

מדינת ישראל
משרד החוץ

26

PM Benjamin Netanyahu's Remarks at the UN General Assembly

(Communicated by the Prime Minister's Media Adviser)

Following is a transcript of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's remarks today (Thursday, 22 September), at the United Nations General Assembly in New York:

"Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

What I'm about to say is going to shock you: Israel has a bright future at the UN.

Now I know that hearing that from me must surely come as a surprise, because year after year I've stood at this very podium and slammed the UN for its obsessive bias against Israel. And the UN deserved every scathing word – for the disgrace of the General Assembly that last year passed 20 resolutions against the democratic State of Israel and a grand total of three resolutions against all the other countries on the planet.

Israel – twenty; rest of the world – three.

And what about the joke called the UN Human Rights Council, which each year condemns Israel more than all the countries of the world combined. As women are being systematically raped, murdered, sold into slavery across the world, which is the only country that the UN's Commission on Women chose to condemn this year? Yep, you guessed it – Israel. Israel. Israel where women fly fighter jets, lead major corporations, head universities, preside – twice – over the Supreme Court, and have served as Speaker of the Knesset and Prime Minister.

And this circus continues at UNESCO. UNESCO, the UN body charged with preserving world heritage. Now, this is hard to believe but UNESCO just denied the 4,000 year connection between the Jewish people and its holiest site, the Temple Mount. That's just as absurd as denying the connection between the Great Wall of China and China.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The UN, begun as a moral force, has become a moral farce. So when it comes to Israel at the UN, you'd probably think nothing will ever change, right? Well think again. You see, everything will change and a lot sooner than you think. The change will happen in this hall, because back home, your governments are rapidly changing their attitudes towards Israel. And sooner or later, that's going to change the way you vote on Israel at the UN.

More and more nations in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America, more and more nations see Israel as a potent partner – a partner in fighting the terrorism of today, a partner in developing the technology of tomorrow.

Today Israel has diplomatic relations with over 160 countries. That's nearly double the number that we had when I served here as Israel's ambassador some 30 years ago. And those ties are getting broader and deeper every day. World leaders increasingly appreciate that Israel is a powerful country with one of the best intelligence services on earth. Because of our unmatched experience and proven capabilities in fighting terrorism, many of your governments seek our help in keeping your countries safe.

Many also seek to benefit from Israel's ingenuity in agriculture, in health, in water, in cyber and in the fusion of big data, connectivity and artificial intelligence – that fusion that is changing our world in every way.

You might consider this: Israel leads the world in recycling wastewater. We recycle about 90% of our wastewater. Now, how remarkable is that? Well, given that the next country on the list only recycles about 20% of its wastewater, Israel is a global water power. So if you have a thirsty world, and we do, there's no better ally than Israel.

How about cybersecurity? That's an issue that affects everyone. Israel accounts for one-tenth of one percent of the world's population, yet last year we attracted some 20% of the global private investment in cybersecurity. I want you to digest that number. In cyber, Israel is punching a whopping 200 times above its weight. So Israel is also a global cyber power. If hackers are targeting your banks, your planes, your power grids and just about everything else, Israel can offer indispensable help.

Governments are changing their attitudes towards Israel because they know that Israel can help them protect their peoples, can help them feed them, can help them better their lives.

This summer I had an unbelievable opportunity to see this change so vividly during an unforgettable visit to four African countries. This is the first visit to Africa by an Israeli prime minister in decades. Later today, I'll be meeting with leaders from 17 African countries. We'll discuss how Israeli technology can help them in their efforts to transform their countries.

In Africa, things are changing. In China, India, Russia, Japan, attitudes towards Israel have changed as well. These powerful nations know that, despite Israel's small size, it can make a big difference in many, many areas that are important to them.

But now I'm going to surprise you even more. You see, the biggest change in attitudes towards Israel is taking place elsewhere. It's taking place in the Arab world. Our peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan continue to be anchors of stability in the volatile Middle East. But I have to tell you this: For the first time in my lifetime, many other states in the region recognize that Israel is not their enemy. They recognize that Israel is their ally. Our common enemies are Iran and ISIS. Our common goals are security, prosperity and peace. I believe that in the years ahead we will work together to achieve these goals, work together openly.

