



TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY

The Gershon H. Gordon
Faculty of Social Sciences
The Harold Hartog School of
Government and Policy



**The Pears
Foundation**

The Crisis in Darfur, Israel and the Jewish People

Beth-Hatefutsoth Museum of the Jewish People

Monday, June 25, 2007

A large, faint, light-colored version of the Tel Aviv University logo (the flame/leaf shape above the Hebrew letters 'תא') is centered in the background of the lower half of the page.

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Invitation | 3 |
| Opening notes | |
| A Note from Mr. Trevor Pears | 4 |
| A Note from Mr. Stanley Bergman | 5 |
| Participants | 6 |
| Opening Statements | |
| Ms. Hasia Israeli, Director General of Beth-Hatefutsoth | 9 |
| Prof. Yossi Shain, Head of the School of Government and Policy, TAU | 10 |
| Presentations | |
| Ms. Ruth Messinger, President of the American Jewish World Service | 14 |
| Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv-Yafo | 19 |
| Mr. Assaf Uni, <i>Ha'aretz</i> European correspondent | 26 |
| Att. Neil Grungras, HIAS European and Middle Eastern representative | 29 |
| Att. Anat Ben-Dor, the Program for Refugee Rights, Law Faculty, TAU | 32 |
| Ms. Simona Halperin, Deputy Head of the International Organizations and Human Rights Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs | 36 |
| Ms. Jacqueline Murekatete | 38 |
| Q & A | 42 |
| Photos | 51 |



אוניברסיטת תל-אביב

הפקולטה למדעי החברה ע"ש גרשון טרדון
בית הספר לממשל ולמדיניות
ע"ש הרולד הרטוך

מזמין את הציבור הרחב
לאירוע בנושא:

משבר דרפור, ישראל והעם היהודי

17:00 דברי פתיחה:

גב' חסיה ישראלי, מנכ"ל בית התפוצות
פרופ' יוסי שיין, ראש בית הספר לממשל ולמדיניות,
אוניברסיטת ת"א

דוברים:

גב' רות מסינגר, נשיאת American Jewish World Service
הרב ישראל לאו, הרב הראשי, ת"א-יפו

מגיבים:

מר אסף אוני, עיתונאי "הארץ"
עו"ד ניל גרינגרס, מנכ"ל היאס-ישראל
עו"ד ענת בן דור, התכנית לזכויות הפליטים,
הפקולטה למשפטים, אוניברסיטת ת"א
גב' סימונה הלפרין, אגף ארגונים בינלאומיים (ארב"ל),
משרד החוץ
גב' ג'קלין מורקסטסה, זוכת פרס האו"ם לשלום וסובלנות
תגובות ושאלות מן הקהל

יום שני, 25 ליוני 2007

בית התפוצות, קמפוס אוניברסיטת ת"א
שער 2, רח' קלאוזנר, רמת-אביב

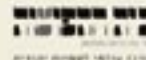
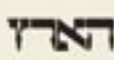
באירוע יוצע תרגום סימולטני
מעברית לאנגלית

* תזיה מחוץ לקמפוס

19:30

"בשולי הטבח בדרפור, במדבר הלוחט,
ארץ המתים נאבקת על חייה"
פתיחת תערוכת הצילומים של אוריאל סיני ממחנות
הפליטים בצ'אד
התערוכה נערכת בחסות הועד היהודי-האמריקני וקרן פירס

IMAGE: BEAC/REUTERS



The Pears Foundation

A Note from Mr. Trevor Pears

Since 2003, the 'Janjaweed', a Sudanese Government backed militia has waged a campaign of ethnic cleansing and genocide against black African tribes in the western region of Sudan called Darfur.

Up to four hundred thousand men, women and children have died. A further two million have fled their homes, with 200,000 living in refugee camps in Chad and the remaining languishing in camps for internally displaced persons in Darfur.

These facts are now widely known not only to the perpetrators and victims of the violence but also to the people and nations of the world.

Despite this however there is still not enough being done to stop these crimes against humanity.

Therefore not only am I pleased to commend this booklet as an educational tool to better understand the issues and what can be done, but I also hope that this booklet acts as a catalyst to the reader to take action.

Individually we may feel we can achieve little, but together I truly believe we can not only make 'a' difference but make 'the' difference.

Trevor Pears
Executive Chair
The Pears Foundation, UK
www.pearsfoundation.org.uk



The Pears Foundation

A Note from Mr. Stanley Bergman

Dear friends,

It is indeed a great honor to introduce a publication dedicated to the humanitarian catastrophe that has engulfed Darfur.

I am so pleased that the Hartog School has taken initiative on this matter, in calling for a united response to the crisis from the Government of Israel, Israeli NGOs and Jewish Organizations in the United States.

Persecution is a subject so close to the Jewish heart and so embedded in the Jewish experience, that communal unity and universal solidarity with all those who face such tragedy is an imperative that we, as a people, cannot ignore.

It was therefore timely and relevant that the Hartog School convened what was an inspirational panel debate at Tel Aviv University, on 25th June, which brought together religious and secular Jews, civil society and government representatives from Israel and the United States.

I would like to express my thanks in particular to Ruth Messinger, President of the American Jewish World Service, for her participation as a panelist at the event. The tireless and sensitive work of AJWS, and Ruth's driving force, is an inspiration to the Hartog School and to us all, and I look forward to furthering our partnership.

We were also especially fortunate to be joined by a remarkable young woman, Ms. Jacqueline Murekatete, a Rwandan genocide survivor and human rights advocate now residing in the United States. My thanks go to Jacqueline and to all the panelists who contributed to a vibrant and motivating event.

I feel strongly that the Darfur event was a spur to awareness and action on this issue, and that by working together, one day we will give meaning to the phrase 'never again'.

Finally, I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to Trevor Pears, Charles Keidan and the team at the Pears Foundation UK, for their continuing, vital and greatly appreciated support of the School of Government's work, and without whom this event and publication would not have been possible. Thank you also to Yossi Shain, Gary Sussman and all the staff for the wonderful work you do at the Hartog School.

Stanley Bergman
Chairman
International Advisory Board
Harold Hartog School of
Government and Policy

Participants (in alphabetical order)

- ◆ **Attorney Anat Ben-Dor** currently heads the Refugee Rights Program at the Buchman Law Faculty of Tel Aviv University. She holds a Master's degree from the Hebrew University, and specializes in immigration issues.

- ◆ **Attorney Neil Grungras** is the European and Middle Eastern representative of the international Jewish organization HIAS. HIAS is engaged in humanitarian undertakings around the world for Jews and non-Jews alike, including a psychosocial project in Chad. This project assists Darfur refugees in five refugee camps in Chad, and represents a joint and cooperative initiative of IsraAID members, including the American Jewish Committee (AJC), B'nai Brith International, through the B'nai Brith World Center in Jerusalem and the organization FIRST.

- ◆ **Ms. Simona Halperin** is the Deputy Head of the International Organizations and Human Rights Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Earlier, she served as advisor to the Israeli mission to the European Union and as the head of the international cooperation desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Between 1993 and 1999, she served as Israel's Deputy Ambassador to Korea and Kazakhstan. She holds a Master's degree in Law and Public Administration from the Hebrew University.

- ◆ **Ms. Hasia Israeli** is the Director General of Beth Hatefutsoth - the Museum of Jewish Diaspora and a World Center for Jewish Peoplehood. Beth Hatefutsoth serves as a platform for Jewish initiatives, discussion and programming. Previously Hasia was the Director General of the Melitz Institute for Jewish Zionist Education (1996-2000) and the Jewish Agency Education Department Deputy Director & the Director of Initiatives and Organizational Development (2000-2006). She holds MA degree in Business Administration from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

- ◆ **Rabbi Israel Meir Lau** was born in Poland before World War II, and survived the Holocaust. He is considered the youngest survivor of the Buchenwald concentration camp. After immigrating to Israel, he served in a number of rabbinical posts, and in 1993 was elected Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi of Israel, a position he held for a decade. Rabbi Lau is a member of the Board of "Yad Vashem", and a recipient of the Israel Prize for his life achievements. In 2005, he published his autobiography *Do Not Stretch Out Your Hand Against the Boy*. Today, Rabbi Lau serves as the Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv-Yafo

- ◆ **Ms. Ruth Messinger** is the president of the "American Jewish World Service", an international development organization providing support to 300 grassroots social change projects throughout the world. Prior to assuming her position at AJWS in 1998, Ms. Messinger was in public service in New York City for 20 years. She served 12 years in the New York City Council and eight years as Manhattan borough president. In February 2006 in honor of her tireless work to end the genocide in Darfur, Sudan, Ruth Messinger received the Jewish Council for Public Affairs' prestigious Albert D. Chernin Award. And in tribute to her life's work, she was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in May 2005 and was also awarded an honorary Doctor of Letters, Honoris Causa, from Hebrew College in June 2007.

Ms. Messinger graduated from Radcliffe College in 1962 and received a Master of Social Work from the University of Oklahoma in 1964. She is a visiting professor at Hunter College, teaching urban policy and politics.

- ◆ **Jacqueline Murekatete** is internationally recognized for her work as a youth leader and humanitarian, speaking out for victims and survivors of genocide. Born in Rwanda in 1984, Jacqueline was not yet ten when she lost her immediate and extended family in the 1994 genocide.

In the past five years, Jacqueline has conducted hundreds of presentations also in the UN General Assembly, Independently and with Holocaust survivor David Gewirtzman.

For her work, she has received a number of prestigious awards, including the Global Peace and Tolerance award from the UN and the Humanitarian award from the Anti-Defamation League.

In May 2007, she graduated cum laude from NYU with a bachelor's degree in Political Science.

- ◆ **Professor Yossi Shain** holds a dual appointment at Tel Aviv University and Georgetown University. At Tel Aviv University he is Professor of Political Science and Head of the Hartog School of Government and Policy. At Georgetown he is Professor of comparative government and Diaspora Politics and he is the first Director of the Center for Jewish Civilization.

Professor Shain earned his Ph.D. from Yale in 1988 with distinction and since 1989 he has taught Political Science at Tel Aviv University, where he served as Head of the Political Science Department from 1996 to 1999. Professor Shain held visiting appointments at Yale University, Wesleyan University, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and Middlebury College. He has also been a visiting Senior Fellow at St. Antony's College, Oxford.

Professor Shain has published more than 40 articles in books and leading academic journals. His forthcoming book is entitled "*Kinship and Diasporas in International Affairs*".

- ◆ **Mr. Assaf Uni** has been writing for the daily *Ha'aretz* for the last three years. During the past year, he served as the paper's Europe correspondent. Uni, 29, traveled the world before joining the staff of the paper, living in Denmark, among other places. During the past year, he published articles from different places in the world, primarily Europe. In April 2007, he went to cover the refugee camps on the Sudan-Chad border; this gave rise to a series of prominent articles on the topic. *Ha'aretz* photographer Uriel Sinai joined Uni, and his photographs can be seen here this evening during the opening of his photographic exhibit, "White Sands."



Opening Statement

Ms. Hasia Israeli, Director General of Beth-Hatefutsoth:

Prof. Yossi Shain, Rabbi Israel Lau, Ruth Messinger, Jacqueline Murekatete, Assaf Uni, Neil Grungras, Anat Ben-Dor and Simona Halperin, Dear Guests and Friends. Beth-Hatefutsoth comes to tell the story of the Jewish people, and to strengthen our sense of belonging. When the Hartog School of Government and Policy came to us and asked us to host the exhibit of Uriel Sinai's photographs, we were happy to lend the space. Immediately, we also suggested that we host the event dealing with the crisis in Darfur, Israel and the Jewish people, because we view the hosting of the event and the exhibition as a Jewish act, as an embodiment of the idea of Jewish peoplehood. Over the past year, Beth-Hatefutsoth has become a world center for Jewish peoplehood, and has assumed the task of promoting an honest and real discussion with Jewish communities around the world, and being the place for meetings and initiatives such as this one.

One of the ways to create a common language of the Jewish people is via a discussion of those values held by individuals as part of a set of basic values held by the Jewish people for thousands of years. Israelis and Diaspora Jews are working together to find the connection and the common language around values of *tikkun olam* (mending the world), *tzedaka* (justice and charity), loving one's neighbor as oneself, and other values that represent the foundation of us belonging to one people. This is an effort that stems from a feeling of obligation.

