

**Opening remarks of H.E. Ambassador Eviatar Manor,
Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations in Geneva,
on the occasion of the screening of the movie *Son of Saul***

Organized by the Permanent Missions of Israel, Hungary and the Club Suisse de la Presse
Cinémas Les Scala
Geneva, 25 January 2016

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Friends,

Tonight, we are gathered for the first event of the week marking the Commemoration of the 6 million Jewish victims of the Holocaust, as well as the seventy-first anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz extermination camp.

Auschwitz-Birkenau was at the center of the Nazi death industry. Through its chimneys, the smoke of more than 1 million bodies billowed into the air. Men, women, children, elderly starved to death, were exterminated by gas and burned for the sole reason they were Jewish.

Son of Saul puts the spotlight on the central and tragic role that the Sonderkommandos played in this evil process. These Jewish men were forced to carry the dead bodies of their peers and family members, and to throw them into the flames of the crematorium.

The cruelty of their task and the industrialization of the Nazi murder process have been very well documented in Professor Greif's book *We Wept without Tears*. From the *Selektion*, to the undressing room; from the number of bodies placed on a trolley, to how much ash is gotten from one human body after being cremated... One Sonderkommando responds to this morbid question: "It weighs less than a kilogram."

Today, seventy-one years after the Holocaust, the number of Holocaust survivors decreases. Fewer men and women who suffered THERE are still with us HERE and able to testify first-hand about the terrible crimes they endured. And, unfortunately, more and more Holocaust deniers spread their despicable theories. In Iran, they plan a second Holocaust caricatures competition to take place later this year. So today, more than ever, it is incumbent upon all of us to remember the unique and unprecedented scope of the catastrophe that befell our people. The Shoah was not one more episode in a continuum of wars, catastrophes and human sufferings. What stands out is the Nazis' definition of the Jews, each and every individual Jew, as being beyond the pale of humanity. Therefore Jews should be physically annihilated and Judaism culturally and spiritually destroyed. It is our common responsibility to inform and educate our children, populations and institutions about the Shoah, in order that such crimes will never happen again.

Before concluding, let me thank the historians, and this evening Professor Greif in particular , who devote their life to gather testimonies and facts about the catastrophe of the Holocaust and provide invaluable information for generations to come.

Let me also thank Géza Röhring and the whole crew of *Son of Saul* for producing such a heartbreaking and poignant movie.

Finally, I would like to thank the Permanent Mission of Hungary and the Club Suisse de la Presse for jointly organizing this commemorative event.

I would like to conclude with the words of the Kadish prayer-

יהא שלמא רבא מן שמיא, וחיים, עלינו ועל כל ישראל, ואמרו אמן

And may life be renewed for us and for all of Israel and let us say Amen.

Thank you.