

**Постоянное
Представительство
Российской Федерации
при Организации
Объединённых Наций**



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PRESS RELEASE

Unofficial translation

**Statement by Vladimir P. Lukin,
Commissioner for Human Rights of the Russian Federation,
at the Special Session of the UN General Assembly, commemorating
the 60th Anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps**

January 24, 2005

Distinguished Mr. Chairman,

The event, which this UN General Assembly Special Session is dedicated to, has a truly unique historic significance. Sixty years ago, at the final stage of defeat of the Hitler's Nazism in the Second World War, the advancing Soviet troops liberated one of the most monstrous death camps Auschwitz-Birkenau. Among the tortured to death in that camp were Jews and gypsies, citizens of 17 countries of the world. Since that time and forever Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Buchenwald, Dachau and Mauthausen are imprinted in the memory of the mankind as ugly symbols of merciless extermination of millions of innocent people. Those are eternal memory and eternal warning. We bow our heads before the victims of the barbaric extermination in the death camps and remember

with gratitude those who, sacrificing their lives, fought against Nazism, oppression, racism and aggression.

Unprecedented in its magnitude and its losses the Second World War made the whole civilized mankind unite in the struggle against the lethal danger of the Nazi enslavement setting aside all differences and contradictions. The victory in this war is our common victory which gave a powerful impetus to the unification of the international community leading to the creation of the United Nations. Having paid the horrible price of suffering and death of millions of people the nations of the world realized the absence of an alternative to the collective security system, which was later enshrined in the UN Charter.

Today we should always bear in mind that attempts to encroach upon the democratic rights of citizens listed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights lead directly to total arbitrariness, which is separated by only one step from the crimes that we recall with horror and repugnancy. Our country with its tragic experience of arbitrariness and lawlessness of the communist dictatorship will never forget it. It would be a madness to let the awful lessons of the Nazi aggression and atrocities fall into oblivion. We must hold sacred the memory of the perished, rule out the very possibility of recurrence of world wars, unite the efforts of international community in fighting new challenges and threats while recognizing and respecting the central role of the UN.

Memories of the terrible years of the war should be a permanent reminder of the necessity to resolutely counteract the attempts to rewrite history, diverge from the established clear historic and moral criteria in the assessment of fascism, and, of course, the attempts to make heroes of the Nazi and their ilk, all enemies of democracy and legal pillars of society. Recently, in a number of European states, which gravely suffered from the Nazi crimes, one can see rallies of those who fought during the Second World War on the side of the Nazi Germany in SS units. The calls made at such rallies to give public and state recognition to the former henchmen of the fascism essentially represent an instigation towards the revision of the Nuremburg Tribunal decisions which qualified

all members of the SS units as war criminals. Any other assessment of what they have done during the Second World War would insult the memory of dozens of millions of the victims of Nazism. There is no doubt about the need to consolidate efforts of the international community in order to counteract the attempts to rehabilitate and heroize Nazism and other forms of militant racism and totalitarianism. In this regard, we would like once again to call upon all the states to implement the relevant international documents in this area, in particular, the UN Human Rights Commission resolution of 16 April 2004 entitled “Inadmissibility of certain practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance”.

Saving monuments of spiritual and material culture from terrorist impingement still remains a pressing task. Failing to act as well as silently watching the desecration of memorials to the Second World War heroes and victims can only play into the hands of the advocates of extremist nationalist ideologies.

We regret to state that such phenomena as anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia are far from being absent from our life. It is especially alarming that they are widely spread among the young generation of some countries. It is not a secret that many acts of anti-Semitism, including desecration of Jewish cemeteries and synagogues, are inspired by young radical factions like “skinheads”. In our country, following the pressure from the public and human rights defendants, the perpetrators of such acts were recently given severe sentences by courts. We believe that extremism, anti-Semitism and ideologies of racial supremacy can be fought only through concerted efforts of the international community.

This session is one of the most important links in the chain of solemn events dedicated to the 60th Anniversary of the Great Victory over fascism, whose military defeat was made possible, as known, thanks to the decisive contribution of our country. On November 22, 2004 on initiative of Russia and a group of CIS countries, joined by other states, the UN General Assembly without vote adopted a resolution which declares

May 8 and 9 Days of Remembrance and Reconciliation. From now on these days will be observed annually as a tribute to all victims of Second World War.

Historic significance of the Victory in Second World War is inseparable from the irreplaceable mission performed by the UN for six decades. The very creation of this world organization was, first of all, a result of the efforts of the anti-Hitler coalition and would have been impossible without its victory over fascism. Threats and challenges of today as well as the preceding historic experience demonstrate that there is no alternative to the comprehensive building of the peacemaking and counterterrorist capacity of the UN, enhancing its efficiency as the central coordinating mechanism in the interstate relations and the basis for creating a safer and more just world order which should rest upon the basic principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and supremacy of international law. Russia is committed to these goals and stands ready for constructive cooperation in this area with all states.

In conclusion, I would like to stress once again that the historic date, which this Special Session of the General Assembly is dedicated to, is seen in Russia as a tribute to the millions of victims of the Nazi nightmare. Auschwitz, liberated and destructed sixty years ago, must never be recreated in any corner of the globe.