These values are rooted and emphasized in the Jewish experience throughout the generations. In the distant past, the Jewish people could not help anyone but itself, as evidenced by the 10th century story of the four captives and their redemption, or the endeavors of Jewish communities in welfare and charity. However, in the world of today, when the Jewish people is scattered, has open and extensive mutual relationships with voluntary community settings, and exists as an equal among equals, giving in non-Jewish settings is not only possible but also essential. With your permission, I would like to conclude my welcome to this discussion with a quotation from the writings of Ahad Ha'am, a philosopher of the spiritual strain of Zionism, and one of the proponents of cultural Judaism, who spoke of peoplehood even at the end of the 19th century and who saw in Jewish morality one of the building blocks of Jewish identity:

"Morality on its own, perhaps more so than other aspects of culture, is a national asset. If this is true for all other enlightened nations, it is even more true of the Jewish people, which, since its dawn, has been "a nation that dwells alone," set apart from other nations by the manner in which it developed and its wondrous existence from antiquity to this day. It is inconceivable that it would not have a unique national message based on the attributes of its spirit, on its past history, and on its current condition and needs." Have an interesting evening.

Prof. Yossi Shain, Head of the School of Government and Policy, TAU:

Thank you very much. "The Crisis in Darfur, Israel and the Jewish People": the question, Why does every international crisis or conflict have to involve the Jewish people or the Jewish question? is a very serious one. And the question of Jewish politics and Jewish involvement in the world is, of course, a question that has been discussed since before the establishment of the State of Israel.

What paradigm does the Jewish people follow? Is it "a nation that dwells alone" as we heard? Is it a nation "like all other nations"? Or, is it perhaps, "a light unto the nations"? These are three paradigms or attitudes that shape the notion of the mission of the Jewish people vis-à-vis itself and vis-à-vis others.

The State of Israel, ladies and gentlemen, obviously created a very clear conception regarding the question of what constitutes Jewish politics. Jewish politics concentrates first and foremost on continued Jewish sovereignty in the land of Israel. All the resources of the state are, above all else, dedicated to this end. In an era in which the State of Israel is becoming the largest center of the Jewish people, both numerically and in terms of the issues with which it deals, it is clear that the topic of Israeli, or Jewish-Israeli sovereignty, is a critical one for anyone in the Diaspora. Moreover, the State of Israel also assumes responsibility for Jews who are not citizens wherever they might be, as part of the fulfillment of the idea that all Jews are responsible for one another. Perhaps this idea is not always immediately apparent in the daily activity of the State, but it forms an integral part of its task and even finds expression in various statutes. If you look at the 1994 Feller Law, you will find that there exists a concept of mutual involvement or mutual guaranty, and of an obligation of the State of Israel for Jews in the Diaspora.

The argument over the centrality of the State of Israel in "Jewish diplomacy" is clearly a fundamental one. I see here in the audience former Member of Knesset Avrum Burg, who created quite a stir recently on the subject of his obligations as a citizen of the world in contradistinction to his obligations as an Israeli citizen and a Jew. This issue in terms of the centrality of Israel in the thought, existence, and type of Jew we would like to see, is a very critical one. It carries over both on the ideological level of the State of Israel and, of course, on the international level and in the way that the nations of the world relate to Israel and the Jewish people.

There is not a single place in the world where Israel's policies do not affect the Jewish people, and there is no Jewish activity that does not bind Jews, wherever they may be, to what the State of Israel does. Therefore, this symbiosis between the Jewish people and the State of Israel, is, I think, almost self-evident today, everywhere and on every matter, be it Zionism, or international conflicts, when Jews are involved, whether they want to or not. We've seen this

over the past few years in the waves of anti-Semitism in Europe and elsewhere, and, of course, in various terrorist attacks, such as the attack on the AMIA Jewish cultural center in Argentina and other similar events.

Therefore, the issue of Jewish diplomacy is one that deals first and foremost with the Jewish people. Because of various distresses of the Jewish people, distresses or perhaps we should call them challenges, and because of matters that are always up for discussion in the State of Israel in the context of the security of the Jewish people in its land, and in the places it dwells beyond its land, we sometimes forget that the Jewish people is also involved in other types of activity, international activity outside the country's borders; in that sense, activity that is directed at other nations, regarding different issues.

This activity forms an integral part of the experience of the Jewish people throughout the generations, despite the fact that, until the Jewish people attained sovereignty, it was obviously difficult for it to be internationally active regarding matters concerning the welfare of other nations of the world; although Jews, as individuals, had always taken an important part in ideologies of international/universal orientation, and had even established various institutions to promote these ideologies. One may say that the Damascus trials of the 19th century to an extent opened the gate for international Jewish diplomatic activity on behalf of a community in distress. However, even by the end of the 19th century, the Jewish people began to operate in an organized fashion at the level of human rights and regarding topics concerning the common good, as an aspect of *tikkun olam* beyond the Jewish people. When Jews attained a certain sense of security both in Israel and, of course, in the free Diaspora, I would say particularly in North America, the concern for all of humanity grew stronger. If you look at the North American organizations, the ones that were established first, whether it's B'nai Brith, or the American Jewish Committee or the American Jewish Congress - these were all universal organizations in their conception of *tikkun olam* in the United States, even if they were intended also to help the Jews themselves.

And therefore the question of what involves the Jewish people is a very central question today, especially when the State of Israel - unquestionably, a country with challenges but a stable country capable of dealing with external issues and issues affecting the world at large in light of the religious commandment and especially in light of the experience of the Holocaust - must constantly struggle with questions of conscience, ethics, an engagement with the world. Israel has no choice but to deal with these questions, as part of a very clear moral imperative, and not just because of the Holocaust. Therefore, the crisis in Darfur represents a very important issue for the Jewish people, because if the Jewish people does not raise its voice, as was also the case in Bosnia, and as was also the case even in Rwanda in various ways, the question is, who will do the work.

The "division of labor" within the Jewish people is very unclear. The question of who speaks for the Jewish people, with what authority and about which topics, is a very interesting issue. The question of a division of labor between the sovereign Jewish state and the organizations and voices in the Diaspora - whether in places where these cannot be expressed, or in places such as North America where entire communities with economic, political and moral clout can enlist themselves in a cause - this question, Who speaks for the Jewish people? is a fascinating one, and one that we, at the Hartog School of Government and Policy, try to deal with, as we deal with the question of the Jewish people and Jewish diplomacy in general. We are developing the entire issue of *tikkun olam* as part of a project of Jewish and Israeli involvement in developing the weaker parts of the world. To develop the project, we are investing a great deal of thought to clarify and understand how young Israelis and Jews can really enter into international activity that isn't only "local," for Israel's benefit. Obviously, this question relates to the state itself, but it isn't just a question of that. We are very interested in the question of involvement, not just in the sense of "a nation that dwells apart," and not just in the sense of "a nation like all other nations," but primarily in the sense of "a light unto the nations."

We see young Jews, Israeli and non-Israeli, throughout the world, and we have no doubt that they could be mobilized to grapple with the most acute issues of ethics, conflict resolution, and giving to the needy, something that the State of Israel tried to do in different ways in the 1950s and the early 1960s.

The crisis in Darfur is critical for us, first of all as human beings, and obviously not just in the academic sense. At hand is a tremendous disaster, and we are convinced that the State of Israel, even though it is dogged every day by threats and challenges in our own surroundings, must act vigorously on this matter. We are proud that today, at the School of Government and Policy, we have the opportunity to contribute if only in small part to putting the issue on the public agenda in the company of great and important people who have come from near and far to share their thoughts with us and to tell us about their activities.

Tonight we are hosting Ms. Ruth Messinger, President of the American Jewish World Service, and we want to thank her for being here. We are very happy also to host the Honorable Rabbi Israel Lau, Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv and former Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel, as well as Mr. Assaf Uni of the newspaper *Ha'aretz*, Attorney Anat Ben-Dor from the Law Faculty of the University, Ms. Simona Halperin from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Attorney Neil Grungras from HIAS, and Ms. Jacqueline Murekatete. All will discuss the topic of Darfur, the Jewish people, Jewish politics, and the State of Israel.

To date some quarter of a million people have been killed in Darfur in western Sudan. According to some estimates, the number may be as high as 400,000. Some two million people have fled their homes. The conflict broke out about four years ago, in 2003, after an African

rebel organization attacked government targets, claiming that the Khartoum government was neglecting its black citizens and giving preferential treatment to the Arabs. In the background, of course, there is a centuries' old struggle over land and grazing rights, between the permanent residents belonging to three African tribes and slaves of Arab descent. The Khartoum government has admitted that it recruited a self-defense militia in order to respond to rebel attacks, but denies any connection to the Arab militias that attack African villages and cleanse wide parts of the region of its black residents.

I don't want to go on at length about the genocide happening before our eyes. You can read about it in the booklets available here today. However, the genocide is one of the most pressing crises among international issues in terms of urgency. The question of how to define genocide is critical, but what we are clearly seeing here is a process of the murder of a people. "Just" destroying a nation or a massacre is not a numerical question, and it is clear that mass murder is taking place before our eyes and that the international community is responding slowly.

Our first speaker this evening is Ms. Ruth Messinger, President of the international development organization, the American Jewish World Service, which is engaged directly also in the Darfur crisis. Ms. Messinger served in public office for the city of New York for twenty years, and has recently focused her efforts on Darfur. As a result of her activity, she has been awarded many prizes, among them recognition from the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, and the prestigious Albert and Cherin Award. In recognition for her life's work, she was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor to the Human Letters from the Hebrew Union College.

Ms. Ruth Messinger will be the first of our speakers.



Presentations

Ms. Ruth Messinger, President of the American Jewish World Service:

Shalom, good evening. Yossi, thank you very very much for your powerful words. Rabbi Lau, it is an honor to appear with you. I am interested in meeting all of the panelists. I actually had the privilege to meet Jacqueline, who will speak later on, just a few weeks ago, and it is wonderful to have you here. I am glad Avraham Burg is here, because we both hope to develop "tikkun olam" service programs involving Israelis and Diaspora Jews, and we can all see that there is a need for that.

When you come to another country to speak, you have to apologize for being monolingual. I do want you all to know, although it won't help, that I speak pretty fluent Spanish, but I will speak slowly tonight because I do not speak Hebrew. Also, when you come to another country, it is very good if a couple of your friends from that country come out to hear you. So I have several friends in the audience. I can't introduce all of them but they include an American Jewish World Service board member, Marion Blumenthal, the distinguished sociologist and researcher Steven M. Cohen, and of most importance to me, my college roommate, Dr. Sharon Levisohn, whom I see once or twice a year.

I want to tell you a little about American Jewish World Service, and then talk about the crisis in Darfur brilliantly addressed by Prof. Shain. I am going to talk to you about what is happening on the ground there and the way in which American Jewish World Service is responding to that and wants many others to respond. But it ought to be left for the panelists to say exactly what Israel or the world Jewish community should do, I have enough on my hands.

So, what is American Jewish World Service? We are the Jewish group that is specifically formed to be concerned about the rest of the world. The core of our work is to support grassroots efforts at social change in the non-Jewish developing world. Three hundred projects, thirty-six countries. Some places it is farmers learning drip irrigation - you know where that comes from. Some places it is women starting a micro finance fund, or a community fighting for better health care, or AIDS prevention education. Most of our work is filled with hope, seeing people and communities in great poverty respond to the needs of their children, of their villages, and make changes that improve their lives.

We are proud to say that we also send volunteers, most from the American Jewish community but also some from Israel. Why send volunteers? Of course because their skills are needed. Of course because they learn while they do. But also we send volunteers, we make grants in the

name of the Jewish community because we think this is a way to give real meaning to the phrase "tikkun olam", and have people all over the world see Jews I think we would want to be seen, and that is as a people committed to social justice.

You can ask many more questions about the organization later. But I was asked to say a little bit about how we got involved in Darfur and I think my feeling is rather: how could we not? The striking thing about this genocide is that for a year almost nobody in the world knew what was happening. The problem started in 2003, and the articles didn't even begin to appear, at least in the American press, for ten months. But when they did, in 2004, we said right away: this is a genocide! It is called a genocide by the United States Congress and by the President, but they are not doing much, and no citizen movement has started. There are people being killed every day, by their own government, simply because of who they are, and we have to respond.

