

Holocaust survivor Roman Schwarzman

On 20–21 October 2022, the Ukrainian Jewish Encounter joined the Atlantic Council and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights as co-sponsors of an international conference in Berlin called "[Russia's War Against Ukraine](#)."

Roman Schwarzman, a 92-year-old Holocaust survivor from Odesa, presented a moving address and spoke eloquently about Ukraine's respect for its Jewish minority. He declared he was twice the victim of fascist threats to his life, first from the Nazis and then the Russians.

The event was hosted by Germany's Institute for Liberal Modernity (LibMod-Zentrum Liberale Moderne) and was held at the Allianz Forum, located next to Berlin's famed Brandenburg Gate.

English Transcript

I never thought that the atrocities committed by the Nazis 80 years ago would be repeated in my long-suffering Ukraine, that there would again be concentration camps, that peaceful cities and villages would be destroyed, and that thousands of civilians, children, women, and the elderly would die. It is hard for you to believe that the criminal actions of the Russian occupying army not only repeat but also surpass in their cynicism, harshness, and senselessness the actions of the German fascists. This is confirmed by boxes with booty found in the liberated territories of Ukraine, tools of torture, numerous raped women and children, looted houses, as well as stolen personal belongings, household appliances, and even personal hygiene items. This leaves an indelible mark on the image of the Russian army as terrorists, robbers, rapists, and murderers.

In the 21st century, we are confronted with barbaric atrocities, a flagrant violation of the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, which outline the basic human rights to life, liberty, and dignity. They are trampling on these rights. Russia is methodically and purposefully perpetrating genocide against the Ukrainian people, similar to Stalin's Holodomor and Hitler's Holocaust. This is genocide committed by the Russian occupiers under the false slogans about demilitarizing and denazifying Ukrainians. The first horrors of World War II were when the Nazis tried to eliminate me as a Jew. Today, Russian imperialists want to kill me as a Ukrainian. I state emphatically and consciously that there has been no threat from alleged Nazis and Bandera supporters in Ukraine. We, Jews, feel free and [protected] in our country until the Russian occupiers come to us.

Ladies and gentlemen! It was not Hitler who wanted to kill me when I was in the small Bershadt ghetto 81 years ago. And today, it is not Putin himself who is firing missiles at my native Ukraine and Odesa. The Russians must be held accountable for their crimes in Ukraine as a nation, just as the Germans have been so far. A special tribunal to punish Russia's criminal aggression against Ukraine is the only way to bring those responsible to

justice. I ask the esteemed leadership of Germany and other countries to support the creation of this kind of international tribunal. The criminals must be punished.

Missile strikes on 10 and 11 October against civilian cities and critical infrastructure in Ukraine once again showed that Russia is a terrorist state. Germany is a powerful democratic state and should be the leader in the common struggle against the aggressor. The goal should be clear and unambiguous — the absolute and unconditional military defeat of the Russian Federation. Your concern, gentlemen, is not enough. The indecision of some Western countries has already led to the loss of life: more than 400 Ukrainian children and tens of thousands of civilians were killed. Many of them could now be alive if we had been provided with defense weapons in a timely manner.

I urge the German government to immediately supply Ukraine with heavy weapons, including tanks and armored vehicles. I am grateful to Germany for what has already been done, for the initiative to strengthen Ukraine's air defense and artillery, and for the delivery of the first German air defense system. I know you are doing your best to deliver the next [batch] as quickly as possible. Please do your best. I am sure that together we shall overcome. Glory to Ukraine!