

Hon Grant Robertson Deputy Prime Minister's speech at Parliament for UN International Holocaust Remembrance Day, 27 January 2022

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcKb\\_uqQ37o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcKb_uqQ37o)

“When we think about such a cruel, inhumane, and extreme extermination of a group of people, we can have a tendency, as Jeremy said when we were out at Makara earlier, to put it into a very impersonal context. That 6 million people should die is a number so vastly unimaginable, that we put it into that statistic, rather than into its individual set of circumstances, and that's why I was especially moved by both Eva's and Boyd's stories earlier today at Makara, bringing that to us as a very individual set of circumstances, different, but both particularly insightful and moving. So, to both Boyd and Eva, I say thank you very much for sharing those stories with us.

It is acts of individual and collective resistance that we think of today. There are stories told often of the resistance forces throughout Europe, there are stories told, as we heard today, of individuals who supported and sheltered those who were being persecuted and lived under the threat of being killed. And, as we reflect on those collective and individual acts of resistance, it is timely to think what that means for us today.

I acknowledge the presence in the room of our Chief Human Rights Commissioner, Paul Hunt. In New Zealand we have had to face extraordinary circumstances, particularly drawn to our attention on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2019, on how hatred, bigotry, prejudice, and violence can come together, and each of us in our daily lives, I believe, has a responsibility to stand up to that. We have a collective responsibility. We invested in the likes of Paul and his Commission. We do it every day when we go to the United Nations, and we support those resolutions. But it's the individual acts of resistance to racism, the individual acts of resistance to bigotry, the individual acts of resistance to dis- and misinformation that I believe is the call of today's theme.

We owe it to every single individual of the more than 6 million who were exterminated, we owe it to the survivors, who I acknowledge again today. We owe it to the families of survivors, and I thought Eva captured well the trauma, sometimes the stigma, that was associated with families of survivors. I acknowledge that. That we, today, owe it to them to make sure that our individual acts of resistance against prejudice continue. Each of us knows the moment in our lives, in our days, when perhaps we turned away from those moments when we could show that individual resistance, and each of us knows that we can and should do better in those moments.

But, as a country, as a collective, we have an opportunity to lead, and we have an opportunity to say “never again”. Never again to the Holocaust, never again to letting go moments of racism, bigotry, or prejudice without resisting and showing our support for all those who had to suffer this before.

Thank you for the opportunity to be with you today, you're most welcome in the houses of Parliament. No rēira, Tēna koutou, Tēna koutou, Tēna koutou katoa.”

[Transcription by Desiree Gezentsvey]