So Israel's diplomatic relations are undergoing nothing less than a revolution. But in this revolution, we never forget that our most cherished alliance, our deepest friendship is with the United States of America, the most powerful and the most generous nation on earth. Our unbreakable bond with the United States of America transcends parties and politics. It reflects, above all else, the overwhelming support for Israel among the American people, support which is at record highs and for which we are deeply grateful.

The United Nations denounces Israel; the United States supports Israel. And a central pillar of that defense has been America's consistent support for Israel at the UN. I appreciate President Obama's commitment to that longstanding US policy. In fact, the only time that the United States cast a UN Security Council veto during the Obama presidency was against an anti-Israel resolution in 2011. As President Obama rightly declared at this podium, peace will not come from statements and resolutions at the United Nations.

I believe the day is not far off when Israel will be able to rely on many, many countries to stand with us at the UN. Slowly but surely, the days when UN ambassadors reflexively condemn Israel, those days are coming to an end.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's automatic majority against Israel at the UN reminds me of the story, the incredible story of Hiroo Onoda. Hiroo was a Japanese soldier who was sent to the Philippines in 1944. He lived in the jungle. He scavenged for food. He evaded capture. Eventually he surrendered, but that didn't happen until 1974, some 30 years after World War II ended. For decades, Hiroo refused to believe the war was over. As Hiroo was hiding in the jungle, Japanese

tourists were swimming in pools in American luxury hotels in nearby Manila. Finally, mercifully, Hiroo's former commanding officer was sent to persuade him to come out of hiding. Only then did Hiroo lay down his arms.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished delegates from so many lands,

I have one message for you today: Lay down your arms. The war against Israel at the UN is over. Perhaps some of you don't know it yet, but I am confident that one day in the not too distant future you will also get the message from your president or from your prime minister informing you that the war against Israel at the United Nations has ended. Yes, I know, there might be a storm before the calm. I know there is talk about ganging up on Israel at the UN later this year. Given its history of hostility towards Israel, does anyone really believe that Israel will let the UN determine our security and our vital national interests?

We will not accept any attempt by the UN to dictate terms to Israel. The road to peace runs through Jerusalem and Ramallah, not through New York.

But regardless of what happens in the months ahead, I have total confidence that in the years ahead the revolution in Israel's standing among the nations will finally penetrate this hall of nations. I have so much confidence, in fact, that I predict that a decade from now an Israeli prime minister will stand right here where I am standing and actually applaud the UN. But I want to ask you: Why do we have to wait a decade? Why keep vilifying Israel? Perhaps because some of you don't appreciate that the obsessive bias against Israel is not just a problem for my country, it's a problem for your countries too. Because if the UN spends so much time condemning the only liberal democracy in the Middle East, it has far less time to address war, disease, poverty, climate change and all the other serious problems that plague the planet.

Are the half million slaughtered Syrians helped by your condemnation of Israel? The same Israel that has treated thousands of injured Syrians in our hospitals, including a field hospital that I built right along the Golan Heights border with Syria. Are the gays hanging from cranes in Iran helped by your denigration of Israel? That same Israel where gays march proudly in our streets and serve in our parliament, including I'm proud to say in my own Likud party. Are the starving children in North Korea's brutal tyranny, are they helped by your demonization of Israel? Israel, whose agricultural knowhow is feeding the hungry throughout

the developing world?

The sooner the UN's obsession with Israel ends, the better. The better for Israel, the better for your countries, the better for the UN itself.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

If UN habits die hard, Palestinian habits die even harder. President Abbas just attacked from this podium the Balfour Declaration. He's preparing a lawsuit against Britain for that declaration from 1917. That's almost 100 years ago – talk about being stuck in the past. The Palestinians may just as well sue Iran for the Cyrus Declaration, which enabled the Jews to rebuild our Temple in Jerusalem 2,500 years ago. Come to think of it, why not a Palestinian class action suit against Abraham for buying that plot of land in Hebron where the fathers and mothers of the Jewish people were buried 4,000 years ago? You're not laughing. It's as absurd as that. To sue the British government for the Balfour Declaration? Is he kidding? And this is taken seriously here?

President Abbas attacked the Balfour Declaration because it recognized the right of the Jewish people to a national home in the land of Israel. When the United Nations supported the establishment of a Jewish state in 1947, it recognized our historical and our moral rights in our homeland and to our homeland. Yet today, nearly 70 years later, the Palestinians still refuse to recognize those rights – not our right to a homeland, not our right to a state, not our right to anything. And this remains the true core of the conflict, the persistent Palestinian refusal to recognize the Jewish state in any boundary. You see, this conflict is not about the settlements. It never was.

