



**Declaration
by President of Iceland
Guðni Th. Jóhannesson
on the occasion of the World Holocaust Forum
at Yad Vashem,
Jerusalem,
23 January 2020**

Almost 75 years ago, humankind could celebrate the defeat of tyranny and evil. The foe had been distinct, the need for battle obvious.

We must remember achievements and advancements. They make us aware of what we have accomplished, and what we have yet to attain. We must also remember mistakes and failures; they drive us to do better. And we must remember crimes and horrors. We must remember the Holocaust.

Yes, memory is essential. It forms the basis of human society, the basis of human progress. Without our own memory, we are adrift. Without a joint memory, peoples cannot construct a common identity, a common understanding of their past, present and future.

Still, remembrance is not always easy or unambiguous. It may divide persons and nations and drive them to conflict and aggression. But we must not differ on or doubt the horror of the Holocaust. When we recall the evil of the Holocaust, our doubts and differences must end.

Let us therefore remember. Let us defend the sanctity of human life and human rights, the rights of dignity and diversity, the freedom of thought and expression, religion and political beliefs. Let us defend these universal values now and forever, near and afar.

In this spirit, the Holocaust Forum at Yad Vashem will contribute to the ongoing fight against racism, antisemitism and all other expressions of hatred, prejudice and bigotry. In this spirit, the memory and testament of the Shoah's victims and survivors will also be preserved. And in this spirit, hope will prevail in a troubled world.