



Media Release

Government Commitment to Holocaust Remembrance will help fight racism

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New Zealand's joining of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) will help fight racism for all New Zealanders, the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand and the New Zealand Jewish Council say.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade [has announced](#) Aotearoa New Zealand has been accepted as an Observer nation at the Berlin-based [inter-governmental organisation](#). New Zealand joins 44 other full or observer member nations including most of Europe, Australia, the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Both the New Zealand Jewish Council and the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand look forward to working closely with the Government to maximise the benefits IHRA membership can bring about in New Zealand for all its communities.

Holocaust Centre of New Zealand chair Deborah Hart says IHRA is committed to combatting rising antisemitism worldwide through Holocaust education. It works to help policymakers address increasing hate at a national level.

"Learning about the Holocaust teaches our young people and future leaders to look at one another with humanity and kindness," she says. "The Holocaust shows us how hate can start small and that we all have a responsibility to counter it.

"The United Nations' [Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief found](#) antisemitism left to fester poses risks not only to Jewish communities, but also to members of other minority communities. Joining IHRA shows New Zealand's commitment to protect all New Zealanders by opposing antisemitism.

"The Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Christchurch mosque attacks recommended the Government take action to promote social cohesion in New Zealand. [According to the OECD](#), education can play a significant role in promoting well-being and social progress," Deborah Hart says.

New Zealand Jewish Council President Stephen Goodman says joining IHRA gives the Government a tool to combat the rise in anti-Jewish sentiment.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has given momentum to dangerous international conspiracy theories about Jewish people, some of which we saw at the protest at Parliament earlier this year," he says.

"There has also been a concerning growth in Holocaust distortion including people wearing yellow stars to oppose vaccine mandates and accusing the Government of acting like the Nazi regime.

“Anyone who understands what occurred in the Holocaust understands this is not only a false and inappropriate comparison, but it belittles the suffering of Jewish people, and others, who were murdered by the Nazi Regime because of their race and religion.

“Reports that [far right groups](#) are growing have caused anxiety within the Jewish community, especially among the many families who came to New Zealand to escape such hatred.

“The Jewish community congratulates and thanks the Government for joining IHRA. It sends a powerful message that it is committed to protecting all Aotearoa New Zealand’s ethnic minority communities,” Stephen Goodman says.

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