

All people have the right to life, justice, freedom and happiness. Human rights form a unified system. Should any fundamental right be denied a person or an arbitrarily chosen group, then all the rights of all people become destabilized and threatened. The rights to justice, freedom and happiness bind the lives of people together like the mutually supporting stones of an edifice. If one stone is loosened, the whole edifice collapses.

In the words of the Hungarian poet Attila József:

"Just like split firewood stacked together,
the universe embraces all,
so that each object holds the other
confined by pressures mutual,
all things ordained, reciprocal."

The planners of the Holocaust discriminated against certain groups of people, thus violating the principle of equality. Fueled by hate, they turned their backs on these stigmatized people. Resorting to the tools of the state and deceitful laws, they placed limits on their existence, then confiscated their property, and finally took the lives of six million people.

Seventy years ago, the terrible progression of the Holocaust struck the societies of Europe and tore their legal systems apart. Both the targets and the perpetrators fell victim to it. Governments which turned against their own citizens led their countries into military defeat and moral crisis. But the community of nations, which respected human rights, turned against these abominable and reprehensible acts. A state in which its own citizens cannot trust will not win the trust of other states, either. And should a country disinherit, plunder and put a part of its population at grave risk, as happened 70 years ago in Hungary, its government will not be trusted by other countries.

The history of the Holocaust in Hungary – which this exhibit introduces through key information and selected photographs – is proof that racism of any form can only lead to tragedy. Anti-Semitism, racism and anti-Gypsy sentiment are all based on a terrible power: that of hatred – a hatred based on misunderstanding, ignorance, and gullibility.

This exhibit aims not only to remind older generations, but to alert and inform young people, and thus to dispel their gullibility. The Carl Lutz Foundation asks all people of good will for assistance in this endeavor.

The opportunity to present a second exhibit here at the United Nations Headquarters is very helpful to this effort. We are grateful. I would like to emphasize the role of the Hungarian American Coalition. They worked with us as true creative collaborators on this exhibit. We also would like to thank the Tom Lantos Foundation for their cooperation. The Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs assisted us in our work, and I must also stress the cooperation of the Permanent Mission of Hungary to the UN. All this was made possible by the support and grant provided by the Hungarian Initiatives Foundation.