I want to interrupt for a minute because not everybody knows the entire story of Darfur, and I am not going to tell it to you because it would take the twenty minutes I have. There is a fact sheet out there, and there are web sites to provide the history. I will describe to you more in a minute what is happening on the ground. But what we first said is: there are victims, there are families being torn apart, there are people being killed. We have to get involved. So we began to spread the word in the American Jewish community and to raise funds to do humanitarian aid and relief. And we have continued to do that now for three years, \$4 million worth of aid. Buying medicine, fixing up a field hospital so that it can handle deliveries of babies. Installing clean water pumps for building latrines, probably what is most needed in any camp situation. People who live in a village of two or three hundred don't need the level of public hygiene that they need in a camp of 10,000 to 130,000 people. So there are the services we provided. But then we said, and this is really what I think tonight is all about, we cannot in good conscience provide humanitarian relief to the victims of an ongoing genocide unless we are doing something, more every day I hope, to stop that genocide.

So starting shortly after March, 2004, American Jewish World Service did two things. We began our own advocacy and public policy effort on our web site, and through demonstrations, telling people, here's what to say to the U.S. Government, here's what to say to the United Nations, here's what it say in your own Jewish community to get more and more people involved. And I want to jump ahead for a minute and tell you the response has been tremendous.

At the same time we founded a broad coalition. We did that work with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum that some of you have certainly visited in Washington. They were our partners in bringing together every Jewish organization and many non-Jewish organizations, Christian, Muslims, civil and human rights groups, secular groups, all coming together, all spreading the world to their constituencies. That amount of public pressure has

made a difference in what the U.S. Government has been willing to do. But the difference is still much too small because this genocide is now entering its fifth year. And as we sit here tonight the problems in Darfur continue.

So let me tell you what it is like on the ground. I went to Darfur in August, 2004. When I wanted to go back a year later with some rabbis from the United States, it was too dangerous for anyone to take us into Darfur, so we went to Chad. Chad is the country just to the west, it shares a border with Sudan, and about 300,000 of the two and a half million who have been displaced have made it across the border. They are in refugee camps right along the border but it is easier to speak with them and interview them than it is in Darfur. For a while, it was easier to provide services in Chad, but now it is difficult there, as well.

Let me talk for a minute about what the visits are like. Two visits, six days, seven different camps. A phrase that will chill many people, camps for internally displaced persons. Refugee camps. I think I asked forty people to tell me their stories and every person said to the translator: "Tell her everything I say because as soon as they speak in the west about what is happening here it will stop". That is a heavy burden.

I met Fatima and Miriam Muhammad, two sisters. They had twigs on their heads, firewood. "What were they doing?" I asked. "Well, we came here, it took us three weeks. We have five children between us. They are all sick with diarrhea". Diarrhea is the killer of children in camps. "We need to get them food, but the only food we get is from the World Food Program. It must be cooked, and there are no stoves. And because of the desert land it is impossible to find firewood in the camp. So we have to go beyond the border of the camp to collect". I said "Is it safe?" "No. If we are found by the Janjaweed militia we will be raped". I looked stunned. They said: "Let us explain. If we send our husbands or our sons, and they are found by the militia they will be shot dead. If we are found, we will only be raped. So we go".

Here is the story that every person in a camp tells you, and this is to convince you of the horror of what is happening. "First," they say, "the planes came and they bombed our village, and they killed my neighbor and her children, and housing was smashed down. And my cousin died". So let me make clear to you that there is no tribe, there is no posse, there is no militia that has airplanes. These are Antonov planes that were given to Sudan during the cold war. The government of Sudan paints its airplanes white and writes UN on them so that people will think they are bringing humanitarian aid. And when they say bombed, they put anything you can imagine in these airplanes - old car chassis, broken air conditioners—and they shove them out the back, and it kills any person it hits, and it smashes down housing. But everyone's story continues, "and then right away the militia rode in," so you know it is orchestrated. The Janjaweed is an Arabic word meaning, more or less, devils on horseback, "They had guns and trucks. They raped and branded women. They shot husbands in front of their families. They

killed both children and animals, and they stuffed the carcasses in the wells to poison our water supply. So we fled, and then they burned our village to the ground."

That is the evidence of what is happening on the ground, and it is backed up virtually every day by anyone who gets there to talk to refugees. So, from the UN Commission that was just there, two quotes: "At a small clinic we saw a number of men who had been shot during the raid, including a twelve year old boy. An American nurse told us that the biggest challenge is to help the children deal with the trauma they are experiencing." Another tactic used throughout this war is rape. In one refugee camp we met a group of thirty women for an hour, and within that hour five women described their own experiences as victims of gang rape, rape to destroy not only them but their families and communities". These are individual stories, but there are hundreds and thousands of them, and one hears them over and over.

The flyer for tonight's conference [see p.3] is one of the best ways of telling the story, but many of you may not have noticed it. This young man, you can't see it on this copy, but you can see it on the original flyer, is holding a picture. Every child in every camp, not asked to draw a specific picture, just given paper and crayons while the parents were being treated, drew pictures of airplanes with bombs, of men on horses with guns. Each one of these children, and there are over a million of them, have been traumatized by their experience. So we argue some about the numbers, but I would say that most people agree now that over 400,000 people have been killed. UN officials say that two and half million have been displaced from their homes, that at least two thousand villages have been leveled, and that close to four million people who were subsistence farmers in their own villages are now dependent on the World Food Program for inadequate rations that are very hard to prepare.

That is what is happening on the ground, but it gets worse. In the last year the sporadic violence throughout Darfur *and* Chad has gotten so much worse that the international aid organizations consider Darfur the most dangerous assignment in the world, and in many places have pulled their own people out because aid workers were being shot and killed. That means close to a million people in camps with no clean water, with only occasional food deliveries, with no health care, but most of all with no witnesses. Yossi [Shain] referred to the history of the world since the Shoah. We gave the world a very powerful idea which we all know and we all repeat: "Never again!" Never again? Bosnia, Cambodia, Rwanda, Kosovo, South Sudan and now Darfur. Genocide is occurring as we sit here, and, without any question, among the people who have driven the response to Darfur in America, and I suspect will drive responses all over the world are Holocaust survivors. They don't have any of the complicated questions. They know we must act.

Let me tell you one story that I cherish. I spoke at a temple in Los Angeles, and I was asked by the rabbi would I entertain questions after. A group of about fifty persons came into the side

chapel, and, as is often the case, there was someone who wanted to argue with me. So a young man stood up to say, "Darfur is none of our business, there are no Jewish lives at risk. We have more than enough problems in the Jewish community. Why are you doing this work?"

I get that question from time to time and I was prepared to give him my answer. But I didn't have to, because a much older, that means older than me, woman pushed herself out of her chair, walked over, put her face about two inches from his face and said "It is because of people like you that I don't have any relatives". For me that is the story of Jewish responsibility, to help in the world in general based on our text and our teachings, but to help in the world dramatically when there is a genocide.

So, very briefly, what is happening on the ground now? There is an African Union force of between 6,000 and 7,000, but this is a vast region. Darfur itself is the size of the country of France, and the problems have now spilled over into Chad and the Central African Republic. So that force, with no resources, with no mandate to protect civilians, is totally inadequate. There needs to be a multilateral peacekeeping force on the ground of 23,000 people as a first step. There needs to be huge organized pressure from all of the governments of the world, first of all on Sudan to stop the violence and to admit the peacekeeping force, and second of all, to address itself to the rebuilding of a country whose people want to be able to return to their homes. The post-genocide problems will be more and more serious and complicated the longer this goes on.

The good news is that in America, we mobilized hundreds of thousands of people, sent a million postcards to the White House, turned out 75,000 people to the mall in Washington, DC a year ago, and have demonstrations going on every few months. We know that those demonstrations are now spreading around the world to African and European capitals. Pressure now should be on the economic trade between Sudan and China, and on using the leverage of the 2008 Olympics to get China to stop protecting Sudan and become a force for change and for good in the world. I believe that how we respond to Darfur is the moral legacy that we will leave our children and our grandchildren. I hope that none of us will be found wanting. Thank you.

Prof. Yossi Shain:

Thank you very much, Ms. Messinger. We would love to hear you speak at even greater length, but, unfortunately, time does not permit this. The next speaker is Rabbi Lau, who was awarded the Israel Prize in recognition of his life achievements. We all know him as a public figure, but of course his personal experience as a Holocaust survivor - I think he is considered the youngest survivor of the Buchenwald concentration camp - allows him to speak as someone who experienced genocide. As a rabbi, he also speaks in the name of Jewish morality. Please.

Rabbi Israel Lau, Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv-Yafo:

Prof. Shain, chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the presidium, esteemed teachers and rabbis, honored guests. A few days before the Passover, that is about three months ago, I learned of a group of refugees from Sudan who had fled the genocide in Darfur that was being held at the lock-up at Ma'asiyahu Camp in Ramle because they are citizens of a country with which we do not have diplomatic relations. Worse - the country has been deemed to be hostile. So these people are in jail.

I went to Ma'asiyahu Camp on the 7th of Nissan, a week before the Passover Seder night. I introduced myself to them; there were several dozen prisoners locked up, generally having done nothing wrong. I tried to figure it out, the camp commander was very helpful, cooperative and supportive. They're sitting there, one of them for over a year, sitting in jail. He got here without permission. Without a visa.

I explained to them that I don't know if I can free them, but I'm having a hard time: next weeks it's our Seder night, we too left Africa, we too were refugees from tyranny, even from northern Africa, from Egypt. Pharaoh was told, "Let my people go" - we left as we did. And I just cannot understand the idea that as we are commemorating our Festival of Freedom, there are maybe a hundred people, at least scores of them, no more than a 20 minute ride away, who have been deprived of their freedom because of a very simple reason: no one knows what to do with them. No one really wants to lock them up. But there's no solution. And, besides, we have so many other problems that are pressing, and worrisome, and difficult.

I promised them that I would tell their story to anyone I could, that I would speak with the Minister of the Interior, who at the moment was in charge of their matter, though not he alone. And that's what I did.

They're hoping for a solution that involves work. So we, as you know, arrange for them to sleep in Beer Sheva, in a stable home, a night here, a night there. There are *moshavim* and *kibbutzim* that employ them. And they want to work. They want to be free. Some of them have no idea what happened to their families.

And I, of course, remembered a story that all of you must know and remember: in 1938, at this time of year, July 6. The President of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, because of some public pressure or another, calls for a conference in Evian, at the foot of the Alps, in the French part. Representatives of 31 countries in Europe and America, even from far-away Australia and New Zealand, show up. Because of the Anschluss, Austria has been annexed by Germany, and there is growing pressure on the Jews, even though the Evian Conference conclusions don't use the word "Jews" who are marked for destruction. The Nazi ruler has

not hidden his intentions; these have been made public since 1923, and he came into power in '33 and established the Nuremberg laws in '36, and this is already the year of Kristallnacht, though later in the year, in November. But in July, the conference representatives are sitting and saying: Because Jews - they use the word "refugees" - will be looking and are already looking for shelter, (they were already talking about 650,000 Jews wanting to leave Germany and Austria), who is prepared to take them in? Where can we direct them so as to prevent their murder? They said this explicitly. They described the situation the way it was. To save people who are threatened by death, and are seeking to emigrate.

The United States said: the usual annual quota. We let 27,000 in every year, this year, too, we'll take in 27,000. Great Britain made its participation at the Evian Conference conditional: we will send a representative if the topic of Palestine is not on the agenda as a possibility, even the most remote, for taking in Jewish refugees from Europe, because this would upset the delicate balance with the Arabs in the Middle East, and we cannot afford to let this happen. So the organizers of the conference promised them that emigration to Palestine - that which we today call the State of Israel, at least the part of that Palestine - would not be discussed at all. Great Britain itself cannot take in any refugees. France cannot take anyone in. No one. Canada is prepared to take in a limited number, but only farmers. These Jews, usually from Vienna, Frankfurt, Dresden, and Leipzig, Munich and Hamburg - they're not exactly farmers. Ditto Uruguay: only farmers. Historically, believe it or not, there was one country in the world that offered to take in 100,000 refugees - The Dominican Republic. Does anyone know where that is? And I say that with a great deal of appreciation and gratitude. Close to 70 years have passed: The Dominican Republic, one righteous entity in a global Sodom.

And the fate of the European refugees...I don't have to tell you. Ms. Messinger mentioned it too, and we all know. Including the fate of "The St. Louis", that arrived with immigrants and refugees from Germany. It was already in American territorial waters, and was sent back to Germany. Its passengers were killed.

So, therefore, when the issue is refugees in this generation... 62 years have passed, and some of us survivors are still alive, and those with numbers on their arms - some of them are still among us. And they didn't want to take us in. There was no room for us.

