

Mr President Jose Igreja Matos, Mr President Yaron Levy, Secretary General Giacomo Oberto, Mr President Duro Sessa, dear colleagues,

Here in Israel, as well as in Poland, I am not alone. I have Polish judges with me, whom I would like to invite to join me on stage. Dorota, Tomek, come up here. This award is also for you.

I am deeply touched by this distinction and truly grateful for the help that we, the Polish judges, have received from you in these past years. During the years when we faced challenges that we never could have expected. In a country in the centre of Europe, in a country that broke the bonds of communist dictatorship, in a country which was a pioneer of democratic transformation, in a country which I am proud to call home.

I thank you on behalf of myself and on behalf of the Association of Polish Judges "IUSTITIA", of which I am the president. Thank you also on behalf of all Polish judges and Polish citizens who are fighting for the rule of law in Poland and in the European Union, who never doubted that the fight makes sense and that the fight is winnable.

The Polish Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Lech Wałęsa, is known throughout the world. He fought against the lawlessness of the communist regime. Today, he continues to engage in the battle against breaking the law in Poland.

He takes a stand when the Turkish judges are harassed.

He understands that although the communist regime has been overthrown, the fight for the rule of law and human rights continues.

Nothing is given once and for all. We are not at the end of history. Each and every one of us must be ready to put our own professional or personal security on the line, at any time, in order to defend the values of the democratic world. Even in countries with established democracies, authoritarian tendencies are on the increase. Authoritarianism slyly takes advantage of the weaknesses of democracy, injecting poison into the system and transforming democracy into a caricature of itself. In such a country democratic institutions become a mere facade, just like the politically controlled Constitutional Tribunal in Poland.

If societies do not wake up in time, they find themselves suddenly in a situation of enslavement. That is why the solidarity of people of good will is so important, the solidarity of those who believe that the personal, inalienable freedom of a human being is a value that cannot be sacrificed for autocracy. It is the judiciary, the third power, but also the independent media, that guarantee liberty. It is no coincidence that our association's motto is "Liberty and Justice for All".

We, the judges, as a professional group with a special social mission, should accept once and for all that our key value, our guiding principle is **not to be indifferent**.

Not to be indifferent to cases of lawlessness in one's own country, but also around the world. This is our obligation. This is our obligation. Marek Edelman, a witness of the terrible events of the Holocaust, said: When you see evil and turn your head away or don't help, when you can help, you become co-responsible. Because turning your head away helps those who do evil.

We have to fight the passivity or indifference of others. We have a responsibility to educate the society. We strive to integrate the legal community from all over the world. I am proud that in Warsaw, a city that witnessed Nazi extermination, the Ghetto Uprising and the Warsaw Uprising, we brought the judges and citizens together in the march of Thousand Robes.

Despite the cold of that January day, some 30,000 people gathered for the march, including judges from 28 countries around the world, all dressed in their legal attire. Two weeks later, Mr. Marian Turski, a prisoner of the Auschwitz concentration camp, Chairman of the Council of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, spoke his famous words. He said Nazism and the Holocaust did not come out of nowhere. He said that one cannot be indifferent to emerging evil.

Here in Israel, I want to say loud and clear that lawyers, judges, cannot remain silent, cannot be indifferent when human rights and freedoms are violated. Law cannot yield to politics. Lawlessness cannot triumph over the rule of law. We cannot be indifferent when Turkish judges stay in prison, when Guatemalan judges cannot return to their country in fear of prison, when Polish judges are afraid to give a verdict because of repressions.

In Poland, a person accused of anti-Semitic slurs was a member of the politically elected National Council of the Judiciary, performing the highest judicial functions, following a recommendation from the Minister of Justice. As a Polish citizen, as a judge, I will do everything in my power, to fight against such lawlessness and hypocrisy.

This award is not only a source of pride, but also an obligation. After seven difficult years of fighting for the rule of law in Poland and the European Union, to go along with you in the march of freedom, in the march for the rule of law in Poland, Europe and the world.

Last but not least, I congratulate Erika Aifan and Murat Arslan.

I know we are going on this march together.

Thank you very much once again.

Long live the Ukraine - Slava Ukraini