



Unto Every Person  
There Is A Name

לכל איש יש שם

Public Recitation of Names of Holocaust Victims on Yom Hashoah  
Under the Auspices of the Speaker of the Knesset

International Committee



# “Unto Every Person There Is A Name” Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day 2017

## Restoring Their Identities

The Fate of the Individual during the Holocaust



Jews arriving at Auschwitz-Birkenau, 1944



## **Yom Hashoah – Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day**

### **24 April 2017 – 28 Nissan 5777**

### **Letter from the International Committee**

### **“Unto Every Person There Is A Name”**

#### **Introduction**

The worldwide Holocaust memorial project “Unto Every Person There is a Name”, now in its twenty-eighth consecutive year, is a unique project designed to perpetuate the memory of the Six Million - among them one-and-a-half million Jewish children – murdered while the world remained silent. The project offers the opportunity to memorialize them not only as a collective, but as individuals – one at a time - through the public recitation of their names on Yom Hashoah – Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day. You can help to restore the identity and dignity of the victims of the Holocaust by organizing a name-recitation ceremony on Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day. Links to lists of names taken from Yad Vashem’s Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names, and ceremony planning recommendations are included below (see page 4).

The Unto Every Person There Is A Name project focuses attention on the urgent need to retrieve additional names of Holocaust victims, before they recede into oblivion. It also gives us leave to reflect on contemporary expressions of antisemitism and their impact on Diaspora communities and on the State of Israel.

#### **A World-Wide Effort**

“Unto Every Person There Is A Name” ceremonies are conducted around the world in hundreds of Jewish communities through the efforts of four major Jewish organizations: B’nai B’rith International, Nativ, the World Jewish Congress and the World Zionist Organization.

The project is coordinated by Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, in consultation with the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs and enjoys the official auspices of President of the State of Israel, the Hon. Reuven Rivlin ([click here to see President’s letter](#), and [letter from Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev](#)).

In Israel, “Unto Every Person There Is A Name” is an integral part of the official Yom Hashoah commemoration ceremonies, with central events held at the Knesset and Yad Vashem with the participation of elected officials, in addition to local events throughout the country.

## Personalizing the Holocaust

The most fundamental feature of the Shoah is the systematic murder of six million innocent Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators for the sole reason that they were Jewish. Each of their deaths was a separate, distinct tragedy that together has caused indelible lasting trauma to the Jewish people. As time passes and fewer witnesses remain, it is imperative to create a personal link between the Jewish people today and those who perished under the Nazi genocidal regime. Ceremonies in which names of Holocaust victims are recited - together with such information as their age, place of birth and place of murder - personalize the tragedy of the Holocaust. Emphasis is thus put on the millions of individuals – men, women and children - who were lost to the Jewish people, and not solely on the cold intangibility embodied in the term “The Six Million”. “Unto Every Person There is a Name” rests on the success of Yad Vashem’s Shoah Victims’ Names Recovery Project that to date has identified close to 4.7 million names of Shoah victims and that continues its quest to recover all the six million names.

## The Central Theme for Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day 2017: “Restoring their Identities The Fate of the Individual during the Holocaust”

The annihilation of Jewish communities and the obliteration of any memory of Jewish life were part of Nazi Germany’s ideology of systematically and comprehensively destroying the Jewish People. The Pages of Testimony at Yad Vashem paint the portraits of millions of Jews, each of whom had a name and identity. Every victim was an entire world. Every person carried the story of the past – the legacy of a community, of experiences, of the spirit of a family and of a future brutally cut short. They were human beings – with names, dreams and loves – who found themselves persecuted, frequently standing in terrible loneliness on the edge of the abyss. Uncovering the identities and worlds of the victims reveals the annals of the Holocaust as a human story, one with which we can identify and from which we can learn. Restoring the victim’s identities by documenting, remembering, researching and educating not only commemorates the world that was lost, but also makes a substantial contribution to shaping a new and better world. Bonding in this way with specific individuals from the Holocaust enables us, in our post-Holocaust generation, to gain meaning that helps shape our own identities and enrich our world.