So you can't entirely stand aside, even though you may not have a solution - so you can at least yell. When someone who is hoarse yells, people ask, Why are you yelling? What good is it doing you? He answers, It won't help me, but when something hurts - you yell. Because if you don't yell, it means that nothing hurts, and that means that you don't care.

In the August 6, 1968, issue of the daily newspaper *Ha'aretz* there is a picture: four people are standing, it is quite surreal, not like yesterday's demonstration of 200 about the Gilead Shalit

matter, four people are demonstrating in that place, across the Knesset building. This is the only time in my life that I've gone out to demonstrate in front of the Knesset. This was in '68, 39 years ago. Israeli TV was broadcasting then in black-and-white, three times a week. Color film wasn't used then, the newspapers didn't use color photography either. But you could see Biafra [Nigeria] children with bloated bellies. The newspapers were reporting that close to 2 million children were dying of starvation because of a ridiculous, tyrannical, dictatorial conflict, to this day nobody know exactly what went on there. Starving children, with bloated bellies, huge eyes, down on their knees with exhaustion, at any moment their heads would be dropping and they'd be falling to the ground dead, dead of starvation. And I just couldn't not do something. So, I took three people. One was called Abie Nathan, one was named Simha Holzberg - he was also a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto, and one was Uri Zohar, who was still Uri Zohar of "Save the Lifeguard" and "A Hole in the Moon." The four of us stood across from the Knesset building on August 5 with a single cardboard sign with four words in [Hebrew] block letters, two large and two small. The two large words were, "Thou shalt not kill," and underneath, "Even in Africa." The "Thou shalt not kill" from the receiving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, from the Ten Commandments, isn't directed just at us, it also applies to Africa.

And I told this story to the Sudanese refugees at Ma'asiyahu Camp. They were beaming that someone cared about them. And then I said to myself, But the poor from your own city take precedence, we have our own refugees whose situation has yet to be solved. Even from Sderot. There are others, people who left the Katif Bloc two years ago and still haven't found a home or a job or a school.

But it's impossible, it isn't one at the expense of the other, God forbid. It's not a question of either-or. The answer has to be both, not either-or. It's one of the aspects of the evil inclination that comes along and says, Don't do anything, because you haven't yet solved your own internal social problems.

I don't need to be taught the verses from Isaiah 58, "Do not ignore your own kin." First of all, do not ignore your kin. "It is to share your bread with the hungry, and to take the wretched poor into your home; when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to ignore your own kin." Clearly, taking care of your kin takes precedence. Exodus 22: "If you lend money to My people, to the poor among you." This teaches us that the poor of your own city take precedence over the poor of other cities. Your own poor take precedence over other poor. But it's not one at the expense of the other. We have to find a solution.

Those same hundred people, for example, sitting in the Ma'asiyahu lock-up, were you to check them out from the security perspective - and the security forces in charge did just that and there was nothing suspicious found with regards to even one of them - Instead of giving them bread and water, giving them the feeling of dependence and the debasement of prison,

and denying them their freedom - give them that same water system under the Creator's sun working in fields, plowing or planting, just like they're asking. If they aren't dangerous, they aren't dangerous to anyone. Even a temporary solution, shelter, or hold a negotiations with whoever can offer them a permanent home. But at least a start has to be made.

And we all remember that amazing gesture of June '77, it's 30 years ago now. In June of '77, Menahem Begin presented his first government here in Israel. As he was presenting the new government, in his speech in the Knesset, he said, "I've heard that there are, in a barely seaworthy vessel, somewhere in the Indian Ocean, 66 Vietnamese refugees who are looking for a home; they were displaced from their homes during the war in Vietnam, and they are seeking safe harbor." In his speech presenting his government, on his first day as Prime Minister, he, as a member of a persecuted nation, as a member of a nation that in this very generation was persecuted and had to seek a new home, he is offering asylum to the Vietnamese refugees. Some of these refugees are still in Israel, to this day. It was a beautiful gesture, so very humanitarian, so very human, so very ethical and educational for all of us.

I would like to conclude my remarks and say one more sentence. When we speak about the sources of Judaism, Ms. Messinger told us a story from a temple in Los Angeles, where someone said to her, "It's none of our business." This is a real house. I don't know who was the guy there in L.A. who told you what he told, but you can quote me, not my authority, the authority of the Bible, of the Torah, the book of Exodus, Chapter no. 2:

What is the unique standing of Moses, the greatest leader we ever had, as it says, "There has been no prophet like Moses in Israel"? What is his uniqueness? "Some time after that, when Moses had grown up (in a place where he himself lacked for nothing, in the household of Pharaoh), he went out to his kinsfolk and witnessed their labors." He allowed his eyes and his heart to feel for them. And the first confrontation that he sees is an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his kinsmen. He comes out to champion the oppressed. He saves the oppressed from his oppressor. The next day, what does he see? "...he found two Hebrews fighting"; so he said to the offender, 'Why do you strike your fellow?' That guy goes to inform on him that, yesterday, he killed the Egyptian oppressor. Moses has no refuge, and flees from Egypt, from Pharaoh's household, to Midian. Now, pay attention to the next picture, the third and last one, his uniqueness.

He's sitting there next to the well, a refugee, a newcomer to Midian. And here are Jethro's daughters coming with their flock of sheep to water them from the well. "...but shepherds came and drove them off." There was a confrontation - and now is not the time to go into the various rabbinic commentaries on the Torah text - but there was a confrontation between the Midianites and the women's father, with Jethro, the priest of Midian. The shepherds prevented Jethro's daughter from giving their sheep water. They blocked their access to the water. And

here - a refugee, an immigrant, what business is it of his? Why are you getting involved? Why are you sticking your nose in? Please, note the words: "Moses rose to their defense, and he watered their flock."

Three confrontations, one after another. The first is between a non-Jew and a Jew, the second is between one Jew and another and the third is amongst non-Jews. It didn't matter to Moses. He stood up for the persecuted, the oppressed. He has to ensure that justice is done. He has to show that he cares, that he is involved. "Do not profit by the blood of your fellow" Leviticus 19, that's the verse that relates to the issue. He can't just stand there doing nothing; nationality, identity, color, and race of those involved - all these don't matter. When someone needs help, when someone is in danger, we have to take a stand and save him.

That is our Torah. You mentioned "a light unto the nations," Prof. Shain. Sometimes, I think - and forgive me if this sounds a little cynical, we are supposed to, as Isaiah says, "I created you and appointed you, a covenant people, a light unto nations " - sometimes, it seems to me that our generator has so weakened and shrunk that it barely suffices for our own usage. So let us become a light of the Jews before becoming a light unto the nations, and let us first set an example for our community, our people, and show them the way to fulfill the highest commandment of "Do not profit by the blood of your fellow" even in Sudan.

Prof. Yossi Shain:

Thank you very much, Rabbi Lau.

Now, after hearing Ms. Messinger and Rabbi Lau, I would like to hear some responses. But I'm not asking for critical responses, but for responses from people who are dealing with the crisis in Darfur in the context of the Jewish people in various ways. We have posed several questions to these individuals, and each will respond from his and her field of expertise. With your permission, let me first introduce the speakers.

The first of the speakers will be journalist Assaf Uni. He has been writing for *Ha'aretz* for three years, and is now serving as the newspaper's European correspondent. Over the last year, he has published article from many places around the world. In April he went to cover the refugee camps on the border of Sudan and Chad, which gave rise to a very prominent series of articles on the subject. I would like him to speak about what he saw there; how he perceived the immediate needs on the ground; what effect did *Ha'aretz's* campaign on the subject have, in his opinion? And, to what extent does the subject receive exposure in the Israeli discourse?

Taking the place of Mr. Alan Snyder of B'nai Brith, we are pleased to host Attorney Neil Grungras of HIAS Israel. Attorney Grungras is the European and Middle Eastern representative

of the Jewish organization HIAS. This organization performs humanitarian activities around the world for Jews and non-Jews alike, and is also assisting Darfur refugees in Chad, in a joint initiative with members of IsraAID, among them the American Jewish Committee and B'nai Brith International. I'd like to ask him about that organizational partnership around the subject of Darfur. How is such a partnership constructed? Structurally and bureaucratically, how are their activities carried out? Because we know that organizations don't always know how to cooperate. Likewise, I'd be interested in hearing what is the scope of their activities, and how is it really expressed within the Jewish people and beyond?

Afterwards, we will hear from Attorney Anat Ben-Dor. She holds a Master's degree from the Hebrew University, and she specializes in questions of immigration. Today, Attorney Ben-Dor heads the Program for Refugee Rights at the Law Faculty here at Tel Aviv University, and, among other issues, she also deals with the question of Sudanese refugees in Israel. So, what really is Israel's obligation towards refugees? In what setting and what situation are we obligated to help, sometimes a very large group of people? One of the questions we ask ourselves is to what extent can the country take in refugees? Earlier, we spoke of 300,000 refugees in Chad. Today, there is a serious and central issue in Africa called "population dumping" - that's the phrase being used. This is a situation in which people cross borders to other countries, and the question becomes to what extent can a country absorb, or assimilate them. We saw this also during the Rwanda crisis, and we will hear about it also in the context of the current one. We would like to hear Attorney Ben-Dor address the whole legal issue. What is the official state attitude and the non-official one towards refugees from Sudan in Israel? How is the Clinic for Refugee Rights that she heads helping them? And what is the response we have to give today to the question of many refugees who might be standing at our doors in some situation or another, which is of course not a simple scenario at all.

After her, Ms. Simona Halperin of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will speak. Ms Halperin is involved in aid to refugees outside of Israel. We would like to ask her about Israel's official involvement in the issue. What about diplomatic initiatives with neighboring countries or international organizations for a long-term solution?

And last but not least, a young woman we are very happy to host here, Ms. Jacqueline Murekatete. Jacqueline was born in Rwanda, and at the age of ten lost her entire family and her extended family in the 1994 genocide. Today, Jacqueline is known as a young leader active in humanitarian causes and as a spokesperson for victims and survivors of genocide. Jacqueline has spoken before the United Nations General Assembly, and she lectures widely on the subject of genocide, sometimes together with other genocide survivors. She has won many prizes, among them the U.N. Global Peace and Tolerance Award and the Humanitarian Award from the Anti-Defamation League. She recently completed her studies at NYU, and she is currently working on a memoir with the assistance of Elie Wiesel. I asked her how she could do all of

this at the same time, but she really is a remarkable young woman, and we are very happy to have her here with us. We would like to hear from Jacqueline how she, as a genocide survivor, sees matters. Also, how does she view the recruitment of young people around the world?

I would now like to ask the first of our speakers, Mr. Assaf Uni from the daily *Ha'aretz*, to give his comments. Please.



Mr. Assaf Uni, Ha'aretz European correspondent:

In the middle of April, the photographer Uriel Sinai and I traveled to central Chad to tour several of the refugee camps that were set up along the border with Sudan at the end of 2004. The initiative for the trip came from the editorial board of *Ha'aretz*, and in particular from the Head of the News Division at *Ha'aretz*, Ronen Zaretzky. Very little can prepare you for a visit to a refugee camp. I think that traveling around Europe, as I did for the past year, is perhaps the worst preparation of all.

The camps themselves, as Ms. Messinger described very accurately, are a place of suffering. In each of 12 camps, there are about 20,000 refugees who live in straw huts under conditions of dire need. The mortality rate in the camps is high as a result of contagious diseases, and there is a lack of access to medical attention. Many infants (close to a third) are malnourished, and there are infants dying of malnutrition. In brief, the ongoing situation in eastern Chad in general, and in the refugee camps in particular, is a fight for survival. Just to stay alive. Any other aspect of daily life barely exists.

And over the last year, as the conflict has spread from Darfur into Chad itself, the situation of the refugees has grown progressively worse. There are international laws that say that a refugee camp may be located no closer than 50 kms. from the border of the country from which the refugees fled. Back then, whoever planned the camps thought this was enough. But in the last few months, these 50 kms. have become their own battlefield, and this has caused further deterioration in the situation of the refugees who fled the massacre in Darfur.

A combination of Arab tribes, who include the Janjaweed who perpetrated the crimes in Sudan, have come together with Arab tribes in Chad; actually, these are the same tribes, as the border between Chad and Sudan is a fictitious line in the sand, drawn 150 years ago. Together, they have again begun attacking the African population that fled Darfur between 2004 and 2005.