The conflict raged for decades before there was a single settlement, when Judea Samaria [the West Bank] and Gaza were all in Arab hands. The West Bank and Gaza were in Arab hands and they attacked us again and again and again. And when we uprooted all 21 settlements in Gaza and withdrew from every last inch of Gaza, we didn't get peace from Gaza – we got thousands of rockets fired at us from Gaza.

This conflict rages because for the Palestinians, the real settlements they're after are Haifa, Jaffa and Tel Aviv.

Now mind you, the issue of settlements is a real one and it can and must be resolved in final status negotiations. But this conflict has never been about the settlements or about establishing a Palestinian state. It's always been about the existence of a Jewish state, a Jewish state in any boundary.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Israel is ready, I am ready to negotiate all final status issues but one thing I will never negotiate: Our right to the one and only Jewish state.

Wow, sustained applause for the Prime Minister of Israel in the General Assembly? The change may be coming sooner than I thought.

Had the Palestinians said yes to a Jewish state in 1947, there would have been no war, no refugees and no conflict. And when the Palestinians finally say yes to a Jewish state, we will be able to end this conflict once and for all.

Now here's the tragedy, because, see, the Palestinians are not only trapped in the past, their leaders are poisoning the future.

I want you to imagine a day in the life of a 13-year-old Palestinian boy, I'll call him Ali. Ali wakes up before school, he goes to practice with a soccer team named after Dalal Mughrabi, a Palestinian terrorist responsible for the murder of a busload of 37 Israelis. At school, Ali attends an event sponsored by the Palestinian Ministry of Education honoring Baha Alyan, who last year murdered three Israeli civilians. On his walk home, Ali looks up at a towering statue erected just a few weeks ago by the Palestinian Authority to honor Abu Sukar, who detonated a bomb in the center of Jerusalem, killing 15 Israelis.

When Ali gets home, he turns on the TV and sees an interview with a senior Palestinian official, Jibril Rajoub, who says that if he had a nuclear bomb, he'd detonate it over Israel that very day. Ali then turns on the radio and he hears President Abbas's adviser, Sultan Abu al-Einein, urging Palestinians, here's a quote, "to slit the throats of Israelis wherever you find them." Ali checks his Facebook and he sees a recent post by President Abbas's Fatah Party calling the massacre of 11 Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics a "heroic act". On YouTube, Ali watches a clip of President Abbas himself saying, "We welcome every drop of

blood spilled in Jerusalem." Direct quote.

Over dinner, Ali asks his mother what would happen if he killed a Jew and went to an Israeli prison? Here's what she tells him. She tells him he'd be paid thousands of dollars each month by the Palestinian Authority. In fact, she tells him, the more Jews he would kill, the more money he'd get. Oh, and when he gets out of prison, Ali would be guaranteed a job with the Palestinian Authority.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All this is real. It happens every day, all the time. Sadly, Ali represents hundreds of thousands of Palestinian children who are indoctrinated with hate every moment, every hour.

This is child abuse.

Imagine your child undergoing this brainwashing. Imagine what it takes for a young boy or girl to break free out of this culture of hate. Some do but far too many don't. How can any of us expect young Palestinians to support peace when their leaders poison their minds against peace?

We in Israel don't do this. We educate our children for peace. In fact, we recently launched a pilot program, my government did, to make the study of Arabic mandatory for Jewish children so that we can better understand each other, so that we can live together side-by-side in peace.

Of course, like all societies Israel has fringe elements. But it's our response to those fringe elements, it's our response to those fringe elements that makes all the difference.

Take the tragic case of Ahmed Dawabsha. I'll never forget visiting Ahmed in the hospital just hours after he was attacked. A little boy, really a baby, he was badly burned. Ahmed was the victim of a horrible terrorist act perpetrated by Jews. He lay bandaged and unconscious as Israeli doctors worked around the clock to save him.

No words can bring comfort to this boy or to his family. Still, as I stood by his bedside I told his uncle, "This is not our people. This is not our way." I then ordered extraordinary measures to bring Ahmed's assailants to justice and today the Jewish citizens of Israel accused of attacking the Dawabsha family are in jail awaiting trial.

