

**Secretary-General's video message for the Informal Meeting of the General Assembly
to address concerns of a rise in anti-semitism worldwide**

New York, 22 January 2015

I could not join you in person for this important meeting. However, I wanted to send this video message to express my solidarity in the fight against anti-Semitism worldwide.

This meeting has been prompted by the troubling rise of anti-Semitic attacks in Europe. But of course, anti-Semitism is one of the oldest forms of prejudice known to humankind.

Over the centuries, and across the world, Jews have been slaughtered and mistreated solely for being Jews. They have suffered banishment and exile, stereotyping and exclusion. They have experienced a full spectrum of abuse – from insidious bias to overt violence, including terrorism in supermarkets, homes and houses of worship. The systematic murder of millions of European Jews in the Holocaust showed anti-Semitism at its most monstrous.

One of the cardinal missions of the United Nations is to prevent such horrors. A United Nations that wants to be true to its founding aims and ideals has a duty to speak out against anti-Semitism.

Our efforts to build a world of mutual understanding are being severely tested today by rising extremism and barbaric acts. The poison of hatred is loose in too many places. Jews remain targets, as do Muslims and so many others. Our responses must avoid perpetuating the cycles of demonization and playing into the hands of those who seek to divide.

We must also avoid another trap involving the Middle East conflict. Grievances about Israeli actions must never be used as an excuse to attack Jews. In the same vein, criticisms of Israeli actions should not be summarily dismissed as anti-Semitism. This only suppresses dialogue and hinders the search for peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The fight against anti-Semitism is inseparable from our wider quest for peaceful coexistence and human rights for all. Where anti-Semitism flourishes, other forms of discrimination are sure to be there, too. But when we counter anti-Semitism, we uphold our common humanity. The fight against anti-Semitism is a fight for all of us.

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