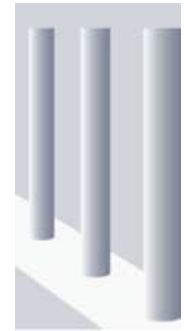


# 2007 Nuremberg International Human Rights Award

Award Ceremony on Sunday, September 30, 2007

**Speech by Gareth Evans,  
President of the International Crisis Group**

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## EXORCISING NUREMBERG'S GHOSTS

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We have in this year's Nuremberg International Human Rights Award winner, Rwanda's Eugenie Musayidire, who will be shortly introduced to you, one of the finest examples it is possible to imagine of the triumph of the human spirit, and the triumph of human decency, in the most appalling circumstances and against the most overwhelming odds, and I feel very honoured, privileged and moved to be part of this award ceremony.

I guess I was invited to be present because of my role in three particular organizations on whose behalf I can, in a sense speak.

One of the hats that I wear, or have recently worn, is as the co-chair of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, which, following the catastrophic failure of the international community to respond to the genocidal horrors that recurred through the 1990s, especially in Rwanda and the Balkans, introduced to the world in 2001 the concept of 'the responsibility to protect'. That Commission made the point (in terms that have now largely been accepted, at least in principle, by the whole global community in the 2005 UN Summit) that state sovereignty is not a license to kill, that states do have a responsibility to protect their own citizens from atrocity crimes, and that when they are unable or unwilling to do so that responsibility shifts to the wider international community.

The second hat that I wear is as a member – along with such real heroes of the anti-racism and anti-genocide cause as Archbishop Desmond Tutu and General Romeo Dallaire – of the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Committee on the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities, which is trying to ensure that the principle of the responsibility to protect is implemented in practice, no easy task when we look at the currents of hatred still running in so many parts of the world.

And the third hat that I wear is as the head of the International Crisis Group, a global NGO dedicated to preventing and resolving deadly conflict worldwide. As such, I guess, I'm representing here all the hundreds, indeed thousands, of civil society organizations around the world who work, often without much recognition or many thanks at all, on these issues - and who would want to join me in paying tribute not only to our Rwandan awardee today, but to the city which is honouring her.

When I made my first visit to Nuremberg not so long ago, it wasn't wearing any of the hats that I have mentioned. I came simply as an ordinary private citizen, to spend a weekend here with my wife – partly because I wanted to see the marvelously restored old city and to experience the

delights of Germany's, and probably the world's, finest Christmas market, but much more than that, because I wanted to see for myself, not just as part of some official delegation or in the context of some big conference, just how it was that a city with such a long and rich cultural history could have been so integral a part of the Nazi era, and whether it really was possible to exorcise the ghosts of that awful past.

I wanted to walk on what was left of the Luitpoldplein and the Zeppelin field, where all those marching feet, and columns of flags and shafts of light were recorded, with disconcerting artistry, by Leni Riefenstahl; I wanted to stand on that crumbling podium where Hitler screamed his obscenities, and try to get some sense of the mass psychology involved; and above all I wanted to sit quietly in Courtroom 600 where Goering and the others were tried for their war crimes and crimes against humanity, and where Nuremberg began its climb back from the abyss: from being the city of the Nazis to the city of international justice, of peace and human rights.

Walking around the city that first time, and walking around it now, I am left in no doubt how comprehensive that transformation has been. It leaps out at you in the physical fabric of the city, in the imaginatively designed 'Way of Human Rights' where we will dine at the Peace Table later today, and in the brilliantly designed Documentation Centre at the Nazi Party Rally Grounds, with its entrance corridor piercing like a dagger the monstrous Third Reich Congress Hall, and housing an exhibition on the Nazi era which is probably the most sensitive and educationally effective I have seen anywhere.

But above all the transformation of Nuremberg leaps out in the extraordinary commitment this city's leadership, with the full support of its citizens, has made over the last decade and more to make Nuremberg a genuine world leader in the protection and promotion of human rights - with this Award, with the support for human rights projects around the world, with its active role in founding the European Coalition of Cities against Racism, and its hosting of innumerable international peace and human rights conferences, all of which have been recognized by the city being the first in the world to be honoured with the UNESCO Award for Human Rights Education.

I said at the outset that there could be no finer example of the triumph of human decency than the *recipient* of this year's award. Let me close my greeting by saying that there could be no finer *giver* of this award than this city of Nuremberg, because there is no city in the world that is a finer and more graphic example of the triumph of human decency,

This is a city that has had, within living memory, a horrible past. But rather than burying that recent past, pretending that nothing really happened, this city's leadership made a determined decision to confront it, to learn from it, and to share that learning, and that passion to ensure that nothing like it could ever happen again, with the rest of the world.

Lord Mayor, you and your colleagues and your citizens *have* exorcised your ghosts. You have done this city proud, you have done the cause of human rights, justice and decency proud. I know that I am echoing the sentiments of many, many people around the world in thanking you for that, most warmly and most sincerely.