Alongside the shock of the visit to the refugee camps, where life and death are constant companions, sometimes in the same straw hut, sometimes on either side of a reed fence, the deepest impression from the visit is represented by the effects of the conflict spilling over into Chad. You can see caravans of displaced Chad citizens fleeing from the terror of the Janjaweed, families who've abandoned villages and are looking for safety in the vicinity of the refugee camps run by international aid organizations.

Prof. Shain asked me to explain the main problems facing the refugees today. I think that, at the moment, the first problem is safety. In truth, that is also what most of the refugees talk about when they're asked what concerns them the most. As Ms. Messinger described, safety in

the camps is a very tenuous matter. Women are raped on a daily basis as they go out to look for firewood to cook the grains supplied by international aid organizations. Infants are starving, also because it's difficult to get food to them, because of the lack of safety.

International aid has been scaled back. Relief workers have told me that until the end of 2006 the situation of the refugees was relatively all right. According to what one relief worker told me, they had even started to recreate the villages they had left in Sudan, with the same types of structures, central hut, and so on. Today, because of the influx of refugees from Chad into the vicinity of the camps, and also because of the reduction of international aid, their situation is growing progressively worse. There are rapes, there are murders. Men are murdered for stupid things like transistor radios.

It's important to point out that the term "Janjaweed" in Chad is a little bit misleading, because Africans call all anti-Africans "Janjaweed." Sometimes, it refers to gangs who want to loot or steal, and not necessarily to destroy the African race or expel it from Darfur, as their colleagues in Sudan have done.

An additional issue that concerns the refugees very much is that of occupation. Maybe it sounds funny, given what they've gone through, but the refugees don't actually have anything to do. It's important to stress that these refugee camps are not self-sustaining establishments. The social structure that existed in Darfur, of a family working the land, with the husband and wife, cousins and children having defined functions in sustaining normal life, has been completely obliterated. We're talking about farmers who cannot recreate the way of life they had. Cattle can't survive in these conditions. Cattle are very thirsty animals, and today only 10 liters of water are allotted per refugee, because all water has to be trucked into the camps.

This area, which is arid to begin with, is now subject to the migration of 300,000 people who are trying to take advantage of its limited resources. All the water, all the natural stores have already been drawn on, and in many of the refugee camps, these have to be brought in by relief organizations from distant places. Likewise, it is very difficult to sustain any kind of commerce there. The refugees remain idle and unemployed. They have no way to support themselves. They are totally dependent on international aid.

And this brings us to the most serious problem of all, and that is the future. All of the refugees are concerned with the question of what is going to happen to them in the future. That is, everyone wants to return to Darfur. Starting with the little children, who'll tell you how nice it was in Darfur and how horrible they're finding life in the camp, and ending with the elderly who dream of their village, where they used to grow fruits and vegetables. They blame the Sudanese government, and they're waiting for some kind of international solution that will restore security to this area of Darfur so that they can go back. I don't think that there

is anyone who thinks that these refugees can somehow exist in the long-term in these locations in Chad. Because the fighting in the area has grown more widespread, this has already become impossible. To try and support 300,000 people on international aid alone is a recipe for disaster. It's a recipe for other confrontations and conflicts. The lack of employment ensures that the area will be fertile ground for every rebel group that wants to rebel against Sudan or Chad, and this creates a great deal of danger. Building a future for the refugees may be the most difficult of all the problems - and no one is dealing with it.

These are, more or less, the problems. They are interconnected, and I really don't want to add too much to Ms. Messinger's very accurate portrayal, because maybe the best approach is to ask the questions that really interest you.

I will only add one other thing, about the media. To a large extent, what we did at *Ha'aretz* - publishing articles and the photographs you can view in Uriel Sinai's excellent exhibit - is really a no-brainer. We went to a place where the suffering was so great, where it was possible to capture it and transmit it so easily, that I don't know of a single person who would not want to help the Darfur refugees as a result of what he read and saw.

No. The real trick of the media - and I say this because the international community has failed at this over and over again - will be to prevent the next wave of suffering. Some of the infants you'll see in the exhibit have already died. The aim of the media or the obligation of the media - the Israel media, the international media - is to make sure that there will be no more pictures of infants like that, and therefore they won't have to be published. Because the moment a conflict breaks out, the moment there is a massacre, and people die, it is very difficult to turn the situation back to what it was before. Not even a thousand articles can do that.

The great wisdom lies in our succeeding to make another such exhibit, another conference such as this one about a different conflict someplace else, redundant.

Prof. Yossi Shain:

Thank you very much. Attorney Neil Grungras from HIAS, please.

Attorney Neil Grungras, HIAS European and Middle Eastern representative:

I am a man of action. I want to tell you a little bit about the things we are actually doing, as of today, in Chad, together with IsraAID; how we're furthering the interests of the Jewish people and Israel, and also promoting the needs of the refugees.

About three years ago, some members of IsraAID came to us and said that they visited Chad. They were extremely eager to supply aid to the refugees in Chad, but they discovered that their help was not wanted. You're wondering why, because Israel has what to offer, and has lots of very talented people who know how to work. Nonetheless, the U.N. personnel who control these refugee camps in southern Chad refused the help. At first, obviously, we wondered about the reason. And, obviously, we rushed to conclude: anti-Semitism, "anti-Israelism." Afterwards, the rest of the members of IsraAID asked us, as a Jewish-American organization, to approach the U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees, to find out what happened, and to figure out how to be involved in the relief efforts in Chad.

What we learned from this was that there were absolutely no anti-Israel sentiments and no anti-Semitism. Rather, the U.N. has certain requirements that have to be met. That is to say, long-term work, long-term commitment, a secure budget, things that Israeli organizations sometimes have a hard time providing, in many cases because the organizations are small.

We started to build a psychosocial project; we got help from some IsraAID members, including B'nai Brith International and the American Jewish Committee, and we were on our way. At first, when we suggested the project, I think that no one understood what we were attempting to do. Israelis are very practical people, they said, what is psychosocial? People are dying of starvation, and you want to give psychosocial help to women who've been raped in the desert? to children dying of starvation?! It's ridiculous!

Nonetheless, we went forward with creating the project. The U.N. understood the meaning of a psychosocial project, and we got to work in two refugee camps. We got some help from the U.N., and help from some American Jewish groups, and we were on our way.

After some time, it became clear that the project was very successful. Psychosocial help, the work that we're doing there, is work with individuals who have suffered, women who've been raped, women who've lost their husbands, and so on, and also community building. Because one of the things that we, as the Jewish people, have to offer the world is, in my opinion, the ability to build a community anew anyplace where we've been "cast."

We tried, and we're still trying, to transmit the information in order to build communities in the camps, with the help of the refugees themselves - to strengthen them, to empower them,

to help them so that they'll be able to build the communities by themselves, and to renew the social fabric that they lost when they left Darfur. To date, we are working in five refugee camps in southern Chad. They say, and we'll get back to this topic in a couple of minutes, that we are one of the most effective organizations in the area. And I am proud to say that we're working there as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and IsraAID, in a country with which Israel has no relations, in a country where most of the population has never met a Jew, certainly not an Israeli.

What's the significance of the work of Jews in the area? In my opinion, this is one of the most important points. And I want to reinforce what Ms. Messinger said about volunteers, particularly Jewish volunteers going into the field. One thing is giving money. Obviously, that's welcome, and obviously that is something that Jews know how to do, like to do, and can do. Another thing is going into the field, get to know the refugees themselves, come into contact with them, hold their hands, support them, let them get to know you, show them that you're a person, show them empathy, and identify with them. Spending time with the refugees also gives a concrete setting to the aid. That is to say, a Jew who's visited the area doesn't feel that he just pulled \$5 from his pocket and eased his conscience a little, even though that is also very, very important. But he'll also carry the memory with him for the rest of his life. He'll also suddenly understand - and I think that in the context of the Holocaust this is very important, many of us still don't understand how the Holocaust happened - how things like this can happen, what does a refugee do, what is a victim, and what the feeling of victimhood is. We, as Israelis, for sure don't get it.

Whoever gets to Chad and works with the refugees, gets to know them, can identify them by name and face, they perhaps remind us sometimes of our grandfather or grandmother, starts to understand that there is much more, that we are within the borders of community, today we are not so different.

And now, to a somewhat painful topic, one of great importance regarding the project in Chad, how Jews and Israelis in general seem to the world regarding Sudan. I have bad news for you. The situation is not so good. In 2005, I was sent to Geneva under the auspices of B'nai Brith International in order to report on our new project. I started to talk about the Jewish experience in community building and the importance of Jewish giving, and so on, and my talk was met with objections and condemnation. Some people in the audience got up and yelled: how dare you, as someone who is causing the problems in Sudan in general, come and declare that you, as Jews, want to help. The nerve!

In September 2006, just a few months ago, the President of Chad warned that he would not allow U.N. forces to come in for peace keeping duties in Darfur, his reason being that the U.N.'s goal is to dismantle Sudan in order to strengthen the status of Israel in the Middle East.

In April 2007, an article in the very respectable French periodical *Jeune Afrique* claimed that Jewish activity in Chad is actually meant to strengthen the status of Israel, to dismantle Sudan and to make it look bad to the world, but not to help.

How can this image be changed? In my opinion, the only way is to come to the area, go into the field, get to know the population, get to know the authorities, get to know the international groups and to work with them. Show them that we are not what they say about us. Because, otherwise, it's better to stay at home and not do anything. And that is something that none of us would want to do.

I have to say that there is a very positive side to relief work in Chad, but this aspect is usually expressed in North America. It exists in the USA and Canada, among Jews who are proud of the work that they're doing. But we have to remember that most of the world doesn't live in North America. There is lots more work to be done.

A very important aspect of our work in Chad is that we are working in cooperation with international organizations that have never before worked with Israelis, that have never before worked with Jews. They're learning who we are, and we're learning who they are. We are promoting the ability to work with them in the future as well, in other places, in order to be able to cooperate in international humanitarian efforts.

I would like to conclude by saying that there is also a problem, which, in my opinion, is only getting worse, particularly in North America, and that is the negative image of Israel among young Jews in the USA and Canada. We have to recognize the problem and deal with it. Many young people today don't identify with Israel anymore. Once, there was identification because of the suffering of the Holocaust. In the past, they identified with Israel's fight for survival. But that's not the situation anymore. Today, young Jews are looking for something new to identify with, and they are looking for *tikkun olam*.

If we can learn how to cooperate, if we can learn how to work as one, as Jews, as Israelis, in places like Chad, we'll be strengthening the entire Jewish people. Thank you.

Prof. Yossi Shain:

Thank you. Attorney Anat Ben-Dor, please.

Attorney Anat Ben-Dor, the Program for Refugee Rights, Law Faculty, TAU:

Good evening. I've been asked to speak about what is happening here in Israel. To be brief, I'll say it plain and simple: I, as an Israeli, am ashamed of the way that this country is handling and taking in the refugees.

I've been dealing with the issue since the beginning of October 2004. At that time, I met my first Sudanese refugee. Together with another eleven people, he was locked up at K'tziyot Prison, which was then a prison intended for terrorists and other security inmates, and populated by Palestinian security inmates. He had not seen a lawyer, he had not met with the Red Cross. No one knew that he existed, and had it not been for someone who was doing his reserve duty there and thought that these black faces were out of place in that population, I think that we, too, wouldn't have known that he existed. But, it made it into the newspapers, so we went to see him, to see the group. We were still trying to figure out their story, and to prepare a power-of-attorney, when the group was forcibly expelled to Egypt. Afterwards, we learned that their return to Sudan was prevented only at the last minute. This, then, was my baptism of fire in the matter.

As Rabbi Lau said, these refugees arrive here literally with nothing other than the clothes on their backs. Often, the refugees include women and children who've given themselves up at the border, who are asking for protection. And the Israeli response has been to jail them.

And I meet with some of them, and when I ask them, "How long have you been in jail?" Sometimes I get answers such as, "A year, five months, eight days and three hours". And this is jail. The wing reserved for illegal residents at Ma'asiyahu, may be defined as a comfortable jail, but is a jail to all intents and purposes. And I want to say: these are people who've been injured.

Sometimes, when I visit the jail, I say, "So why don't you go to the doctor if you're feeling so bad?" the inmate will say, "When you go to the doctor, they cuff your hands and shackle your feet, and it reminds me of jail I already sat in abroad, and I'm not ready for that." Or, when one of them says to me, "I'd like you to transfer me to another cell," and I ask, "What's the problem?" he answers, "Because my cell mate here screams in the night."

