REMARKS BY PROF. PETER M.F. MBITHI, VICE CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI DURING THE COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, IN 8.4.4. MULTI-PURPOSE HALL AT 10.00 A.M.
The Israeli Ambassador to Kenya, Amb. Yahel Vilan

The Deputy Vice-Chancellors, UoN

Members of the University Management Board

The Organizers

Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen
I take this opportunity to welcome you all to the University of Nairobi for this important lecture, and I especially pass a special welcome to the Israeli Ambassador to Kenya, Amb. Yahel Vilan.

Allow me to make brief remarks about the Holocaust, the topic of the discussion today, and for which the Israeli Embassy has organized for a distinguished researcher to make a presentation.

The Holocaust was the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime of Germany and its collaborators.
The Nazis, who came to power in 1933, believed that Germans were “racially superior”, and that the Jews, who they deemed inferior, were an alien threat to the so-called German racial Community.

It is note-worthy that although Jews were the primary victims of Nazi racism, there were other victims including some 200,000 Roma (Gypsies). Further, at least 200,000 mentally or physically disabled patients, mainly Germans living in institutional settings, were murdered in what was called the “Euthanasia Programme”.
As the Nazi tyranny spread across Europe, the Germans and their collaborators persecuted and murdered millions of other people. During this period, between two and three million Soviet prisoners of war were murdered or died of starvation, disease, neglect or maltreatment.

It is in historical records that between 1941 and 1944, Nazi German authorities deported millions of Jews from Germany-occupied territories and from the countries of many of its allies. They were sent to ghettos and other killing centers, often called extermination camps, where they were murdered in specially developed gassing facilities.
Finally, the Allied Forces were able to defeat the Nazis who surrendered on May 7, 1945, virtually marking the end of the Second World War.

In the aftermath of the holocaust, many of the survivors found shelter in DP (displaced persons) camps managed by the allied forces. Between 1948 and 1951, about 700,000 Jews immigrated to Israel, including 136,000 Jews displaced from Europe. Other Jewish DPs emigrated to the US and other nations. As you may know, the holocaust was a turning point in history, which prompted the world to say “Never again”.
I am aware that the International Holocaust Remembrance Day is marked on January 27, every year. However, this year the Israeli Embassy elected to have their Remembrance Day one day ahead and gave the honour of hosting the event to the University of Nairobi.

I am sure that our guest speaker for the public lecture, Prof. Lea Prais, will give proper insights on this historically ignominious happening, and enlighten us further on how it has affected huge populations around the world.
Mine, therefore, is to welcome all our guests to the University and to pass special thanks to the Israeli Ambassador for gracing this occasion.

Thank you and be blessed.

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AND
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