



27 January 2014 - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says that “there are reminders all around us of the dangers of forgetting”, in an Op-Ed article published today.

The article “A visit to Auschwitz” is published on [the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of The Holocaust](#). The United Nations has dedicated 27 January every year to the memory of the Holocaust, on the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp.

“This year marks two decades since the genocide in Rwanda. Conflicts in [Syria](#) , [South Sudan](#) and [the Central African Republic](#) have taken on dangerous communal dimensions. Bigotry still courses through our societies and our politics. The world can and must do more to eliminate the poison that led to the camps, writes the Secretary-General.

“I thought of those captives standing naked for hours in icy weather, torn from their families and

shorn of their hair as they were readied for the gas chambers. I thought of those who were kept alive only to be worked to death. Above all, I reflected on how unfathomable the Holocaust remains even today. The cruelty was so profound; the scale so large; the Nazi worldview so warped and extreme; the killing so organized and calculated nature,” Mr. Ban wrote.

The Secretary-General [visited Auschwitz-Birkenau](#) , which is on UNESCO’s World Heritage List, last November. Mr. Ban points out that combatting hatred is among the most important missions of the UN. Human rights mechanisms work to protect people; special courts and tribunals strive to combat impunity, deliver justice and deter violations and the UN special advisers on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect scan the world for the precursors of atrocity crimes. In addition t

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initiative seeks to counter manifestations of hatred, from anti-Semitism and Islamophobia to ultra-nationalism and bias against minorities.

Last but not least the “United Nations and the Holocaust Outreach Programme” has been working with teachers and students on all continents to promote tolerance and universal values

At this year’s remembrance ceremony at UN Headquarters, the featured speaker is the film director Steven Spielberg, whose Shoah Institute for Visual History and Education was a landmark in preserving survivor testimony.

“A few steps from the crematorium at Auschwitz, I took a moment to myself for reflection... My hope is that our generation, and those to come, will summon that same sense of collective purpose to prevent such horror from happening again anywhere, to anyone or any group, and build a world of equality for all,” writes Ban Ki-moon.

□ **For further information:**

UN Secretary-General’s Message (Video): <http://vimeo.com/85053314>

On the International Day: <http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/>

On Genocide: http://unric.org/html/english/library/backgrounders/genocide_eng.pdf

On Racism: http://unric.org/html/english/library/backgrounders/racism_eng.pdf

On the UN Holocaust Outreach Programme: <http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/bg.shtml>

Ban visit to Auschwitz: <http://unric.org/en/latest-un-buzz/28854-haunting-silence-at-former-nazi-death-camp>