I want to tell you that children aged 15 and 16 have been jailed, two refugees from Darfur who came here without their parents sat in jail for over six months until the Hotline for Migrant Workers managed to get them out of there. Three refugees, ages 15 and 17, from southern Sudan, sat for ten months, until my colleague who is sitting here this evening, Attorney Yonatan Berman, threatened with an appeal to the Supreme Court. This is what Israel has been doing, officially.

And the reason for all of this is that they are citizens of an enemy state. And I really want to follow up on what Rabbi Lau said, his words really moved me: after World War II, Israel suggested an amendment to the Fourth Geneva Convention, as it was being drawn up. And the amendment that was entered as a result of the experience of the Jews during the Holocaust, says that when a refugee who is a citizen of an enemy state shows up, you may not take any steps to limit him because of his citizenship. You should know that this person is fleeing. He is fleeing because of that state. And therefore his citizenship is detrimental to him.

Jailed refugees with whom I speak understand this. You don't have to be a jurist to get it. They ask, "Why am I in jail?" and I explain, "Because they think that you're an enemy of Israel." He says, "Don't they know that the Sudanese government is my enemy? My enemy is your enemy. I need your protection."

So Israel has been behaving as if it doesn't know this. And we needed to petition the Supreme Court to start the process of releasing these people and giving them back their freedom. And, by the way, they're released under restricted conditions, very restricted in fact. The refugee must remain on the specific *kibbutz* or *moshav* or in the particular hotel. His freedom of movement is limited. He has to work there.

I am now handling the case of a refugee with mental illness. And the hotel that employs him says, "We don't want to employ him, he works way too slowly, sometimes he just zones out." By the way, this has also happened on a *kibbutz*. They said to me, "Sometimes he just starts crying in the middle of the work day, we don't know what to do with him." So what is the solution according to that military attorney who's also working the case? He writes: "Please return so-and-so to jail. The hotel doesn't want to employ him anymore."

So, that's how they relate to the problem. And if we're sitting here and talking about being a light unto the nations, the only thing I see is great darkness and suffering. And because I'm sitting here as a jurist, I want to say that this is also illegal! The State of Israel signed the convention in 1951. Again, one of the lessons of the Holocaust that has been mentioned here is, Never again, never again will persecuted people find themselves standing in front of locked doors. Israel is a signatory to the convention, it promised to extend protection and offer asylum to refugees, and it isn't doing it.

Today, there are several hundred refugees from Sudan, some of them from Darfur. They ask me, "What is my status in Israel?" I say, "There's no status." They ask, "And what about my future in Israel?" I say, "I don't know". He's out of jail already, he wants to make a life for himself, he wants to learn the language. He says to me, "Should I learn Hebrew or English?" And my answer is, "I don't know."

Some of these people find themselves in this situation for three years already, in a situation of not knowing. We have women and men who have been separated from one another ever since. The man was in jail, and his wife and children were placed in a shelter. This was the extent of the generosity of the State of Israel, not to arrest the women and children. And the man wants to see his wife and children. What's more natural than that?

By the way, I think that today this thing is even more upsetting, because lately the army has routinely been releasing the refugees, they've gotten it: these people are not a danger. But still the country is incapable of determining their fate. There a sort of policy of sticking their collective heads in the sand hoping that the problem will just go away. Well, it's not going away. And these people need something to be done.

I would just like to mention that we've set up a booth outside, and we're collecting donations for the most basic of necessities. For diapers, milk formula, medications. The state of Israel isn't supplying any one of these items. And you may have read about this in the papers, students at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev say that every night the army drops off refugees and takes off again. They leave them on the sidewalks, children and women.

And here I'm perhaps describing the negative. The positive aspect of what is happening is that civilians are getting involved. And I would like to mention the organizations that have taken this on: the Hotline for Migrant Workers, a new non-profit organization called ASAF for psychosocial help for refugees that really came out of that project run by Israelis in refugees' camps in Chad, students at the university in Beer Sheva, The international Christian church, the *kibbutzim*, the *moshavim*. Also the Islamic Movement suddenly found itself hosting refugees for a weekend in the Bedouin village of Lakiya. And I asked, "So, what did you do with them?" And they said to me, "Well, there were a few weddings, we fed them." That is to say, on a personal basis, I think that maybe we can, here and there, give ourselves a good grade.

But, generally speaking, it seems to me that, if there is no forthcoming solution, and if it isn't formulated soon, I really don't know what will happen. Prof. Yehuda Bauer, who is also a recipient of the Israel Prize and a well-known expert at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, has said: "If we don't do something, our children and grandchildren will curse us. On the other hand, if we do something to help, we can look at it with satisfaction."

And I think that Israelis remember that gesture of Prime Minister Menahem Begin that Rabbi Lau mentioned. As far as I'm concerned, that's what is needed.

And I would just like to relate for a moment to something that Yossi said. People say, "Well, if we give help, more will come." So, first of all, I'd like to say that Israel has tried, over and

over, to imprison people for over a year and a half because of the concern that more would show up. The Supreme Court has determined that that is illegal.

But beyond that, I'd like to say that Israel has yet to take in even a single refugee. So, in my opinion, the state has absolutely no moral justification for talking about a what-if scenario. Perhaps, we ought to take the first small step, and then we'll be able to ask for assistance, and make all sorts of other plans. But, today, given the current situation, there are infants and women and children in our streets, and I'd set the question aside. Thank you.

Prof. Yossi Shain:

Thank you. Ms. Simona Halperin, please.



Ms. Simona Halperin, Deputy Head of the International Organizations and Human Rights Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

Good evening. First of all, I'd like to address the comments that our guest, Ruth Messinger, opened with. She described some of the work the organization does in the world, and told us of some projects, among the over 300 projects in some 30 countries. I would like to tell you that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs operates Israel's division for foreign aid, the International Cooperation Center. Within that setting, I am happy to say that we have experience and activity in over 100 countries throughout the world, with dozens of projects every year. Although, with all due modesty, I also have to say that I don't know if the scope of these projects, Ruth, reaches the scope of the projects you operate around the globe, also because of reasons having to do with budgetary modesty. Perhaps when Israel will join the OECD, It will enlarge the scope of the financing that we can set aside to the issue. But, as of today, we are very limited, and every year stand begging at the doorstep of the government in an attempt to get the state to enlarge this budget.

The whole issue of awareness of what is happening in the world, not only here in the State of Israel, and of the places where we can give, assist, share our experience, and also help physically, is the guiding principle both in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in the State of Israel, at the level of activity. My first diplomatic posting was to Kazakhstan, a member country of the former Soviet Union, after it first gained independence. I went there in '93. I used to say then that it isn't necessary to reinvent the wheel every time and that Israel was there to share - specific to Kazakhstan, having to do with World War II and its contribution then - and also to the world in general.

Today, Israel is in a situation where it can also give back. And that's the basis, and here I want to thank Assaf and his series of articles in *Ha'aretz*, because I think that, to an extent, it alerted both the people here and also the people of Israel and the Israeli government to recognize (perhaps a little too late) the horrendous humanitarian disaster that we are dealing with in Darfur and in Sudan in general, and thereby to recognize that we must act.

Earlier, Attorney Neil Grungras spoke of the first attempt of IsraAID to become active in Darfur. An Israeli organization, IsraAID, got there, and they said, We want to help. Tell us how, how do we begin to work, how do we begin to act. And they got the cold shoulder from international organizations (UNHCR and others). At least partially, this was because of organizational issues: there has to be a long-term commitment, and there has to be a plan of action.

But some of it, let's not forget, is because of national affiliation. We, as Israel, cannot operate in Chad, and certainly not in Sudan itself, a place where, the moment Israeli set his foot down,

he becomes an enemy of the state. But even in Chad and other countries in the region, we as Israel cannot operate in the open.

Therefore, we in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs dealt for a long time with the question, So how do we, despite everything, work and help? This is our tradition, this is why we were established, this is how we've been operating for dozens of years in many places, sometimes keeping a very low profile, sometimes publicly and openly. How do we, despite it all, make our contribution, and work to help people who are - I can't say at the mercy of fate - at the mercy of people. And we, as the Jewish people and as a country that was established from dust and ashes, cannot look the other way, we cannot not give a response and not be part of the effort.

We have come up with a plan of action, which is currently before the government, and I hope it will be given the green light within the next few days. Based on the plan, we as the State of Israel will be directly involved, neither in Chad nor in Sudan, but in other places where there are Sudanese refugees. Not all of them, but some of them are from Darfur, the majority from other places in Sudan. We will act directly in order to help. There is a project that is about to start within the next few days: at the beginning of July, a team of ophthalmologists, organized and financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will be leaving to establish an "eye camp" that will perform eye surgeries for refugees in one of the refugee camps in Kenya.

Another activity will be operated indirectly; this will not be a direct action of the Israeli government, given the fact that blatant Israeli activity endangers the refugees in the camps, should it become known that Israel is giving, or participating, or assisting. Therefore, we intend to operate there within the framework of a proposal that should be approved within the next few days, via two other pillars: One is the organization Israel Civil Society and we've heard of examples of the Israel Civil Society's activities here this evening. The second is this: we are, in cooperation with some U.N. organizations - among them UNHCR (the U.N. Refugee Agency), the U.N.'s World Food Program, UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund), and others - constructing various projects that will be earmarked, financed and operated by donations from the State of Israel.

Again, the guiding principle is: "we must act, we are not allowed to look the other way!" On the other hand, it is clear that we don't want to get to a point where our activity, which stems from the right motivation, endangers the very people it is meant to assist. Thank you.

Prof. Yossi Shain:

Last but not least, Ms. Jacqueline Murekatete, please.

Ms. Jacqueline Murekatete:

Thank you. Good evening, everyone. I will first begin by saying what a great honor and a privilege it is for me to be here in Israel. It is my first trip here in Israel and I would really like to thank the planners of the event, and all the people who made it possible for me to be able to come here. In particular I would like to thank Gary Sussman, his colleague Na'ama Shalev, Stanley Bergman, and Congressman Steve Israel back in the U.S., as well my friend Sharon Roling who has made the trip with me here to Israel.

It is a great honor for me to be in Israel. As a genocide survivor -and I am speaking for all Rwanda genocide survivors, we have always been inspired by the existence of Israel. The State of Israel, a land of witnesses and survivors, dreams, and actions has always inspired me and fellow Rwanda genocide survivors and has always shown us that despite all we have suffered, there is no reason to despair. With the existence of Israel, genocide survivors like myself are called to recognize the fact that despite all the odds, a group of dedicated people made up largely of survivors, witnesses, and children of survivors can successfully build a civilized and democratic society, dedicated not only to serving its citizens but the world at large.

Dear friends, as we have heard from previous speakers, the situation in Darfur has progressed for the worst since its beginning in 2003. And as genocide survivor - and I am sure I am speaking for Holocaust survivors as well - it is very difficult to once again see innocent people being killed, and to once again see that the international community is doing very little to end the situation. Personally, as I read about, hear about, and watch on my television screen about innocent men being killed and women being raped in Darfur, I am taken back to 1994, when my own country, Rwanda, experienced one of the worst genocides in documented history. And I remember how the life of a nine year old girl was dramatically changed in a matter of just one hundred days.

Allow me please to briefly tell you about my personal experience. In 1994 I was nine years old. I had parents, I had six siblings. I was always surrounded by relatives and friends. I went to school and, like any other nine year old child, I had goals and dreams. And that was in spite of having grown up in an environment in which Tutsis, my ethnic group, and the minority group in Rwanda, had been discriminated against, persecuted, and often killed since 1959. But living in Rwanda, despite growing up in that discriminatory and unjust environment, none of us really ever thought that an evil such as that which occurred in 1994, would ever occur in Rwanda. And none of us ever thought that the international community would ever allow such thing to take place, especially in the aftermath of the Holocaust, the genocide in Cambodia and the other genocides that have taken place previous to 1994. But at the beginning of 1994 the Hutu-led Rwandan Government once again said that there was a "Tutsi problem" in Rwanda and the final solution to that problem was going to be killing all Tutsis, men, women, and

children indiscriminately. So in the days following April 6th 1994, the official date when the massacres began, I was forced to flee my home with my grandmother, who I was with at that time. At first we run away to our county office where we thought we would be protected. But it was only a few days later when our Hutu neighbors (Hutus being the majority ethnic group in Rwanda), started following us with machetes and clubs and saying that all Tutsis are cockroaches, that all Tutsis are snakes, and that all Tutsis deserve to die. Our former Hutu neighbors started attacking us but miraculously my grandmother and I escaped, and I soon found myself hiding in a Hutu man's home. There was a Hutu family who agreed to hide us, but it was only a few days later that we were discovered. To this day I still remember the morning when I was woken up by a loud banging on the door and heard men screaming. In a very few minutes I had Hutu men and boys standing on top of me with bloody machetes and screaming at the man who was hiding us, telling him: Why do you have these cockroaches in your house? Why do you have these snakes? Don't you know that all Tutsis deserve to die? My grandmother and I thought that that was going to be the end of us, but once again we survived that incident. Eventually I ended up finding refuge in an orphanage, an orphanage which was owned by an Italian priest and which at the beginning of the massacre in 1994 began taking in children and trying to protect them.

