



Pope on Holocaust Remembrance Day: Church rejects all forms of antisemitism

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January 28, 2026 - Eighty-one years after the Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp was liberated, we remember the millions of lives lost to the Holocaust and focus on preventing the recurrence—in any form—of this form of “hatred, bigotry, racism and prejudice”.

Eighty-one years ago today, the Auschwitz Birkenau German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp was liberated. In this camp alone, more than one million people were murdered, the majority of them Jews.

To mark the historic moment where the survivors were freed, the date—January 27—was chosen by the United Nations in 2005 as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. 2026 is the 25th anniversary of the creation of this day.

Pope Leo XIV commemorated the International Day with a Tweet on his Pontifex account, stressing that “the Church remains faithful to the unwavering position of the Declaration Nostra Aetate against every form of antisemitism. The Church rejects any discrimination or harassment based on ethnicity, language, nationality, or religion.”

The dangers of hatred and bigotry

From the horrors of the second World War and the Holocaust, the United Nations was born. Its goal is to maintain international peace and security, provide humanitarian aid to people in need, safeguard human rights, and uphold international law.

With this mission in mind, the United Nations adopted two foundational documents in 1948: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Together with these documents, the UN’s resolution creating this International Day stress that the Holocaust “will forever be a warning to all people of the dangers of hatred, bigotry, racism and prejudice”.

Ways of remembrance

From this resolution, the United Nations urged member states to “develop educational programmes that will inculcate future generations with the lessons of the Holocaust in order to prevent future acts of genocide”. Twenty-one years after this summons, countries have responded in their own ways.

In the United Kingdom, the Centre for Holocaust Education offers a look into understanding how and why it took place. Research at the Centre is focused on ensuring the Holocaust does not simply fade into memory, rather that its story and lessons continue to be taught to current generations.

At the United Nations General Assembly Hall in New York, diplomats and members of the public will come together to observe the International Day with Holocaust survivors and their families. Keeping alive the voices of those who lived through the horrors prevents the full impact of the Holocaust from being reduced to words in a textbook.

25 years of voices and stories

The theme for this 25th anniversary of the International Day is “Holocaust Remembrance for Dignity and Human Rights”. As the United Nations described, “remembrance dignifies the victims and survivors of the Holocaust. It keeps alive their memories of the communities and traditions and loved ones the Nazis sought to erase.”

Remembering challenges everyone to reflect on the “deadly consequences of antisemitism and hatred, dehumanization and apathy left unchallenged.”

The UN points out that after more than eight decades since the Holocaust, people today face daily attacks around the world.

Antisemitism has been on the rise and the denial and distortion of the Holocaust continue. According to a report by the Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism, across Europe there has been a “400% increase in hateful content”.

Remembering the Holocaust, however, “defies denial and distortion, rejects falsehoods, confronts hatred, and insists on the humanity of the victims”, the UN noted. Placing an emphasis on universal rights for everyone—no matter their ethnicity, religion, or background—is essential for achieving peace. It is also a central part of the UN’s mission.

This International Day continues to be a poignant reminder to the world of the danger hatred, bigotry, and antisemitism pose. The UN stated, “in honoring the victims of the Holocaust, we reaffirm our common humanity and commit to defending the dignity and human rights of all people.”

Moreover, Holocaust Remembrance Day is a call to action: Do not forget, rather reflect on where the world is in order to prevent atrocities such as the Holocaust from ever occurring again.

Source: [Vatican News](#), January 28, 2026.