Now, for some, this story shows that both sides have their extremists and both sides are equally responsible for this seemingly endless conflict.

But what Ahmed's story actually proves is the very opposite. It illustrates the profound difference between our two societies, because while Israeli leaders condemn terrorists, all terrorists, Arabs and Jews alike, Palestinian leaders celebrate terrorists. While Israel jails the handful of Jewish terrorists among us, the Palestinians pay thousands of terrorists among them.

So I call on President Abbas: you have a choice to make. You can continue to stoke hatred as you did today or you can finally confront hatred and work with me to establish peace between our two peoples.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hear the buzz. I know that many of you have given up on peace. But I want you to know – I have not given up on peace. I remain committed to a vision of peace based on two states for two peoples. I believe as never before that changes taking place in the Arab world today offer a unique opportunity to advance that peace.

I commend President el-Sisi of Egypt for his efforts to advance peace and stability in our region. Israel welcomes the spirit of the Arab peace initiative and welcomes a dialogue with Arab states to advance a broader peace. I believe that for that broader peace to be fully achieved the Palestinians have to be part of it. I'm ready to begin negotiations to achieve this today – not tomorrow, not next week, today.

President Abbas spoke here an hour ago. Wouldn't it be better if instead of speaking past each other we were speaking to one another? President Abbas, instead of railing against Israel at

the United Nations in New York, I invite you to speak to the Israeli people at the Knesset in Jerusalem. And I would gladly come to speak to the Palestinian parliament in Ramallah.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While Israel seeks peace with all our neighbors, we also know that peace has no greater enemy than the forces of militant Islam. The bloody trail of this fanaticism runs through all the continents represented here. It runs through Paris and Nice, Brussels and Baghdad, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, Minnesota and New York, from Sydney to San Bernardino. So many have suffered its savagery: Christians and Jews, women and gays, Yazidis and Kurds and many, many others.

Yet the heaviest price, the heaviest price of all has been paid by innocent Muslims. Hundreds of thousands unmercifully slaughtered. Millions turned into desperate refugees, tens of millions brutally subjugated. The defeat of militant Islam will thus be a victory for all humanity, but it would especially be a victory for those many Muslims who seek a life without fear, a life of peace, a life of hope.

But to defeat the forces of militant Islam, we must fight them relentlessly. We must fight them in the real world. We must fight them in the virtual world. We must dismantle their networks, disrupt their funding, discredit their ideology. We can defeat them and we will defeat them. Medievalism is no match for modernity. Hope is stronger than hate, freedom mightier than fear.

We can do this.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Israel fights this fateful battle against the forces of militant Islam every day. We keep our borders safe from ISIS, we prevent the smuggling of game-changing weapons to Hezbollah in Lebanon, we thwart Palestinian terror attacks in Judea and Samaria, the West Bank, and we deter missile attacks from Hamas-controlled Gaza.

That's the same Hamas terror organization that cruelly, unbelievably cruelly refuses to return three of our citizens and the bodies of our fallen soldiers, Oron Shaul and Hadar Goldin. Hadar Goldin's parents, Leah and Simcha Goldin, are here with us today. They have one request – to bury their beloved son in Israel. All they ask for is one simple thing – to be able to visit the grave of their fallen son Hadar in Israel. Hamas refuses. They couldn't care less.

I implore you to stand with them, with us, with all that's decent in our world against the inhumanity of Hamas – all that is indecent and barbaric. Hamas breaks every humanitarian rule in the book, throw the book at them.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The greatest threat to my country, to our region, and ultimately to our world remains the militant Islamic regime of Iran. Iran openly seeks Israel's annihilation. It threatens countries across the Middle East, it sponsors terror worldwide.

This year, Iran has fired ballistic missiles in direct defiance of Security Council Resolutions. It has expended its aggression in Iraq, in Syria, in Yemen. Iran, the world's foremost sponsor of terrorism continued to build its global terror network. That terror network now spans five continents.

So my point to you is this: The threat Iran poses to all of us is not behind us, it's before us. In the coming years, there must be a sustained and united effort to push back against Iran's aggression and Iran's terror. With the nuclear constraints on Iran one year closer to being removed, let me be clear: Israel will not allow the terrorist regime in Iran to develop nuclear weapons – not now, not in a decade, not ever.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I stand before you today at a time when Israel's former president, Shimon Peres, is fighting for his life. Shimon is one of Israel's founding fathers, one of its boldest statesmen, one of its most respected leaders. I know you will all join me and join all the people of Israel in wishing him refuah shlemah Shimon, a speedy recovery.

