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The Responsibility to Prevent

The mere idea of hate, especially of that sponsored by a government, is surely condemnable and morally incorrect. The Genocide Convention, passed by the UN, sets a moral standard for all states to follow and encourage others to follow regarding one of the most basic human rights; this is the right to live. This right to live has been threatened by Iran's leaders, especially by former president Ahmadinejad who is a proud champion of eliminating Israel from the map. The states of the United Nations must hold Iran accountable to the lessons of the Holocaust for their incitement to genocide.

Iran's signature on the Genocide Convention of 1948 requires Iran to abide by its statutes, including one that outlaws the incitement to genocide. Former President Ahmadinejad is known for directing threats of annihilation to Israel, a country that is to him "destined for destruction and will soon disappear" (Gerson). These threats should not be taken lightly because they are parallel to Nazi Germany's anti-semitic government agenda. Steven Blaney, a former Minister of Public Safety in Canada, assured that the Holocaust "did not begin in the gas chamber," he understands that the Nazi party's genocidal ideology must have "[begun] with words" (MacCharles). Blaney's statement correctly aligns the hate or prejudice against a group of people with acts of violence or an eventual mass genocide. A regime of leaders who share the same anti-Semitic beliefs is, regardless, alarming.

Lessons from the Holocaust are still very applicable to the current situation in Iran, but the question remains whether a state will take action to prevent the incitement from proceeding. The past supreme leader of Iran, Ruhollah Khomeini, has written several works of propaganda against "wretched" Jews in which he asks "[Allah] to curse them", among other dehumanizing remarks (Richter). One of the primary signs of the incitement to genocide is the smearing of a people's image through metaphoric language, especially toward a national audience. Other genocidal events, like those in Rwanda, have set a precedent that the intent of violence does not matter. No matter what the underlying message, if a state message could be deemed hateful toward a group of people and could be concluded to include violent tendencies, it must be inciting genocide. Thus, the state messages about exterminating Israel must be met with the United Nations' sanctions against Iran.

A state cannot, in an international community, be allowed to incite violence against a group of people; a history like the Holocaust must not be repeated. Today's children and students are tasked with the responsibility to prevent—they are the future who can finally eliminate the idea of prejudice. This, however, is a daunting task, but once it is finally accomplished, not one more generation will have to bear the experience of mass genocide.

Works Cited

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