

United Nations International Holocaust Remembrance Day – 27 January 2021

MTG, Napier

Mayor Kirsten Wise

Kia ora tatou and a very warm welcome to you all.

{{Welcome to any dignitaries in attendance}}

It is an honour to be here this evening as we remember the victims and survivors of the Holocaust.

Time does not diminish the importance of the Holocaust and as we reflect on these atrocities, it's important to look at the adversity we have faced recently and remember that we still have so much to be grateful for.

While travelling in my twenties, I visited Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum and the experience will stay with me forever. Entering through the gate with its sign "work sets you free", where not a single bird sang and the horrors of genocide were on display was such a sobering experience.

From the Holocaust came many lessons, and resistance and resilience are two of the greatest. It's hard to imagine how in the face of such extreme suffering, so many found the courage to fight back and to live.

Reflecting on these lessons, it's important to also remember that there are many victims of intolerance in our world today. As a result, people are displaced and forced to practice resilience and resistance every day of their lives. It is my hope that we look to these people and to victims of the Holocaust, and work towards a more inclusive and supportive society.

I would like to thank the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand for bringing us together for this important occasion.

I'd also like to thank the MTG for hosting us this evening and UNESCO and NZ Human Rights for sponsoring the event.

Together you have provided us the opportunity to reflect and remember. As the living we owe it to those who can no longer speak to tell their story for them.