

LA BENEVOLENCIA

To the President of the State of Israel on the occasion of his visit to open the Dutch Holocaust Museum,
Sent via email

Amsterdam, 10 March 2024

Mr President.

We are an organisation built on the archetype of an organisation of Holocaust survivors who saved Muslims Catholics and Serb orthodox persecuted people during the Bosnian war in a kind of "reverse Raoul Wallenberg" operation.

Nowadays, we are known as an organisation attempting to empower civilian populations in war-torn, and post genocidal countries, and now in western "peaceful" societies, to take agency to resist incitement to atrocity and violence.

As such we were invited to take residence on the roof of the Holocaust museum, together with respected refugee artists of Syrian, Palestinian, Bosnian, African, Russian heritage, and artists and intellectuals of the Dutch scene. We worked together there during four years that the building stood empty while the Amsterdam Jewish quarter management raised funds for the construction of the holocaust memorial. During that time, the place became one of refuge and joy to replace hatred and vengeance - but also to produce great productions and works of art.

Now we find this place commemorating a unique Genocide of 80 years ago precisely at the time of a strange and terrible turn that events have taken.

Our organisation works in a spirit of solidarity with all victims of identity-based persecution, violence, oppression and atrocity. And we used symbols, events and issues that happened to Jews as the quintessential symbol for genocidal victimhood we knew.

Now that symbol has acquired a strange twist- that of a victim turned perpetrator.

We do not join those that are protesting against the invitation to you today, to open the Holocaust Museum. The president of the Jewish state belongs to such an occasion. But we refuse to agree with not mentioning the role of a perpetrator that the Jewish state has now taken in the war in Gaza if that is the intent in the official statements during the opening. Israel stands accused in front of the world of committing itself the very act the Jewish refugee founder of the Genocide convention, Raphael Lemkin, sought to prevent.

A Holocaust museum is there not only to commemorate, but also to prevent a repetition of the Holocaust. It needs to deal with both the attitudes and Traumata that lead to Genocide, and then the blindness of the perpetrators during its implementation.

If the state of Israel wants Hamas and its allies to admit their responsibility for the atrocities of the 7 October, the state of Israel cannot deny its own responsibility for the deaths of more than 30 000 people and the intentional imposition of suffering and displacement on more than a million fellow human beings.

The atrocity of 7 October stands as a war crime of its own, but it is no justification for the deaths and the cruelty and the suffering inflicted. The leaders responsible and all those who committed the 7 October atrocity should also stand trial before a world court and be prosecuted. And urgently, they should be made, through whatever negotiation it takes, to release the hostages.

WWW.LABENEVOLENCIA.ORG .

RADIO LA BENEVOLENCIA HUMANITARIAN TOOLS FOUNDATION

SUMATRAKADE 1485 . 1019 RS AMSTERDAM . THE NETHERLANDS

T +3120 6166599 . INFO@LABENEVOLENCIA.ORG . KvK# 3417658 . VAT# NL 81.1072.423.B.01

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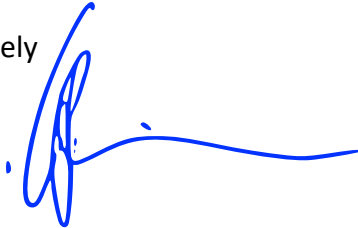
But you , Mr president, stand here as the representative of the other side. The side of the victims whose state vowed to be an reminder to the world of “never again” – and stands now accused of genocidal acts in front of a world court.

On the occasion of your visit, we call on you not to shirk the responsibility for these deaths and the suffering of a whole population. To show contrition and humility and an intent to address it.

And as a Jew myself I beg you to not give us a holocaust speech that instrumentalises our past victimhood as a reason for today’s acts. This denigrates the true victims of the holocaust, my grandparents among them. Don’t let this occasion be understood in this way. Announce something different that faces today’s reality. Stop being self righteous. and stand up to your responsibility- towards the suffering of our fellow humans of Gaza and towards your role in the new historic image you are creating for the Jewish people whom you indirectly represent.

And we implore you to go back and stop your state’s slaughter and imposition of mass suffering on the civilian population of Gaza– NOW, as a true act of commemoration and prevention of further suffering.

Sincerely



George Weiss, Director
Radio La Benevolencija HTF
www.labenevolencija.org

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