

MESSAGE SENT BY H.E. AHMET DAVUTOĞLU, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY TO THE CEREMONY HELD IN ISTANBUL ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF COMMEMORATION TO HONOUR THE VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST, JANUARY 27

Dear Mr. Can Has, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Kadir Has University,
Dear Professor Mustafa Aydın, Rector of Kadir Has University,
Very Reverend Chief Rabbi and
Distinguished Head of the Turkish Jewish Community,

Please allow me to thank you for the kind invitation to the ceremony held in your University today, January 27th, on the occasion of the International Day of Commemoration to honour the victims of the Holocaust. H.E. Ambassador Naci Koru, Deputy Minister, represents my Ministry at the ceremony, which I am unable to attend due to the visit of H.E. Francois Hollande, President of the French Republic.

I commemorate with great respect all Holocaust victims who lost their lives as a result of the irrational and unconscientious campaign conducted by the Nazi regime to systematically exterminate the Jewish race during the Second World War. And I wish to proudly highlight the friendship shown by the Turkish nation, which has extended a helping hand to people subjected to such oppression and persecution throughout history.

Jews fleeing from oppression and massacres in their lands were always welcomed with open arms in our country, both in the period of the Ottoman Empire and during the Second World War. In turn, they made significant contributions to our society and culture. On this occasion, I also commemorate with gratitude and esteem our diplomats, who never hesitated to put their own lives in danger to save our citizens of Jewish origin in Europe from genocide.

The importance of drawing lessons from crimes committed against humanity is self-evident and stems from our belief in furthering mutual understanding, freedom, security, and democracy to build a better future and a world living in peace. We particularly encourage our young generations in this direction. Likewise, there is a need for long-term, comprehensive policies and strategies to fight against manifestations of discrimination and intolerance such as Islamophobia and xenophobia, the expressions of which we have witnessed worldwide.

I once more thank the Kadir Has University for hosting this meaningful ceremony, and express my sincere thanks to the Jewish community for their meaningful contributions.