

## **The First International Conference on Nations under Genocide**

Welcome Speech by Prof. Sz. A. SZUROMI (April 19<sup>th</sup> 2017)  
President of PPCU

*Your Eminencies, Excellences, Distinguished Guests, Honorable Professors and Colleagues, Our Dear Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is an extraordinary honor for the Pázmány Péter Catholic University to welcome you to *The First International Conference on Nations under Genocide*. It is an inspiring prominent moment when we can be together; those who carry different wounds of the body of our nations, of our peoples, of our Families and of our various Faiths. These irreparable tragedies cannot be forgotten, because these are living memory and belong essentially to our own history, even to the daily life of many of you, still now. Unfortunately, we are in an epoch of the history of human being when many times harms, massacres, persecutions, and other forms against nations and faith happen.

I would like to express my thankfulness to Prof. Ahmed Anwar Dezaye, president of the Salahaddin University of Erbil, as well as to Prof. Ibrahim Ismael Hamarash, and to the entire Salahaddin University, whose initiative inspired this conference, and thanks to the mutual partnership of our Institutions, it has been come true today.

I would like to express my deep respect and gratitude toward those whose presence enriches this important event. It is a great pleasure to greet among us His Excellency Governor Ali, Governor of Halabja, which territory suffered the largest chemical weapons attack against civilian on March 16<sup>th</sup> 1988.

I would like to greet also personally His Excellency Nicodemus Daoud Matti Sharaf, Syrian Orthodox Metropolitan and Archbishop of Mosul.

And our good friend, His Grace Abna Ermia, general bishop and director of the Coptic Orthodox Cultural Center in Cairo.

There are many esteemed guests and distinguished scholars here too, and we are really happy on that.

If we open the writings of the great ancient historical authors – e.g., Herodotus – we can read terrible descriptions of several conquests which caused murdering, deportation, and humiliation of entire nations. The real deeply staggering fact that we are discuss today not about the Ancient Time, but on the Modern Age of the human history, including our present days.

We must raise our voice against any unmerciful and grievous act or recurring savageness which has caused – and causes – terrible tolls in the 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> century. We have to bow our head with great respect toward the memory of those who died; toward their sufferings; and toward a deep pain of entire nations, communities, minorities or faiths, because their sacrifice.

The *General Assembly of the United Nation* issued a convention on December 9<sup>th</sup> 1948 about the *Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*. The articles and the intention are clear of this document. However, we never can forget: when we speak on *genocide*, it does not mean only killing members of a nation, ethnic, race or religious group, but means much more: death of individuals, who are despoiled from their human dignity. It is an irreparable loss of a nation or a community.

We can only pray and hope for that time, when the dreamed peace with recognition of equal value of nations and faiths, the peaceful cohabitation without persecution, but with same rights – as it was dreamed even by Marcus Aurelius – will come. However, even when the earthly peace among peoples becomes fulfilled, we cannot forget our own traditions, convictions, history, tragedies, etc., because we must preserve the received heritage of our forefathers.

I believe and hope that our International Conference on Nations under Genocide can effectively serve this goal, and we can continue this conference in the future with more participants of further nations and communities, more experts of these world-wide happened terrible tragedies to call attention of the world for the extreme inhumanity, for the particular value of every single loss, and for the unforgettable memory of our martyrs.

With these words I wish you a fruitful conference!