAN TO THE UNITED NATION

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Statement

by

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to the United Nations**

before

the Sixtieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Item 72: Holocaust Remembrance

New York, 31 October 2005

Mr. President,

It is appropriate for us to have another discussion on the Holocaust within the context of the work of the General Assembly, for we should never cease to draw the relevant lessons from this astonishing and terrifying period of human experience. The Holocaust was, and is, a different genocide; a genocide where wickedness fell into union with human organization and efficiency of a sort hitherto unheard of, one which turned a continent into a slaughterhouse, with twentieth-century specifications. In sum, it was a crime of the most colossal proportions.

Therefore, in our invocation of history, which is what this resolution is all about, we must be precise, and accurate. While most delegations here would view this topic as the historical narrative of others, for Europeans, the narrative is memory -- as was stated most eloquently by the distinguished representatives of Norway, Austria, Hungary and Romania, in this hall on the 24 January 2005.

Mr. President,

It is certainly not the intention of this delegation to cast any aspersions in the direction of any particular quarter, for the Europe of today is not the Europe of the first half of the twentieth century. But there can be no sound discussion of this most serious issue, without acknowledging the context in which it occurred.

The Holocaust was, in its broadest sense, a crime inflicted on European soil, by Europeans against Europeans. The administrative and logistical exertions in the commission of the crime were undertaken not just, as we know, by the Nazis of Germany, but also by several other sympathetic governments from across Europe; governments who arrested their own nationals -- when no crime had been committed -- and who seized their estates and titles, virtually all that these people owned, before then transporting them: men, women and children, the elderly and the infirm, off to other parts of Europe to confront an uncertain, often terrible, fate. While other governments invoked policies amounting to indifference.

Sixty years on, we live at a time when it is still difficult for the vast majority of member states to examine their own national histories to their very limits, particularly their modern histories. And while we should continue, of course, to feel great pride in what good we find in them, we must also begin to reckon with what in our national memory is distasteful or was perhaps even criminal or terrible. It is therefore extraordinary and encouraging how a few European states have started to follow the example set by Germany many years ago, in beginning a process of recovering memory and in beginning a painful, critical, though ultimately a liberating, self-examination, where their part in the Holocaust is concerned.

But to what other purpose, must we all draw on our memories generally, and, in this instance, the memories of others? First and foremost, we must of course remind ourselves the extent to which chauvinistic nationalisms or philosophies of negation can be pernicious. In the context of Europe in the 1930s, these feelings were channeled in the form of a virulent and abhorrent anti-Semitism. Today, they could fan a revived anti-Semitism, or they could also appear in the form of other expressions, akin to what we all witnessed recently in the Balkans and in certain parts of Africa.

Mr. President,

Given the historical suffering of the Jewish people and in view of the fact that European Jewry was the principal victim of the Holocaust, there has been a tendency by some to view the refrain: "never again" solely within that understanding, the context of the Jewish people and their future.

The concentrations of evil found within the historical experience that is the Holocaust, does however bring the point home for all peoples everywhere, Jewish and otherwise. And the principal lesson drawn by one hundred members of this General Assembly, is that if we are ever to make genocide, and the like, truly unthinkable in the future, not only must we confront, squarely, the philosophies of negation within our own societies, wherever and whenever they occur, but we must also support, collectively, the existence of the world's only permanent judicial body designed to end impunity for the gravest of crimes -- if we are to give true meaning to the phrase "never again" -- and that body is of course the International Criminal Court.

Unfortunately, and by contrast, "never again" is also sometimes used as a form of moral justification for the implementation, by one state, of some policies, the effect of which is the continued domination of one people by another, is the continued degradation of one people by another, and that is deeply unfortunate.

Mr. President,

Ultimately, we hope this occasion and ones like this will enable us to derive the right lessons from the atrocities committed by the Nazis and by their accomplices, to ensure such crimes will not come to blight the twenty-first century, as it begins to unfold before us.