

Dr. Božo Cerar
Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia

Washington, D.C., January 21, 2014

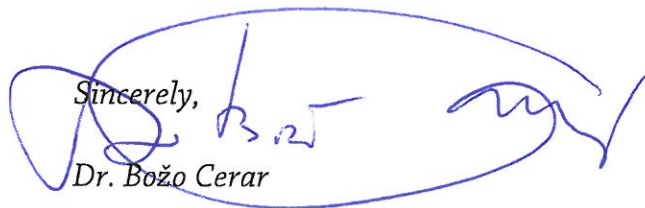
Ladies and Gentleman,

My warm greetings to everyone gathered to commemorate this special day, when all over the world, people remember the liberation of Auschwitz – Birkenau concentration camp. I believe that this ceremony as well as many others around the world reflect hope of the mankind in common humanism and common values.

The suffering of millions of Jews, Poles and other Slavic nations, Roma people, homosexuals, disabled and many others who were victims of Nazi and Fascist violence in extermination camps must never, and will never, be forgotten. Each of us is bound by this memory to prevent war atrocities from happening again and to insist on human rights being respected. Every year the International Holocaust Remembrance Day reminds us of this common duty. Especially on January 27, there is a need to foster a memory of the most tragic, fatal and criminal events in mankind's history with a particular sensitivity in order to truly recognize the meaning of our cultural messages for a better future.

Many Slovenes, too, were among the victims of Fascist and Nazi concentration camps and in these days, we remember their suffering with deepest respect. Out of a population of about 1.5 million in 1941, over 61,600 Slovenes were sent to Dachau, Mauthausen, Auschwitz, the Fascist camps on the island of Rab and Gonars, and other death camps. 10,190 of them never returned. They shared their agony with your parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters. Therefore it is so much more important that we all together honor their sacrifices of the victims in binding ceremonies and that we together overcome cultural, religious, linguistic and other prejudices. The very heterogeneous experience of the past creates common ground for us all to cooperate on the basis of mutual trust. Especially educating next generations about the horrors the world witnessed in the 1940s is our extraordinarily moral duty and any opportunity should be used to express opposition to extremism and intolerance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'B. Cerar', enclosed within a large, loopy blue oval scribble.

Dr. Božo Cerar

Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to the U.S.