American Red Cross Presents the 2026 International Humanitarian Law Youth Action Campaign United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Tour

International Humanitarian Law Youth Action Campaign Summit Representatives toured the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

July 29th, 2026, 8:00 AM ET
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The Holocaust Memorial Museum is the United States' official memorial dedicated to preserving the legacy of the Holocaust. On Wednesday, July 29th, Summit Representatives embarked on a guided tour of the museum.

Representatives were first sorted into groups of 5-6 individuals. Uniquely, each group was led by an adolescent who was trained to guide peers around the museum. Each group first stepped onto an elevator that was intentionally designed to reflect the World War II era. A small TV hung over their heads and played an introductory clip as the elevator slowly moved up. Eventually, the clip ended and the doors opened, spilling them out into the broad yet immersive surroundings of history.

The tour began with the end of World War 2. Artifacts were scattered across the museum, including images of shocked American soldiers, quotes from key players such as President Truman and General Dwight D. Eisenhower, and preserved rubble. A key point that was emphasized throughout this section was that Holocaust survivors were not initially overjoyed to see the American soldiers. They were subjected to immense pain, suffering, and starvation, which desensitized them to military activity. Many victims never recovered from trauma and did not recognize freedom.

The rest of the tour proceeded chronologically, starting from the rise of Hitler and ending at liberation. The museum featured a wide range of artifacts that conveyed the history of Nazi

Germany, from clips of starving children, tattered flags, burnt books, and many more. Most notably, the museum displayed a real-life train car that was used to transport victims to concentration camps. Visitors could walk through the car and observe the small, cramped space that hundreds of individuals were shoved into. Additionally, a small room labeled the Carole and Andrew Harper gallery was intentionally designed to reflect ideas associated with the Holocaust, including white walls and light seeping from a square window in the corner.

Shortly after touring, Representatives attended a presentation from Dr. Steven Luckert, Senior Program Curator for the William Levine Family Institute for Holocaust Education. He displayed numerous examples of propaganda, specifically pointing out important details in the posters such as eye contact and a call to action. He explained that these posters, combined with the country's low self-esteem, were effective in persuading Germans to ultimately turn against their Jewish peers. Additionally, Dr. Luckert emphasized how the Nazi Party led a beautification campaign to portray the Theresienstadt ghetto, a concentration camp, as a place where people could live a safe and satisfactory life. This campaign ultimately tricked the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Danish Red Cross into reporting positively on the conditions of the ghetto after their visit.

After hearing from Dr. Luckert, students were introduced to Dr. Ashleigh Landau from the Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide. The Simon-Skjodt Center highlights the Holocaust as a tragedy that could've been prevented and aims to use this history and research as tools for preventing future atrocities. As a Research Associate, Dr. Landau focuses heavily on identifying these warning signs for genocides so interventions can be taken. Part of her and the Simon-Skjodt Center's work has led to the development of the Early Warning Project, an initiative to use data and qualitative methods for predicting the occurrence of mass atrocities.

Although this experience was one of the most emotionally heavy for many Summit Representatives, it was also one of the most important. Dr. Luckert, Dr. Landau, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum as a whole have emphasized how important it is to use history as a tool for reshaping the future. The horror that cost millions of Jews their lives in the 1930s and 1940s is a scar on our world that will never truly fade, and it is so important we never lose that history and the lessons it continues to teach us. As representatives reflect on this experience, International Humanitarian Law feels more of a necessity than ever to continue advocating for.

Warm Regards,
International Humanitarian Law Youth Action Campaign Summit Representatives

SYNOPSIS: The American Red Cross IHL YAC United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Tour allowed Summit Representatives to engage with the history and realities of the Holocaust. After the tour, representatives met with Dr. Steven Luckert and Dr. Ashleigh Landau from the

museum to further their perspectives on this tragedy, encouraging us all to view history through a lens of preventing future atrocities.