

Director General Fedotov,
Excellencies,
Dear János,
Distinguished Guests,

Let me express my heartfelt thanks to the organizers of this event to commemorate the tragedy of the Holocaust at the Vienna International Center, the home of the UN in Vienna.

The undeniable historical facts – namely the estimated 580.000 Hungarian Jews and 100.000 Hungarian Roma victims of the Holocaust sadly justify that Hungary has a prominent place among those nations in Europe bearing responsibility. This event also marks the moral imperative to remember one of the highest losses in human life as a consequence of the darkest chapter of 20th century history.

As Minister János Martonyi said in his speech delivered at the conference “*Jewish Life and Anti-Semitism in Contemporary Europe*” organized by the Tom Lantos Institute in the Hungarian Parliament last October: „*The Holocaust had been committed by Hungarians against Hungarians; this is the greatest national trauma for us, which we must face*”.

In response to the recommendation of Hungarian Jewish organizations and with a view to mourning, remembering and finding out more about the tragic events of the year 1944, Prime Minister Orbán set up *the Hungarian Holocaust 2014 Memorial Committee* and declared the year 2014 *the Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year*.

The Hungarian Government is honored that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has undertaken to be chief patron of 2014 as the Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year.

The Memorial Year will serve to remember the tremendous loss the Hungarian nation suffered and to reinforce the culture of tolerance among all Hungarians. In fact, emphasizing "never again" not only as a national responsibility for the past but also as an individual duty for the future, should be the principal message for the 21st century for Hungarians and the wider international community.

Hungary is also represented today at the memorial service to be held at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, and an international Holocaust conference is jointly organized in Budapest by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Holocaust Documentation Centre and Memorial Collection.

Furthermore, the Government of Hungary has established a 5 million euro fund for NGOs and local governments for programs of the Holocaust Memorial Year.

We believe that education is the core of social remembrance and plays a crucial role in reinforcing the social process of raising awareness amongst young people. It is of utmost importance to raise awareness of the destructive nature of the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century already at the primary school level.

Accordingly, the Government of Hungary was the first in the world to introduce a memorial day for the victims of the Holocaust in its schools. The Government is working to further strengthen Holocaust remembrance in our educational system in close cooperation with Jewish communities.

We are proud that, following a unanimous decision last year by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), Hungary will take over the presidency of the organization in 2015. We consider this decision as an acknowledgement of the efforts made by the Hungarian Government over the past few years to promote and support Holocaust education and remembrance as well as its sincere commitment to fight anti-Semitism.

I am particularly happy to see that the same spirit to involve the young generations in this fight is manifested in the intentions of the International Poster Competition "*Keeping the memory alive – journeys through the Holocaust*" as part of the United Nations Holocaust and Outreach program 2014.

Finally, let me recognize the creative efforts of all the participants in this important initiative and wish them every success. Their efforts are testimony to the fact that remembrance and responsibility can come together and say "never again".