THE PRESIDENT
Jerusalem, January 2018
Tevet 5778

Dear friends in the Jewish communities all around the world,

I am writing to invite you to join with me and the citizens of the State of Israel in remembering, on Yom Hashoah, the six million of our brothers and sisters who were murdered during the years of the Holocaust.

This year on Yom Hashoah 2018/5778, as we also mark and celebrate 70 years of the independence of the State of Israel, we will remember the many survivors who came home to Eretz Yisrael and played such a significant role in building and developing the State of Israel.

Many Holocaust survivors quickly became part of the combat forces fighting for Israel's independence. Sadly, some of them fell in that war. Others however, became an inseparable part of Israeli society. They helped build the State of Israel in a variety of fields such as economics, industry, and education. Their personal histories reinforced for them the vital importance of documenting what happened and perhaps even more importantly, preserving the memory of those who perished.

I want to quote the words of Holocaust survivor Leyb Rochman, who wrote the following about the role of the State of Israel in the survivors’ experience: “During the first post-Shoah years, we lived lives of despair. However, the cup of our despair now contains drops of comfort... I have lived here for nearly 25 years, and I can attest to my own restoration. Here is where my children were born... I now have a granddaughter. I thought I would never again see my mother, sister or brother. Now, I see them once more – in the faces of my children and granddaughter, in my home in Jerusalem, where they have been as if reborn, before my very eyes.”

By reading out names of our fellow Jews murdered in the Shoah, we can help give them back their human face, their place in our shared Jewish destiny. All of us, all members of the Jewish People, share a history and a future. I call on you to participate with us this year, in the privilege and the duty of the ceremony entitled “Unto Every Person There is a Name” on Yom Hashoah.

Yours sincerely,

Reuven (Ruvi) Rivlin
Unto Every Person There Is A Name
Public Recitation of Names of Holocaust Victims in Israel and Abroad
on Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day

“Unto every person there is a name, given to him by God and by his parents”, wrote the Israeli poetess Zelda. Every single victim of the Holocaust had a name. The vast number of Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust – some six million men, women and children - is beyond human comprehension. We are therefore liable to lose sight of the fact that each life that was brutally ended belonged to an individual, a human being endowed with feelings, thoughts, ideas and dreams whose entire world was destroyed, and whose future was erased. The annual recitation of names of victims on Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day is one way of posthumously restoring the victims’ names, of commemorating them as individuals. We seek in this manner to honor the memory of the victims, to grapple with the enormity of the murder, and to combat Holocaust denial and distortion.

This year marks the 29th anniversary of the global Shoah memorial initiative “Unto Every Person There Is A Name”, held annually under the auspices of the President of the State of Israel. In addition to name recitation ceremonies conducted all over Israel, the project aims to reach out to as many overseas communities and institutions as possible. With this in mind, we are sending you the attached materials, in the hope that you will join us in this essential mission, and hold a name-reading ceremony on Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day.

The theme of this year’s observances is:

70 Years of Remembering and Building

Holocaust Survivors and the State of Israel

Following WWII, most Holocaust survivors chose to concentrate on rebuilding their lives, with many of them doing so in Eretz Israel, which they viewed as Home. The annals of the Holocaust survivors who made aliyah to Israel are apparently unparalleled in the history of human migrations. Only very rarely has a group of newly arrived immigrants integrated so successfully into their new society, and become such active partners in shaping its face and character.

From the day they reached the Land of Israel, the survivors took on two simultaneous missions: shaping and preserving the memory of the Shoah on the one hand, and constructive social action on the other.
The attached materials include texts and readings on this year’s theme that can be incorporated into your ceremony.

To date over 4,700,000 names of Holocaust victims have been recorded in Yad Vashem’s online Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names, with more than 2,750,000 names registered on Pages of Testimony.

You can assist in our ongoing names collection campaign by downloading and distributing Pages of Testimony, or by submitting them online through our website: www.yadvashem.org.

Sadly, the generation of survivors is dwindling rapidly. As the bearers of their legacy, we must do everything possible to perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust's victims. By reciting their names, ages and places of death, we keep their memory alive, and remind ourselves that each man, woman and child was, and is, an entire world.

Sincerely,

Avner Shalev
Chairman
Yad Vashem Directorate