I've always admired Shimon's boundless optimism, and like him, I too am filled with hope. I am filled with hope because Israel is capable of defending itself by itself against any threat. I am filled with hope because the valor of our fighting men and women is second to none. I am filled with hope because I know the forces of civilization will ultimately triumph over the forces of terror. I am filled with hope because in the age of innovation, Israel – the innovation nation – is thriving as never before. I am filled with hope because Israel works tirelessly to advance equality and opportunity for all its citizens: Jews, Muslims, Christians, Druze, everyone. And I am filled with hope because despite all the naysayers, I believe that in the years ahead, Israel will forge a lasting peace with all our neighbors.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am hopeful about what Israel can accomplish because I've seen what Israel has accomplished. In 1948, the year of Israel's independence, our population was 800,000. Our main export was oranges. People said then we were too small, too weak, too isolated, too demographically outnumbered to survive, let alone thrive. The skeptics were wrong about Israel then; the skeptics are wrong about Israel now.

Israel's population has grown tenfold, our economy fortyfold. Today our biggest export is technology – Israeli technology, which powers the world's computers, cellphones, cars and so much more.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The future belongs to those who innovate and this is why the future belongs to countries like Israel. Israel wants to be your partner in seizing that future, so I call on all of you: Cooperate with Israel, embrace Israel, dream with Israel. Dream of the future that we can build together, a future of breathtaking progress, a future of security, prosperity and peace, a future of hope for all humanity, a future where even at the UN, even in this hall, Israel will finally, inevitably, take its rightful place among the nations.

Thank you."

מח' מידע והפקה – אגף תקשורת והסברה

**מדינת ישראל
משרד החוץ**

30 June 2016

PM Netanyahu's Fourth of July statement at US Ambassador's Residence

(Communicated by the Prime Minister's Media Adviser)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issued the following statement at the Fourth of July event at US Ambassador Daniel Shapiro's residence:

"This night of celebrations comes after a day of tragedy. In Kiryat Arba, near Hebron, the city of our forefathers, young Hallel Yaffa Ariel, a 13-year-old, was murdered lying in her bunk

bed.

What makes someone slit the throat of a child? It's not the quest for peace. It's a mind flooded with hate and incitement, an ideology that says this child is not a human being.

And this ideology of hate was manifested again when another would-be murderer knifed two Israelis in Netanya a few miles from here.

We will always fight the terrorists. We will fight their despatchers; we will fight the inciters; we will fight the sponsors. You do battle with terrorism by fighting the terrorists and those who back them.

This is our position; this is the American position. And I repeat it here on this day, the Fourth of July, which also commemorates the fortieth anniversary of the rescue at Entebbe, in which we fought terrorism and we received much support.

I was in the United States at the time and learned of my brother's death when he led the rescue party at the old terminal at Entebbe. But I remember the support of the American people. That hasn't changed – it's grown. And the support of successive governments – that's grown.

I want to use this opportunity, as we celebrate the Fourth of July, to thank President Obama, Vice President Biden, Secretary Kerry, with whom I just spent a fruitful day in Rome, to reaffirm again that our greatest alliance, our most basic alliance is with the United States of America.

We have an increasing number of friends around the world. We do, and it's heartening. But we never forget that the one true partnership is between the State of Israel and the United States. And I want to tell you why the US-Israel alliance has weathered every storm and every difficulty and will continue to do so.

The answer is deceptively simple. It's because when Americans look at Israel, they see themselves, and when Israelis look at America, they too see themselves.

Now, there are differences. It's true, we're going to eat Big Macs. It's true – that's not a difference. But we drink chocolate milk out of plastic bags. That innovation of Israel has not yet made it...

But the foundational ethos of our two nations is nearly identical. It's the reason the American founders thought of putting Moses on the national seal. In fact, the image of Moses is in the US Congress. Moses – Moshe.

I think Washington and Herzl would get along quite well; Ben Gurion and Jefferson would have a lot to talk about; unquestionably, so would Madison and Begin, for sure.

By the way – you mentioned Alexander Hamilton. He came from the Caribbean. Well, his nanny was a Sephardi Jewess who taught him to read the Ten Commandments in Hebrew. That's another connection.

