

**Secretary-General's message to the 5th Global Forum for Combating Anti-Semitism
[delivered by Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process]**

Jerusalem, 12 May 2015

I am pleased to greet the participants in this important global forum. I thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel for inviting the United Nations to participate.

History has proved time and again that hatred kills. Anti-Semitism is one of the oldest and most pervasive forms of hatred in the world. It is also one of the deadliest. The Holocaust shows the depths to which anti-Semitism can lead.

But we need not look only to history; the reality of today's world shows an alarming rise of intolerance, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. Today, we continue to see the impact of anti-Semitism throughout the world, with vicious and sometimes deadly attacks against Jews driven by extremism and dangerous prejudices.

Violence against people because of their religious beliefs is one of today's greatest threats. The core values of the United Nations – peace, equality and human dignity – are our strongest weapons against this scourge.

I will continue to mobilize international support to help put an end to anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim hate and other forms of bigotry. Last month, I brought religious leaders together at the United Nations to signal our shared abhorrence at violence carried out in the name of religion, and our common commitment to religious freedom and mutual respect.

I am also pleased to announce that later this year, the United Nations will convene a seminar to bring members of civil society together to confront anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination.

We all share responsibility to eradicate anti-Semitism at its roots, before it poisons young minds and hearts. We must teach our children to become citizens of the world and to recognize our common humanity. We must be as adept at using modern technology to reject stereotypes as others have been in using it to spread hate speech and incite violence.

We must speak out against all forms of intolerance, and stand firm against Holocaust denial.

The denial of the State of Israel's right to exist is often a manifestation of the same ugly bias. The pursuit of justice for the Palestinians and of peace in the Middle East must not be used to justify violence and hatred against Jews and their communities.

It is in defence of our principles that we must together work to find a peaceful resolution of the conflict. This is in the long-term strategic interest of Israel, its neighbours and the region as a whole.

Today we see a rise not only of anti-Semitism, but also of Islamophobia. I call on Muslim leaders to stand against anti-Semitism, just as Jewish leaders have a responsibility to challenge anti-Muslim hate.

We must all work to close what I call the empathy gap in our world today – where too many communities rush to point out an affront against them, but ignore or dismiss the legitimate grievances of others.

Let us work together to achieve our common goals of mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.

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