(For the full rationale of this year’s theme and texts that can be used in ceremonies, [click here](#))

**New this year: option to enhance your ceremony with the ready2print exhibition, “Spots of Light: To be a Woman in the Holocaust”.** For more information, [click here](#)

For further information, questions and to receive the exhibition files free of charge please contact: [traveling.exhibitions@yadvashem.org.il](mailto:traveling.exhibitions@yadvashem.org.il)

## Recover Names of Shoah Victims

“Unto Every Person There is a Name” events provide a unique opportunity to gather heretofore unknown names of all the Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

Since its inception, one of Yad Vashem’s central missions has been the recovery of the names and personal stories of all victims of the Shoah. While the Nazis sought not only to physically destroy the Jews but also to obliterate any memory of them, The Shoah Victims’ Names Recovery Project realizes our moral imperative to memorialize each victim as a human being, and not merely a single collective number. (To learn more about the project [click here](#)).

The relentless endeavor has to date identified close to four million seven hundred thousand names of Shoah victims, documented in the Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names online at: [www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org). Roughly half of the victims’ names in the database were derived from various archival sources and postwar

commemoration projects. The other half are recorded on “[Pages of Testimony](#)” submitted by relatives and others who knew of the victims. The outstanding universal value of the Pages of Testimony Memorial Collection has been recognized by UNESCO, which in 2013 inscribed it in its prestigious Memory of the World Register.

The Names Database, uploaded to the Internet in 2004, marked a pioneering use of technology in the service of memory, documenting and commemorating nearly three million names of Holocaust victims. To continue to meet the needs of an expanding worldwide community of users, Yad Vashem has upgraded and re-designed the database, making use of an innovative platform that allows the accessibility of online information in a fast and user-friendly format.

“Unto Every Person” ceremonies may be utilized to call upon members of your community to complete a “Page of Testimony” for each unregistered victim, or to volunteer to assist others with this urgent task.

For further information, [click here](#)

## **Recitation Ceremony Planning Recommendations**

1. Outreach: The International Committee urges organizers of “Unto Every Person” ceremonies to invite all Jewish organizations and institutions in their community, including schools, synagogues of the various streams and community centers, and Israeli diplomatic representatives, to take an active part in the name recitation ceremonies and in the Names Recovery Campaign. The Committee specifically requests that the four sponsoring organizations be actively engaged in each ceremony and that all local agencies cooperate to make the ceremony as inclusive and meaningful as possible. The Committee also recommends that non-Jewish groups and leaders in the larger community be invited to participate in the recitation ceremonies, which can be held in an appropriate public setting.

2. Press: Local and national media, especially television, should be encouraged to cover the ceremonies. Any visual products from the ceremony should be sent to Yad Vashem in order to be archived and exhibited in the future.

3. Family names retrieval: We urge you to encourage members of your community to search for names of relatives and friends who were victims of the Holocaust, to compile your own personal and local lists of names and family members for commemoration, and to submit names to Yad Vashem’s Database (see above).

4. Ceremony requirements: The recitation ceremonies require coordination and planning but involve very little expenditure. Basic requirements for the ceremony are:

\* Poem “Unto Every Person There Is A Name” by Israeli poet Zelda ([Click here for text of poem](#))

\* [Lists of names](#)

\* [Pages of Testimony](#)

\* [Yizkor and El Maleh Rahamim prayer texts](#) (available in Hebrew)

\* Six Yizkor candles

\* A sound system

\* Professional-standard video equipment

\* A table or podium covered in black

\* Sufficient volunteers to recite names

\* Master of Ceremonies

5. Central Ceremony at Yad Vashem: The official State ceremony marking the commencement of Yom Hashoah will take place at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem on Sunday, 23 April at 20:00 (8 PM.) Israel time. The ceremony is broadcast live on Israel's Channels One, Two and Ten accessible via the internet, which might allow you to incorporate it into your own ceremony. Furthermore, the ceremony will be available online on the Yad Vashem website within 2 hours after it concludes and could be utilized as an element in your own ceremony.

We are available to answer any questions that might arise and provide additional material as necessary to ensure the success of your event.

Sincerely,

Members of the "Unto Every Person There Is A Name" International Committee:

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