Our two nations were founded on a noble ideal, a romantic ideal, a beautiful ideal, a timeless ideal. The Jewish people, like the American people, was born of a heroic battle against oppression. We [both] knew the pain of tyranny and thus set out to establish free nations.

Today, the United States and the Jewish state serve as beacons of progress and hope for people around the world. Both Israel and America respect individual rights. We respect individual rights while we cherish our collective identities. The two are intertwined.

And it's no coincidence that we also share the same enemies. The values we hold most dear are anathema to terrorist groups like ISIS, Hezbollah, Hamas, and regimes like Iran. The last thing they want is our pluralism, our diversity, our belief in choice. They cannot stand the sight of men and women mingling together, of minorities enjoying full rights, of gays and lesbians marching proudly, of free people electing their leaders, sometimes pushing them out of office, too, by the way. That happens.

And as we saw this morning, those terrorists can't even stand a helpless 13-year-old girl sleeping in her bedroom.

My friends, I spent a significant part of my life in the United States. I studied there, I worked there, my beloved father taught there, and my English ain't too bad either. I know what a unique nation America is.

I'm deeply grateful for the political and military support America has given Israel over the years and, indeed, just now. We came from the air-force cadets, and we saw our magnificent young men and women flying those machines. They're American machines.

We appreciate the latest machine, the F35. We'll talk about the other versions we want. Vertical takeoff, that's a hint. And I hope that we'll conclude a new memorandum of understanding for the invaluable American support for Israel's defenses for the next decade.

But I'm even more grateful not only for what America gives Israel. I'm most grateful for what America is: the land of the free, the home of the brave; a nation which, to paraphrase Lincoln, has so often been the best last hope of humanity. It keeps reenergizing that hope. America has made this world a much better place. It has provided more opportunity for more people than any other country in the history of the world.

Tonight I join you in celebrating America. Sara joins me and all of you in celebrating America. I admire your history; I treasure your friendship; I cherish our alliance.

When America is denigrated by some abroad, I want each and every one of you to know that Israel stands with America, shoulder to shoulder, through thick and thin. We are here for you as you are here for us.

Thank you and Happy Fourth of July.

God bless America."

10 May 2016

PM Netanyahu - Memorial Day Address (Opening Ceremony)
(Communicated by the Prime Minister's Office)

Following is the address by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the opening ceremony of the Memorial Day for Israel's Fallen Soldiers:

Honorable Speaker of the Knesset, Yuli Edelstein,

Distinguished guests, first and foremost my brothers and sisters, members of the bereaved families,

As the son of a bereaved family, I, like you, carry the weight of despair. I know the depths of sadness and the agonizing pain of loss. They are relentless. When I received the news of my brother and later had to break it to my parents, my whole world collapsed. The same thing happened to you. We spend the remainder of our lives struggling to emerge from the ruins. It never fully happens, but there is new life. Today I spoke with the mother of Ben Vanunu, a remarkable young boy who fell in Operation Protective Edge. Sarit and Ilan welcomed a daughter into the world today, and tears of sadness and joy mix together.

Twenty three thousand, four hundred and forty seven – this is the number of Israel's fallen soldiers, in honor of whom we bow our heads today – in grief, silence, admiration and gratitude. The day bereavement first enters our doorstep is the day our loved ones become no longer just ours. While they fundamentally belong to us, a part of our flesh that has been cut off, they also belong to the nation, a nation that pays tribute to them today and acknowledges the enormity of their sacrifice. Jews, Druze, Christians, Muslims, Bedouins, Circassians, men and women – we all share one fate.

Anyone who has ever lost a son, a brother, a father, a daughter or a friend has cried out: Why? I myself asked the exact same question when my brother was killed. But in time I came to understand that the question should be: For what? What is the purpose? What is the meaning of the price that we have paid? Our sons and daughters went to battle with their heads held high. They died for a higher calling – to ensure Israel's existence and guarantee its future. This is precisely the difference, the whole difference, between a beaten and oppressed nation, a persecuted nation that is forced to rely on the kindness of strangers, as we were until 68 years ago, and a nation that lives on its land, builds its country, controls its destiny. But the price is horrible. We know more than anyone how horrible it is.

