

*It is Time*

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An unfathomable hatred uprooted their lives, stole their families, and shattered their dreams, but nothing could steal their voices or their courage to speak up against ignorance. Nothing could stop them from telling the world about the pain, blood, and death they saw and felt. Nothing could stop them from telling the world all they knew, for if society learned of the atrocities then perhaps a crime against humanity such as the Holocaust would never happen again.

Through their gift of writing, two brave survivors of the Holocaust, Elie Wiesel and Simon Wiesenthal, spread a wave of awareness throughout the world. Both men had lost much in the Holocaust and both were left with aching scars, but they knew that those murdered didn't deserve to be forgotten. On the contrary, their stories had to be told so that the memories would be constant reminders of the destruction that hatred breeds. Elie Wiesel and Simon Wiesenthal used their memories and the memories of those who could no longer speak for themselves to tell the world of what they lived through, of what their friends and families lived through, and of the friends and family who had not lived. They told their stories to fight ignorance because ignorance leads to hatred and hatred lead to death, too much death.

When the public learned of the millions who had been massacred in what became known as the Holocaust, a cloud of fear settled over a world in mourning, but government leaders rose up with a noble promise of "Never again." Sadly, they were wrong. Now, many years after the Holocaust, the shock has begun to fade and society

once again grows blind to the signs of intolerance. By forgetting what was, we are permitting it to happen over and over again.

As I write this essay, thousands of people in the Sudan are being slaughtered, but once again very little is being done to end their suffering. In Darfur, Sudan, the Arab militia known as the Janjaweed, is determined to wipe out the ethnic tribal groups in the western part of the country. About 1.2 million people have been driven from their homes; 200,000 have fled to Chad for salvation, and at least 50,000 have died. Ignored by their government, the ethnic tribal groups of Sudan are staring genocide in the eye.

Why have the tales of hunger, disease, and death told by Elie Wiesel, Simon Wiesenthal, and so many others not stirred a fire without our hearts and made us more sensitive to human suffering? Why aren't we honoring the promise of "Never again" and why are we letting another people perish before our eyes? Will the world repeat what happened before, to sit passively by as millions die, then intervene only after their deaths and make an empty promise of "Never again"? Hasn't the world seen enough senseless violence and death? Isn't it time for humanity to stop petty judgments based on race, color and religion and recognize the common bond that unites us: we are all human? It is time.

As a member of my high school newspaper, I hold the power of language at my fingertips. I want to use the voice this gives me to inform others of the devastation crushing innocent lives in places such as the Sudan. Knowledge is power, and I want to help people attain that power. Everyone one of us must wake up from the naïve dream that what has happened before will never happen again because it has happened in places such as Rwanda, Cambodia, and Uganda, and it is happening still. The cycle of death

and violence will continue to spin until each of us recognizes the responsibility we hold toward our fellow man. The heroes of the past such as Raoul Wallenberg and Simon Wiesenthal prove that it takes just one person, just one voice to make a difference. I hope that by writing articles in my school newspaper about the crisis in Sudan and by spreading awareness on the subject of genocide as I pursue a future as a writer, I too can have a voice that makes an imprint of change so that perhaps one day we will live up to the promise of “Never again.”