It is in that orphanage that I ultimately survived. But the memories from that orphanage also still hunt me. To this day, I still remember the cries of toddlers that I used to listen to at night, toddlers who cried for parents who they would never see again. And I still remember the days I watched as children came to the orphanage, children whose arms, whose legs, had been hacked off. I still remember those mornings when I would get up and see dead bodies behind the fences of the orphanage. And as the genocide continued, I remember the nights when the Hutu militia and the Hutu civilians near the orphanage used to come into the orphanage and tell us and tell the Italian priest that they were going to kill every Tutsi child in the orphanage. The Hutu-led government of Rwanda had declared that all Tutsis deserve to die and so it did not matter if you were a child or if you were a woman.

Although I survived the 1994 genocide in my country, at the end of the genocide I came to learn that my parents and my six siblings had not been as fortunate. I learned that one day during the genocide my neighbors, my Hutu neighbors - people who a few months before used to come to my house for drinks, people whose kids I had grown up playing with, going to school with - these same neighbors, had come to my house and they had taken my parents and my six siblings, most of my uncles and aunts, to a nearby river where they butchered them. Their only "crime", of course, being that they were Tutsis and in 1994 being a Tutsi was a crime deserving of death. I was fortunate in that I was granted asylum and I came to the United States at the end of 1995, where I was given the opportunity to start a new life and to go to school.

But coming to America, one of the things that really disturbed me was learning that, while the genocide was taking place in my country, some countries knew what was happening and so many countries had the means to interfere, to do something. But that the international community had remained silent and indifferent, just as it had done during the Holocaust. I remember that every day during the genocide, during those one hundred days of killing, those of us who survived for another day used to tell ourselves "There is no way these killings are going to continue for another day. Certainly somebody is going to hear about what is happening in Rwanda, and if they do, they will surely come to our aid." So coming to the United States and hearing that some people did know and that they did nothing was heart-breaking and hard for me to comprehend. But at the same time, I knew that that type of indifference, that type of silence amidst genocide was something that I would dedicate my life to fighting. I made this a life time goal and for the past six years I have been traveling with a Holocaust survivor and educating people about the crime of genocide. I am also currently writing a book about my experience with the help of Dr. Elie Wiesel.

I strongly believe that genocide is preventable because there are warnings to genocide and the international community has the means to prevent it. There were ample warnings before the 1994 genocide occurred in my country, and most of us today know that there is a genocide going on in Darfur. But once again, the same silence the same indifference on the part of the international community. I think that it is critical for each of us to start realizing that what happens in Darfur happens to us. It is time for us to start realizing that the crime of genocide is a global problem. It is not something that happens in Africa. It happened in Europe, It happened in Asia, and it can happen any where. I think that what each of the panelists here is trying to say is that we can no longer be indifferent. The history of silence amidst genocide needs to end, if not for our sake, for the sake of our children.

So, once again, it is a pleasure for me to be here and I really hope, I have all the confidence that you as Israelis, as people who know how it is when people are indifferent, how it is when people are silent, I have all the confidence that once you go home today you will begin talking to your neighbors and talking to your friends about what is happening in Darfur. In 2004 I had the opportunity of addressing the United Nations General Assembly as the U.N commemorated the 10th anniversary of the genocide in my country. And to this day I still remember how, after describing my experience during the genocide and the many deaths that I witnessed, I remember how many state representatives came to me and said: "We are sorry, we did not know what was happening. We did not have sufficient information about what was happening in Rwanda". But, for each of us who came here today, there is no way we can go home now and say that we didn't know. There is no way that years from now we can meet somebody, a child from Darfur, a woman from Darfur, and tell him or her that we didn't know, because we do know. And as people who do know we have a responsibility to speak up and to speak on behalf of the people who are being killed in Darfur.

So as we leave here tonight, once again I would like to encourage all of you here to do all you can to help the people of Darfur. Let us not be silent, let us not be indifferent to their suffering as remember Dr. Elie Wiesel's words that "indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for it benefits the aggressor never his victim, whose pain is magnified when he or she feels forgotten." I thank you very much for your attention.

Prof. Yossi Shain:

It is quite remarkable, Jacqueline, you know, you come here and it is startling to see this power, and we thank you for coming here.

Before opening the discussion up to questions from the floor, I'd like to thank Na'ama Shalev who was absolutely instrumental in making this evening happen. I am also very grateful to Dr. Gary Sussman and to Eli Fried who develops, here at the school, the entire *tikkun olam* program. Thanks are also extended to Dr. Sarit Ben Simhon-Peleg, to Limor Rahmanov, and to all those who have worked so hard on this issue.

I would also want to thank the Pears Foundation which has supported this event and has enabled us here at the School to do some really important work; to the American Jewish Committee (AJC) for cosponsoring the photo exhibit here tonight and lastly to Beth-Hatefutsoth and all others who helped us accomplish the mission.



Q & A

From the audience:

I have a question for Ms. Halperin from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. You spoke about Israeli aid to the victims themselves, to the refugees. I am intrigued by the possibility of a diplomatic initiative for involvement in the conflict itself, whether it be Israel in cooperation with European countries, or with the U.N., or international organizations, involvement to stop the genocide.

Ms. Ruth Messinger:

I know the question for myself. The call for an international peacekeeping force will go to every single country in the world. So any country can step up to it.

Ms. Simona Halperin:

I'd say two things. One, Israel, also in the context of its contacts in the international arena, is involved, and is urging other countries to be involved in terms of stopping the genocide. This is an aim of the highest priority. The Foreign Minister, also in her annual address to the U.N. General Assembly in 2006, referred to the issue of Darfur and called on the nations of the world to act.

But I am now going to raise another point. Israel is now starting a process of active participating with U.N. peacekeeping forces. We cannot expect - and it would be unrealistic to do so - Israel to become in some way a part in an act of peacekeeping or conflict resolution in the area such as the crisis in Darfur, or in Sudan, or in another area where the involvement of Israel has the potential only to further endanger both the already stricken population as well as other forces active in the area. This is something about which we must be realistic.

We have expressed our disappointment with the lack of adequate activity on the part of the U.N. as an organization, and on the part of the nations of the world, in dealing with the tragedy of Darfur. But when Israel expresses disappointment, it is seen as somewhat problematic. At the same time, today, more or less, is the first anniversary of the establishment of the Human Rights Council. The Human Rights Council is a new body, established over the ruins, or if you will, the failure of the Commission on Human Rights that preceded it in Geneva. And I think that in the one year of activity, when the crisis in Darfur has, without a doubt, been the current number one humanitarian crisis in the world, when the Human Rights Council discussed it in a session that had been called specifically to discuss the issue, just one time during this whole

year, and it achieved a proposal for a resolution that "**praises the government of Sudan for its cooperation**", when the Sudanese government has been preventing OIC forces from even entering the area, and forbids U.N. peace keeping forces access to the area (not because of Israeli participation, but because of a total ban on peace keeping forces going into the field) - this is a badge of shame for the Human Rights Council, for U.N. activity and for the international organizations for the year. A badge of shame that is only growing more pronounced, so to speak, because of the blatant politicization of the Council: alongside treating real world crises like the one in Darfur with kid gloves, the Council spent most of its time (three special sessions as well as discussions during its regular sessions) condemning Israel as an abuser of Palestinian human rights, completely ignoring the question of terrorism, Qassam rockets on Sderot and the right to self-protection.

Regarding the question of Israel leading or participating in the issue of Darfur in the international arena, we have to remember that if Israel assumes a leadership role, we might only be undermining moves by European nations and the western world that are trying to act, and that is certainly not the intention.

I can say that we are actively cooperating with other elements in order to ensure that action gets taken. And we are even paying a proportional part of the cost of the U.N. peacekeeping forces, forces that are still sitting in Khartoum and waiting for permission to enter Darfur.

Prof. Yossi Shain:

I would perhaps add that in the report you are talking about, Israel is given the lion's share of the report, as an abuser of human rights. Even the U.N. came to the conclusion this week that this is complete and total madness. While the largest portion of the report is devoted to human rights abuses in Israel, the massacre in Darfur gets maybe two pages in the whole report!

So the problem is much more widespread, and that is where the distinction between Israel and the Jewish people, that is, can such a distinction really be made in discussion, becomes, I think, a very critical question.

From the audience:

My name is Deborah. My question is, and I hope it's not a rhetorical one, Could we have identified, could we have known, could we have prevented, do we have the tools for the future. We've seen genocides in the past.

Prof. Yossi Shain:

Anyone who read Samantha Power's book on genocide, which won the Pulitzer Prize, understands very well the vagaries of treating genocide and how, notwithstanding the alarm that is being sounded, the repetition is clear, in Srebrenica, in Rwanda, in Darfur, etc etc. Time and again we miss, so the question is why.

Ms. Ruth Messinger:

I would just say people like the people here at the Hartog School must start figuring that out. I would also give great praise to the student movement in the United States. There is much activity happening on campuses, and some students, even as they were finishing college, set up an organization called Genocide Intervention Network just four years ago. Most of their work right now is on Darfur and they have done an analysis of where to divest money from the oil companies. But their intention, working very closely with Samantha Power, is to make genocide a field of study. They want to identify the conflicts in the world that could lead to a genocide and urge early intervention.

Mr. Assaf Uni:

There are two very sad lessons here. One is Rwanda, where it was possible to have prevented genocide. I think that anyone who knows the story even a little bit knows that the international force that was there could have done it. Its orders were not to intervene. There was also information about what was happening, information via the media, it was covered by the media, there were reporters there. And even so, the world did nothing.

The second sad lesson is that Clinton and Blair's humanitarian interventionism - which brought about a successful invasion into Sierra Leone that really did prevent the massacre of tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of people - petered out or died as a result of the war in Iraq and as a result of all sorts of other things.

But these two lessons don't negate the possibility, and do not make redundant the possibility that this has to be done. That is to say, we have to shed light on those places where it is possible for a genocide to occur, or for the deaths of thousands to occur, a conflict that might cost the lives of thousands.

I think that the media can do it. All the organizations that are involved, all the bodies now active in Chad, they're working in the dark. No one knows what is really the motivation of the people who are now arming the Africans. The government of Chad is sending trucks full of arms to the African tribe of Daju, to fight the Janjaweed. Why? For what purpose? Are they

trying to clear the area so that it can be settled by other tribes? Who is arming the Janjaweed in Chad? Are the Janjaweed in Sudan? Is it rebel forces against the government of Chad, trying to recruit them for themselves? There's no information. Everyone is groping in the dark. The moment you know the truth, the moment you know what's going on, you can at least hope that the world has learned the lesson of Rwanda. And therefore we have to keep on trying.

From the audience:

All the speakers have really described a shocking situation, and it's been hard to listen to, and we all know and understand the situation. I just want to shed light on a different aspect that we haven't discussed yet, and maybe we'll continue to speak about it at other conferences and get-togethers. Many Israelis are very willing, really want to take on the issue and contribute to a change in the situation, to help, to assist. About a month ago, we did an event [in the subject of working in the third world] together with you at the School of Government. We thought 200 people would show up, but 1,000 came. More than it was a success of the conference itself, is was just amazing to see how many Israelis are truly willing to sign on to the cause. The Israeli government isn't quick enough, it doesn't see the picture fast enough. It doesn't respond fast enough. We at IsraAID have been running with our program now already for over two-three months, and there's still no answer, no response. I also want to say to Ms. Messinger and also to Jacqueline: there are very many young people here, you just have to tell them and they'll go wherever they're told. And today it's Darfur, and we may not be able to prevent tomorrow's disaster, but we're getting involved and we can do the job. And this is also the opportunity to tell Ms. Messinger that perhaps it's a good idea that we engage in more cooperation with organizations such as yours, or with other American organizations or with U.N. organizations, because these can enter places that are closed to us. And then there's really a huge pool of Israelis also to help Anat Ben-Dor, and we've seen it with that young woman from Beer Sheva University, and really there is an enormous pool of people. Let's see how we can take advantage of this. We can't prevent all the horrible things in the world from happening, but we can help as Jews and as Israelis.