I try to familiarize myself with the personal stories of many of the fallen. So much power is embodied in what they themselves said and wrote. Avraham Lustig, who fought in the War of Independence and was killed in the Convoy of 35, wrote in his journal a day before he went to battle that suffering is okay and death is okay as long as you know why and what for. Eliraz Peretz, son of our friend Miriam, who fell six years ago on the border with Gaza, adopted this principle: "If you love, love with no limits; if you are going to be friends, be friends with no limits; and if you are going to be a combat soldier, then without limits and give it your all." Eliav Gelman, an officer in an elite unit who was killed two months ago at the Gush Etzion Junction while trying to protect civilians from a knife-wielding terrorist, used to say to his soldiers: "Self-sacrifice for higher values such as love for the Land of Israel, connection to the succession of generations and contribution to the greater good is what enables our people's existence in its land." It is an ongoing account of resilience and strength – on the battlefield, in protecting our borders and at the forefront of the fight against terrorism.

My brothers and sisters, dear families, life in an era of revival and rebirth exacts a personal price and a national price. But our people's spirit is strong and we believe in the Glory of Israel.

As a 3,000-year-old nation determined to protect its land, we will continue to stand strong in the face of our enemies, build our land, develop our country and guarantee our existence. We will not lose hope for reconciliation with our enemies, but we will first make peace within ourselves. True reconciliation comes from our shared destiny, and there is no deeper or more noble expression of this shared destiny than this day, the day we remember with great love and admiration our sons and daughters, the heroes who sacrificed their lives so that we can live in our land.

May the memory of our loved ones – Israel's fallen soldiers – be forever blessed.

**מדינת ישראל
משרד החוץ**

4 May 2016

Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day Address by PM Netanyahu

(Communicated by the Prime Minister's Office)

Following is the address by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the eve (4 May) of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day:

Distinguished President, Reuven Rivlin, and his wife,

Distinguished guests, and first and foremost our brothers and sisters, the Holocaust survivors who lit the torches of remembrance and hope,

You moved me. My wife and I met with you in my office yesterday. You spoke from your hearts; you told us how you maintained your humanity in the most inhuman conditions; you told us how you held on to life; and how you created a new life here in Israel. It is our duty to ensure that you and all of the Holocaust survivors continue to live your lives in comfort and dignity.

Mr. President, what you said is true. We did not do enough over the years, but in the last few years we have added resources for this and we will continue to do so for one simple reason – because you deserve it. It is your right, not an act of charity. It is a debt owed to you by the State of Israel, and we will pay this debt.

A distinct message came up in our meeting. The tragedy that befell our people must never happen again. Today, in our eternal capital Jerusalem, I reiterate the commitment: There will never be another Holocaust.

What paved the way for the Holocaust? What oiled the wheels of the Nazi death machine? The answer is the lie. Nazi propaganda portrayed the Jews as the source of all evil in the world, poisoners of wells, parasites, the enemies of humanity. The defamation preceded the extermination. The Nazi regime in Germany was defeated 71 years ago, yet anti-Semitism and the lies did not die along with Hitler in his bunker. Because today, millions of people in the Muslim world read and hear horrendous fabrications about the Jewish people. They are told that Jews are the offspring of apes and pigs. They are told that Jews – and I quote – “drink the blood of their enemies in goblets.” These and other lies are spreading in social media, through means of dissemination that Hitler and Goebbels could not have even imagined.

This incitement stems from radical Islam and the Arab world, but in recent years it is joined by no less venomous incitement from the Western world. British members of parliament, Swedish high-ranking officials, French public opinion makers. I have to say that anti-Semitism today is a peculiar matchmaker – the elites who supposedly represent human progress have joined forces with the most sinister, barbaric fanatics on earth who behead people, oppress women, persecute LGBTs, destroy cultural treasures. They have teamed up to propagate the anti-Semitic virus against one target – us, against the State of Israel, the only true democracy in the Middle East which upholds values of progress and human dignity.

Their hostility towards Israel has long exceeded legitimate criticism, if that ever existed. This is the total rejection of a state for the Jewish people. While throughout history the anti-Semites depicted Jews as the enemies of humanity, they now present the Jewish state as the enemy of humanity. This lie has no limits.

Only two weeks ago, the UN's UNESCO agency – and you have to hear this to believe that these things were said – the UNESCO agency resolved that the Temple Mount, Mount Moriah, is in no way linked to the Jewish people. Pay attention to what is happening here. A global organization responsible for preserving history is offhandedly rewriting a basic fact of human history. This is willful ignorance. Even worse – it is an addiction to a lie and its dissemination around the world until it is accepted as fact. This is precisely how Jew haters have acted throughout the ages.

