

## Speech

By the Governing Mayor of Berlin, Klaus Wowereit  
to Welcome the Conference of the World Federation  
of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust and Descendants  
on 24 August 2014 at the Hilton Hotel in Berlin

---

Berlin is greatly honored that the World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust and Descendants has chosen to hold its conference in Germany's capital city for the first time.

For many Holocaust survivors, traveling to Berlin – to the country of the perpetrators – is not easy, even now. I am therefore especially grateful to you for being here today.

Berlin will never forget what Jews suffered at the hands of Germans. Jewish victims are commemorated in many different places in the city – from the Memorial to the Murdered Jews in Europe and many historic sites of remembrance to the “Stolpersteine” placed in front of houses in which Jewish Berliners lived before they were deported and killed.

We are profoundly grateful to the Holocaust Survivors who visit schools and speak to students about what it was like to be Jewish back then, about the persecution, about how their childhood came to a brutal end overnight, about the exclusion and mistreatment that dominated every day life.

Remembering the Holocaust responsibly and on many levels is fundamental to ensuring that Jews experience Berlin as a “place to be” again and that they feel safe and at home here.

Berlin's Jewish community is growing. We are proud to say that Jewish life and Jewish culture are an integral part of life in Berlin today, where they enrich the city's cultural diversity.

The most important lesson learned from history is that we must preserve and defend the diversity of Jewish life in Berlin. We will continue to do everything we can to ensure that Jews enjoy living in Berlin and that they can feel safe here.

I want to be very clear about that, also against the backdrop of the recent conflict between Israel and Hamas. The people of the Middle East long for peace. But it has to be a peace that gives Israel long-term security. We cannot tolerate rockets being fired at Israel cities or Jews having to live in fear again, almost 70 years after the end of Nazi terror.

We need a political solution that will break down hatred on both sides and build peace. That means security that Israel can depend on, but it also means real prospects for the future for Palestinians. Only then will peace be possible.

We have experienced passionate debates on this conflict here in Berlin, too, and people are allowed to express their opinions freely. But we will not permit anti-Semitic hate speech under the cover of “freedom of speech”. Anti-Semitism is not tolerated in Berlin. People who engage in anti-Semitic rabble-rousing or attack, Jews are also attacking our society, and they will face the full force of the law.

Berlin is committed to a strong, self-confident Jewish community in this city. Berlin is committed to Israel.

I am delighted to be able to welcome you to Berlin. I hope you will find time during your stay to explore the traces of the Jewish past and present in our city.

I would like to wish you all an inspiring conference and a very pleasant stay in Berlin.