



Conférence de lancement du Projet Aladin
UNESCO - Paris, 27th March 2009

A Call to Conscience

We, women and men in public life, historians, intellectuals and people from all faiths, have come together to declare that the defence of values of justice and fraternity must overwhelm all obstacles to prevail over intolerance, racism and conflict.

With every passing day, we witness a rising tide of hatred and violence filling the gulf of misunderstanding.

This particularly affects the current relations between Muslims and Jews, while for centuries - in Persia, throughout the Middle East, in North Africa and across the Ottoman Empire - they lived together often in harmony.

We say clearly that the Israelis and the Palestinians have a right to their own state, their own sovereignty and security and that any peace process with such aims must be supported.

In the face of ignorance, prejudice and competing memories that we reject, we believe in the power of knowledge and the primacy of History.

We therefore affirm, beyond all political considerations, our determination to defend historical truth, for no peace is built on lies. The Holocaust is a historical fact: the genocide in which six million European Jews were exterminated.

Its scope is universal, for it was the values of dignity and respect for human beings that Nazi Germany and its European accomplices sought to destroy. To deny this crime against humanity is not only an insult to the memory of the victims, but also an insult to the very idea of civilization. Hence, we believe that the teaching of this tragedy concerns all those who have at heart the will to prevent further genocides.

The same requirement of truth calls on us to recall the actions of the Righteous in Europe and in the Arab and Muslim world.

Together, we declare our common desire to promote a sincere dialogue, open and fraternal.

It is in this spirit that we have gathered around the Aladdin Project. We call on all men and women of conscience around the world to work with us in this common endeavour of shared knowledge, mutual respect and peace.