

## Statement on the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz

Today, 27 January, the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect joins the international community in commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp and International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The systematic persecution and extermination of more than six million Jews, including more than a million murdered within the confines of Auschwitz, remains one of the darkest chapters in human history. Today we honor all victims of the Holocaust and of Nazism, including the Roma, and reflect upon the world's largely unfulfilled post-1945 promise of "Never Again."

From the ruined crematoria of Auschwitz and in response to the Holocaust, the international community outlawed the crime of genocide and proclaimed, for the first time, universal human rights that must be upheld and protected. These ideals are enshrined in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, both of which were adopted at the newly formed United Nations on 9-10 December 1948. In 2005, fifteen years ago, world leaders gathered once again at the UN World Summit and committed to upholding their collective Responsibility to Protect (R2P) vulnerable populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.

Today we are sadly reminded that the hatred and antisemitism that begat the Holocaust is experiencing a resurgence. If we do not resist those who deny the humanity of others we risk repeating the horrors of the past. On the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Global Centre is calling upon all UN member states to consistently uphold their collective responsibility to protect by embracing five policy actions this year:

1. **PREVENT:** Build societies that promote and preserve universal human rights
2. **PROTECT:** Invest in peacekeeping and protect vulnerable populations
3. **RESIST:** Actively oppose xenophobia, antisemitism, racism and religious extremism
4. **END IMPUNITY:** Uphold international law and promote justice and accountability
5. **EMPOWER:** Support civil society, humanitarian workers and human rights defenders

Auschwitz-Birkenau is a warning from history of the consequences of indifference and inaction in the face of mass atrocities. From Syria, Yemen or Myanmar (Burma), to the persecuted Uighurs of Xinjiang in China, and anywhere else where persecuted people face the threat of the concentration camp or the mass grave today, the world simply must do better.