

Obama Pledges to Prevent Future Holocausts

President Obama on Monday morning pledged to do whatever he can to stop another **holocaust**.

Obama was escorted by Holocaust survivor Ellie Wiesel, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986, through the museum before addressing a crowd outside.

"I've stood with survivors, in the old Warsaw ghettos, where a monument honors heroes who said we will not go quietly; we will stand up, we will fight back," Obama said. "And I've walked those sacred grounds at Yad Vashem, with its lesson for all nations—the Shoah cannot be denied."

During his visit to Yad Vashem he said he was given a gift, inscribed with the words from the book of Joel: "Has the like of this happened in your days or in the days of your fathers? Tell your children about it, and let your children tell theirs, and their children the next generation."

With that recollection, Obama said that is why he's there: not simply to remember, but to speak.

"I say this as a president, and I say it as a father. We must tell our children about a crime unique in human history," Obama said. "The one and only Holocaust—6 million innocent people, men, women, children, babies—sent to their deaths just for being different, just for being Jewish ... We must tell our children about how this evil was allowed to happen—because so many people succumbed to their darkest instincts, and because so many others stood silent. Let us also tell our children about the Righteous Among the Nations."

Obama then announced he will award a posthumous Presidential Medal of Freedom to Jan Karski, a former officer in the Polish

Underground during World War II who was among the first to provide eye-witness accounts of the **Holocaust** to the world. The Medal of Freedom is the Nation's highest civilian honor, presented to individuals who have made especially meritorious contributions to the security or national interests of the United States, to world peace, or to cultural or other significant public or private endeavors.

Obama said "never again" is a challenge to reject hatred in all of its forms—including anti-Semitism, which has no place in a civilized world. "Never again," he added, is a challenge to defend the fundamental right of free people and free nations to exist in peace and security—and, he said, that includes the State of Israel. Obama said "never again" is also a challenge to societies and nations.

Obama then announced the first White House position dedicated to preventing and responding to mass atrocities. He called it the Atrocities Prevention Board, and said it will bring together senior officials from across the U.S. government. The board will convene for the first time on Monday at the White House.

"In short, we need to be doing everything we can to prevent and respond to these kinds of atrocities," Obama said, "because national sovereignty is never a license to slaughter your people."

Obama also signed an executive order that authorizes new sanctions against the Syrian government and Iran and those that abet them for using technologies to monitor and track and target citizens for violence.

"These technologies should not empower—these technologies should be in place to empower citizens, not to repress them," Obama said. "And it's one more step that we can take toward the day that we know will come—the end of the Assad regime that has brutalized the Syrian people—and allow the Syrian

people to chart their own destiny.”