

STATEMENT OF THE WORLD HOLOCAUST FORUM 23RD JANUARY 2020

Statement on the World Holocaust Forum, 23rd of January 2020

His Beatitude Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem

"We mourn for those who suffered and died so terribly in Auschwitz-Birkenau, and throughout the Holocaust. We pray for comfort for all of those with family members no longer here because of these atrocities. All people must heed the lessons of history and never fail to stand alongside our neighbours of different culture, ethnicity and faith, to ensure their freedom and safety."

"We thank God for those whose very lives today are a victory over the unimaginable evil of the Shoah. We thank God for those who risked torture and death to save their Jewish neighbours for no other reason than because it was the path of righteousness. We humbly ask God to give us eyes to see the seeds of injustice as they are sown, and the courage to act in righteousness as the best of us have before."

"What must we learn from this? We must all remain vigilant against such evil, and teach the generations to come the deep truth, that God is reflected in every single human soul, that every human is precious. Yet there is more. We honour the memory of those who died for their neighbours by following their example of love and courage, of mercy and forgiveness. We bear witness to the world through the love we show to each other and to our neighbours. Our great responsibilities, given to us by God, require us to struggle for unity of the Body of Christ, and as one body to care for our neighbours as ourselves."

"We must never forget the despicable acts of the past, but they do not and must not define our future. Every act of love and mercy, every act of kindness, every time a neighbour does not pursue a claim but shows forgiveness, each of these is another brick in the house that shelters all of humanity."

"Our Lord Jesus Christ declared that God's great blessings come to those who are peacemakers, those who show mercy, those who mourn, and those who are persecuted because of him. For those that share our faith whether they are leaders or the most humble congregant, each must make every effort according to their means in these holy tasks and will receive blessings accordingly. The merciful will be shown mercy. The peacemakers will be called children of God. Today as leaders of many faiths and cultures stand in sorrow and reflection for past evil we pray for a new wellspring of hope; for peace, for mutual understanding, for selflessness, and for mercy."

"On this day, we also remember Ms Naama Issachar, and pray for her return to her family. Having personally met with His Excellency President Putin, we know him to be a true friend to the Jewish people across the globe, and to the people of Israel. On this day of remembrance, we are hopeful that he will grant Ms Issachar her freedom as a sign of the friendship and goodwill between the Russian and Israeli people. Amen."

From Secretariat-General