From the audience:

Shalom, my name is Or. I would like to ask both Attorney Ben-Dor and Ms. Halperin the same question. In your better dreams, how do you see the solution that the government will come up with for the refugees who're arriving here, assuming that we're talking about much higher numbers, than the numbers today?

Attorney Anat Ben-Dor:

I'll put it briefly. Today, there's a system in place since 2002, when Israel established and

started to operate a system for receiving refugees. For the first time, I might add. In 1954, the state signed the convention, and many years passed without anything being done. But today, there a governmental system in place. There's an inter-ministerial committee working out of the Ministry of the Interior. The members come from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Chairperson is Attorney Ofra Friedman, who, I'm sure, many of you know. This committee is charged with the decision on who is eligible for protection and who is not.

Another thing that operates today, and operates well, and I have to say that in this matter Israel has been generous beyond the provisions of the convention, this is in granting temporary asylum to people from countries in conflict, when the situation in their homelands is so bad that their lives will be endangered if they are returned there. And today, such temporary asylum is extended to people from Congo and the Ivory Coast.

So I think that the short answer: we have to put an end to the discrimination, which, by the way, is forbidden according to the convention on refugees. It is forbidden to discriminate between people on the basis of their country of origin. So, we mustn't treat the Sudanese refugees the way they've been treated, as nationals of an enemy state. We have to treat them as refugees, and to help them enter the shelter system and deal with them the way the convention on refugees demands.

I also have to say that the convention on refugees does not oblige a country to allow refugees to become naturalized there. It can extend them temporary asylum, until it is possible for them to return to their land. And it's possible, for example, regarding the Sudanese refugees, that some distinction be made; it's true that not all of them are from Darfur, some of them are from southern Sudan, and it's possible that the situation there is very slowly getting better, and maybe they'll be able to return to their homes some day. So, what I'm trying to say is, maybe the bottom line is that: the legal tools are available. Even the system is in place. True, it's small and not very developed. Maybe it needs to be enhanced. All that is needed is to start, and I am concerned that Israel is not used to taking in refugees who are not Jewish. Israel has taken in many refugees who were in various quasi-refugee situations over all these years. But this whole obligation of the refugee convention, this whole virtue, that which Rabbi Lau spoke about, the issue of being a light unto the nations, means looking not only at the Law of Return, but also to look at these refugees. And, in my opinion, that's what needs to be done.

Prof. Yossi Shain:

Perhaps it ought to be mentioned that, according to international law, there is no obligation on any country to take people in. Every country is obligated to allow people to leave, but is not obligated to let anyone in. However, a country does have an obligation, after having

taken people in, i.e. granted them first asylum, to accept refugees. And then, the country has to treat them a certain way, and cannot move them to areas in which there is an imminent danger to their safety and lives. But, no country is obligated also to resettle them, according to international law. And it's under no obligation to grant them permanent resident status.

And this is one of the greatest dilemmas facing nations who have opened their borders, because immediately the question of second asylum country arises; where do they go? And this question is very widespread today, we see these things in Asia, in many places. I've dealt with this for year, the solutions aren't simple. And, as you've said, the institution that the state has recently established is relatively new; there are many countries trying to set up similar institutions. But these things aren't simple in many countries, as we saw with the Dutch peace force in Srebrenica and elsewhere. There are very serious dilemmas at stake that Israel didn't consider, and now, perhaps, it's starting to deal with them.

Ms. Simona Halperin:

I'll respond very briefly, but first I must preface my comments by saying that I'm from the Division for International Organization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We handle Israel's foreign relations, not the difficult issues with which the state of Israel has to deal: what to do with the people who are seeking asylum who are already here.

Nonetheless, I have to relate to two or three of points raised. First of all, I'd like to thank Attorney Anat Ben-Dor, because she was very precise, and it's important to explain matters. When we talk about granting asylum, we're talking about granting temporary asylum and extending protection, and also not moving them to a place where they'll be in mortal danger, in danger of their lives, of losing their lives. And, indeed, we have not always met this obligation in a respectful manner, and in a way that most of us would have liked to see Israel deal with people who are seeking asylum.

Another point needs to be clarified. Not all of them, I'll be even more exact and say that a large number of the people seeking asylum will not be eligible for refugee status, to be recognized as refugees, in the end. And this is another thing we ought to remember when we approach the topic, and I think that this point too, in its professional aspect, is one that Attorney Ben-Dor can expand on. Nevertheless, Israel has an obligation, despite the fact that Israel isn't even the country of first asylum for all of these refugees. We have to remember that Israel has no border with Sudan, and all those who arrive in Israel from Sudan seeking asylum come here after having gone through Egypt. Some of them, not a small percentage, have already begun the process of asking for asylum. Some of them have even been recognized by the Egyptian authorities as refugees, and still they choose to continue on and to cross into Israel.

And here it needs to be said that despite the fact that there is a legal basis for dealing with infiltrators based on the law of infiltration, because they come here from a country that is defined as an enemy nation, a hostile nation, nonetheless, Israel has come to recognize that, first of all, they require a human response. Therefore, there exists a process of judicial oversight and of a judge meeting with all those who're seeking asylum. And there's a process of an attempt to give decent conditions and to extend protection to all those who are seeking status, seeking asylum.

Moreover, lately we have seen action on the part of the government that has wakened to the issue, and there is an inter-ministerial committee that comes together to deal with the issue, a committee headed by the Minister of the Interior, which is the highest echelon one could expect, that of a minister, which is empowered to come to decisions and to make recommendations. We hope that we will not continue to see these scenes of children abandoned with their parents in the dead of night in places where we'd rather not see them. And we also wouldn't want anyone getting this kind of treatment. Jew, non-Jew, Israeli, non-Israeli.

Prof. Yossi Shain:

Last question, please.

From the audience:

My name is Dalia Sheinberg, I'm an American-Israeli student at Tel Aviv University. I think that we are very good here in Israel at teaching our children about the Holocaust. We're very aware of its significance, we think about it a lot, and we also know very well how to say, This will never happen again. Never again. But it seems to me that we sometimes lose the human aspect of other genocides, in various places throughout the world. And I at least feel that this conference has changed me, changed my awareness. I hope that I speak for everyone here.

And I think that there is one small thing that can be done, and maybe people can get together to do it. There is so much good will here in the auditorium, each one of us has some connection with Israel Civil Society or with other organizations or with other universities or schools. Maybe we could invite the people who came here from abroad to speak about other situations in the world, Jacqueline and Ruth Messinger, who spoke in a way that really changed my level of awareness. And they could teach all of society, not just the people sitting here in the auditorium tonight, starting with little kids in school, to complete the other side of the subject of genocide. That is to say, to stop it from being considered something that's just Jewish, something that's just internal to the Jews. But also to urge our entire society to act. And I'd like to ask everyone, think about your contacts with other organizations, with universities, school, Civil Society, invite them. They are such amazing speakers. I, at least, was very moved.

From the audience:

Who at present is preventing the international force from entering Sudan?

Response:

The Sudanese government.

Ms. Ruth Messinger:

I just want to respond to Dalia's words. I had very limited time to speak, so I talked about the work of American Jewish World Service and the Save Darfur Coalition. We are still pushing our government. There is much more to do. Sudan does not want the peacekeeping force. But the U.S. and Great Britain wrote the UN resolution so that Sudan had to give permission. Such weak efforts are not sufficient. So, go to civil society. Go on the AJWS web site at www.ajws.org. Wear the green Save Darfur wristband. Wear one because that reminds you that there is a continuing genocide and by definition that means we are not doing enough. Wear two because, as the teenagers in Los Angeles told me, if you wear two, when someone asks you what it is about, you can take one off and give it to them

Prof. Yossi Shain:

I would just like to say one thing to all of you who have questions: look, the School of Government is located at Tel Aviv University. There are people who ask, Who needs a school of government in the first place? Because a school of government is not an advocacy group. And there are lots of people here at the university, including members of the University Senate, who think that even an evening such as this one is not something that is appropriate to the academic setting. And I don't say this in a condemnatory fashion.

These questions have to be asked as academic questions, and not as questions intended to raise consciousness. We have really seen, as we were told earlier, that when we invited the representatives of U.N. agencies here, we reserved a small auditorium because we didn't know how many students would come. Suddenly, security personnel were telling us that 700 people had gathered outside, young Israelis, and we had to open a very large hall. There is a tremendous thirst amongst the young people at the university. And the universities haven't really given this any consideration, it doesn't interest them, I'm telling you this up front. It doesn't interest them, it's not part of the issues that are discussed. So this is really a very critical question in terms of the function of the academy.

We, at the School of Government and Policy, have chosen not simply to stay in our ivory tower, but also to deal with questions of public policy and international diplomacy at the level

of involvement. Not in the sense that what we're doing is political, but we are putting issues on the public agenda, and we are really giving them a great deal of resonance.

I truly want to thank all the wonderful guests who came here tonight to do this. And again to thank all those who contributed.

Now I would like to invite you to the photographic exhibit "White Sands" by the photographer Uriel Sinai. We are very happy to be opening the exhibit, which was curated by Eldad Rephaeli. The exhibit, which will be on display here at Beth-Hatefutsoth for another few weeks, is made up of photographs that were taken earlier this year in the refugee camps on the Sudan-Chad border. You are all invited. Thank you.

- End of discussion -





Prof. Shain



The Panel



Ms. Messinger



The Panel



Rabbi Lau



Mr. Uni and Att. Ben-Dor



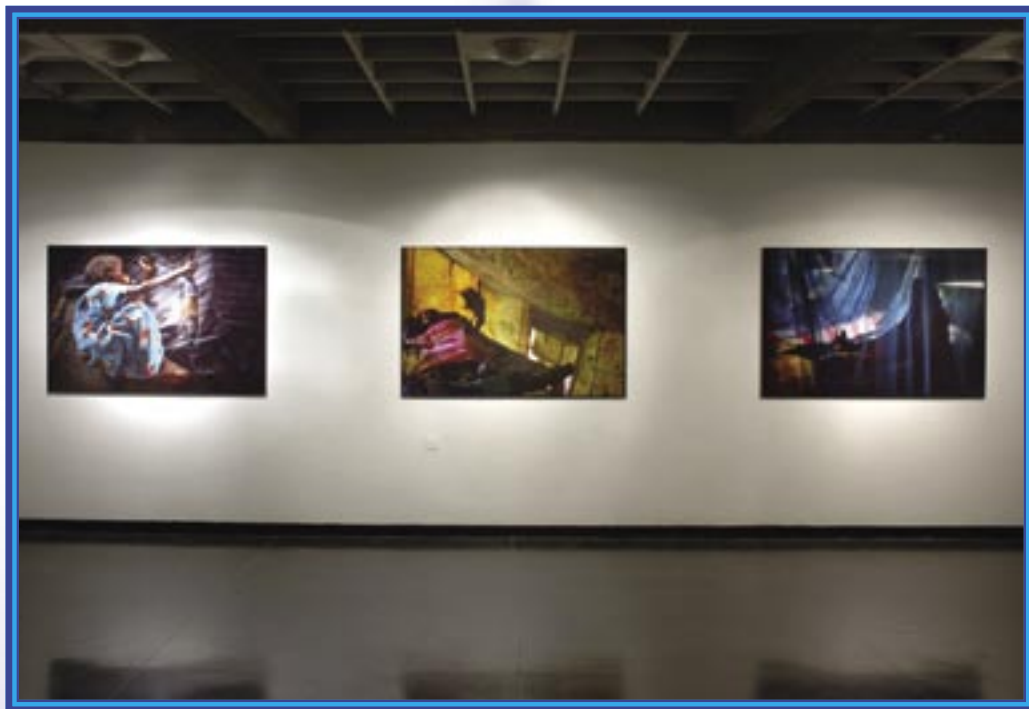
Att. Grungras, Ms. Murekatete and Ms. Halperin



Mr. Eldad Rafaeli (curator) and Mr. Uriel Sinai (photographer)



From the photo exhibit



From the photo exhibit

