



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day

Saturday the 27<sup>th</sup> January is International Holocaust Day which commemorates the day in 1945 when the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp was liberated by Allied forces at the end of the Second World War. It is a day when we can all, irrespective of our religious beliefs or race, raise awareness and reflect on what can happen when anti-semitism and racism are unchecked.

Unfortunately, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century racism and genocide have not been eradicated and we must do everything possible to convey a message of tolerance towards people who seem to be in any way different.

There will be a one minute silence held on International Holocaust Remembrance Day, but the Government of Gibraltar has been working hard in the run up to the day to ensure that the message of unity and solidarity is heard loud and clear and shared by everyone in Gibraltar.

In 2016, HM Government of Gibraltar decided that resources spent on receptions following the one minute's silence, would be better utilised by focusing on the educating of children on what has gone before and more importantly, how to avoid a recurrence in the future. This is why Government gives Learning From Auschwitz an annual grant to help them educate a new generation of children every year.

Last December, in continuation of the Government's new focus, the Ministry of Equality funded and organised a visit by Holocaust survivor, Arek Hersh. This was the third time that Government has funded a visit by a Holocaust survivor. He was joined by Holocaust Education Advisor, Mike Levy and together they presented a talk to a packed audience. The event was opened by Minister for Equality, Samantha Sacramento MP and Ms Naomi Hassan-Weisfogel from the locally registered charity "Learning From Auschwitz". The event also included a short speech by Ms Melanie Trinidad, a Westside School student and also a poem by Mr Giron Asquez, a Bayside School student. These students visited Auschwitz-Birkenau with their schools as part of the



Learning From Auschwitz trips organised annually through the Department of Education. The event was a full house, attended by over 130 people.

Mr. Levy also met with local teachers and advised them on how best to teach lessons from the Holocaust to children of different ages. In the run up to Holocaust Memorial Day, all local schools have had specific lessons or activities prepared to commemorate this important day. Mr Hersh's talk was video recorded and will be made available, with subtitles, to the general public to be enjoyed by anyone who could not attend on the night.

The Minister for Equality, The Hon. Minister Samantha Sacramento, MP, said "It is very important that we continue to discuss what happened in the concentration camps during World War Two and in other subsequent genocides. We need to remind ourselves, particularly the younger generations, of what can happen if we do not put a stop to racism, discrimination and anti-semitism. This is why it is important that this subject is taught to our local school children.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Learning From Auschwitz for their determination in spreading this important message and to all our local schools and teachers who have prepared lessons and activities this week for the benefit of the next generation of Gibraltarians."