

**Speech by H.E. Ambassador Ertan Tezgör (Ret.), Head of the Turkish Delegation to the
International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance**

Distinguished Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Kadir Has University,

Honorable Rector,

Esteemed Chief Rabbi and Distinguished President of the Turkish Jewish Community,

Esteemed Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs,

Distinguished Guests,

Today, we have gathered for the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, which has been commemorated in sacred locations belonging to our Jewish citizens since 2011. This year the event takes place at Kadir Has University, which is one of the prominent education institutions of Turkey. I would like to express our gratitude to the University for providing us with the opportunity to reflect on this meaningful day with their hospitality, and to the Turkish Jewish Community for their valuable contributions to the preparation of this ceremony.

Today, we respectfully commemorate millions of Jews who lost their lives under the Nazi regime. The Holocaust is the most incomprehensible crime perpetrated against humanity.

We believe that necessary lessons should be drawn from the Holocaust disaster which is unprecedented in history and that it must never be repeated.

In this framework, since 2008, Turkey has been attending as an observer to the meetings of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, which works on issues such as education and research regarding the Holocaust as well as organizing ceremonies for the commemoration of the Holocaust. Distinguished members of our Jewish community, as well as representatives of the Council of Higher Education and the Ministry of National Education are amongst the members of the delegation attending these meetings.

We benefit greatly from the participation in the activities of an Intergovernmental Alliance, which have been shaped under the framework of the fundamental principles of the Stockholm Declaration of 1998.

In recent years, Turkey holds seminars, exhibitions and conferences within the framework of its close cooperation with the Aladdin project launched under the patronage of the UNESCO, which aims to develop dialogue between Jews and Muslims, the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam and the Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

In addition, our cooperation with umbrella organizations dealing with the Holocaust and Anti-semitism in Europe and North America also continues. The Alliance's current Canadian Chair, Dr. Mario Silva, visited Ankara and Istanbul last October and was received by our Minister of National Education.

Following his successful and fruitful contacts, Dr. Silva expressed their appreciation regarding the work done in Turkey.

On the other hand, our government contributes to the International Fund created by the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum Foundation, which was established in order to recall this unprecedented tragedy, and participates to the International Committee Meetings of the Fund. In this respect, I would like to share with you these important words emphasized by Henry Appel who survived Auschwitz:

“There is only one thing worse than Auschwitz itself... and that is if the world forgets that there was such a place.”

Distinguished Guests,

It is a fact that our motivation on further addressing Holocaust education after becoming an observer to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance has increased. On the other hand, it is obvious that the contributions we make to the Alliance regarding the development of a mutual understanding and tolerance with the perspective of a country having mostly a Muslim population will further increase after gaining full membership status. I would also like to underline the importance of continuing to work together regardless of any ethnic origin and religious belief, with a view to leave a better and peaceful world to the next generations.

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to respectfully greet you once again and express my hope that our will to never relive the pain of the Holocaust, which is engraved in our universal memories, will be better embraced and more strongly conveyed.