Today they cloak the root cause of the conflict between us and the Palestinian – the refusal to recognize the State of Israel in any borders. They justify the worst violence against us. They say we are responsible for the terrorist attack in Paris. They perceive the victim as the aggressor and the aggressor as the victim.

The Nazis said that the Jews were to blame for everything. Present-day anti-Semites say that Israel is to blame for everything. Many of the fathers of Zionism believed that the source of this perverse hatred of the Jews is our people's unique circumstance whereby we were homeless and dispersed among the nations. They hoped, and many of them believed, that if the Jews had a state of their own, this hatred towards them would pass from the world.

Distinguished guests, regrettably reality demonstrates that this optimistic assumption of the fathers of Zionism was clearly mistaken. There were those who once thought that Zionism was the cure for anti-Semitism, and today there are those who believe that Zionism is the reason for anti-Semitism. They are also wrong.

The hatred of Jews draws on many and ancient sources, and it will not pass from the world easily. We must do three things to fight it: fight the lie, boost our strength and build our country. There is only one way to fight a lie, and that is to disprove the falsehood and spread the truth. Truth means insisting on historical facts starting with the deep attachment of our people to our country. Truth means denouncing the double standard applied to the State of Israel and only to the State of Israel. We must mobilize to spread the truth with the same fervor as our enemies mobilize to spread the lie.

We must all join this battle. And here is another fact: in today's virtual world, it is easy to use the most advanced technology to spread the most ancient hatred. But the same technology can be used to spread the truth too, and this technology can be found in the pockets of each and every one of you. All of you have the electronic device needed to spread the truth in your pockets and in your homes. Many Jews are already doing this in Israel and around the world, and I call on you, members of modern humanity, to join us in our efforts to ward off the lies. Because, as Herzl predicted and as the rise of Nazism proved, anti-Semitism is disastrous for the Jews, but will eventually wreak havoc on all humanity, and therefore we must all fight it.

While we fight for the truth, we must also continue to build our defenses. Because even if we cannot eradicate this hatred of the Jews, we can curb the murderous attacks on us, and to this end we are diligently enhancing our military might. For many generations we were like a driven leaf, powerless, defenseless, but that is no longer the case.

The IDF is one of the strongest armies in the world, not only because of the tanks, planes, submarines and cyber, but largely because of the courage of our soldiers. Here they stand before us, and with them, standing shoulder to shoulder are all of our defense forces – the police, the Shin Bet, Mossad. They are inspired by the Jews who fought the Nazis in the allied forces, in the ghettos, the camps and the woods.

We have learned the lesson. We do not ignore those who call for our destruction and we are not deterred by them. There are those who choose to overlook the intentions of Iran, who etches on its missiles "Israel must be wiped out," and holds Holocaust-denial contests. These days they have a Holocaust-denial cartoon competition. Is there anything more depraved than that? We do not ignore this. Some are willing to accept Iran having nuclear weapons, but we do not and will not. Anyone planning our annihilation should know that the State of Israel is very strong. We have strong defense, offence and deterrence capabilities. The bitter enemy will no longer dwell securely; Yehudah will now dwell securely. In addition to refuting the lies and augmenting our strength we must continue to build our country, and we continue to develop Israel by leaps and bounds.

In the 68 years of Israel's independence, Israel's population has multiplied by ten and its economy by one hundred. We have absorbed millions of immigrants from 70 Diaspora communities. We are laying foundations, putting down tracks, breaking new frontiers in science, technology, culture, art, in every field. Israel is the definitive testament to the creative spirit and the life that beats in the hearts of the Jews. We all draw inspiration from this spirit that exists in you, the Holocaust survivors. You, who witnessed the Nazi horrors, are living testaments of the light that broke through the cracks of the darkness of death. Your grandchildren and great-grandchildren walk among us tall and proud, and like you, contribute to the country's security, development and prosperity.

The prophet Isaiah promised to give unto the mourners of Zion splendor instead of ashes. And that is the essence of Israel's rebirth – splendor instead of ashes. More than anything else, the flourishing State of Israel signifies the triumph of light over darkness, life over death and truth over lies.