



Coventry to host Holocaust Memorial Day 2009

Coventry is planning to create an inspiring and thought provoking focus after being chosen today as the host city for the 2009 Holocaust Memorial Day national commemorative event.

Coventry successfully bid to hold the event based on its creative ideas and reputation for building a vibrant multicultural community. As well as remembering the victims of Nazi persecution and other genocides, Holocaust Memorial Day provides a platform to highlight the extreme consequences of hatred for our society and communities.

Stephen Smith, Chair of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust said: "This year's theme is 'Stand up to hatred'. Coventry's commitment to developing links between its communities makes it an ideal partner with which to launch the 2009 theme. The work of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust will throughout the year focus on encouraging people to use their voice to stand up to hatred, culminating in the national event next January in Coventry."

Event organisers in Coventry are currently developing ideas around the national theme that will challenge people and encourage them not to tolerate what can become a corrosive force, able to ruin lives, wreck co-operation, destroy communities, races and even nations.

Councilor Ken Taylor, Leader of Coventry City Council said: "Since the Second World War the people of Coventry have been internationally known for working to promote peace and reconciliation both nationally and locally.

"We're proud of the way that our different communities live alongside each other and we recognise the value that diversity brings to our city. The 2009 theme is one that we will work hard to develop so that we create a memorable and thought provoking Holocaust Memorial Day. Understanding between different communities is critical if

we want to avoid the kind of hatred that led to the genocide in Nazi Germany and in other countries around the world.”

Coventry has a talented group of professionals and community groups who will be working not only on the commemoration event itself but also schools programmes and exhibitions.

In addition to holding local Holocaust Memorial Day event each year the city has also held its own Coventry Peace Month each year since 2003.

For further information call:

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Holocaust Memorial Day Trust: Lauren Hamburger 020 7299 8756

Notes to Editor:

Holocaust Memorial Day

- In November 2005, the United Nations established Holocaust Memorial Day as a day of remembrance across the World
- Further information can be found by visiting [**www.hmd.org.uk**](http://www.hmd.org.uk)
- The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2009 is 'Stand up to hatred'

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust

- HMDT is responsible for the annual, National Commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day. It promotes and supports HMD events and projects in local communities and schools. It raises awareness, informs and educates about the Holocaust and its contemporary relevance - especially to issues of racism; prejudice and discrimination. It prompts action in the UK in favour of diversity; equality and harmony between communities
- The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust is funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government
- HMD commemorates all victims - the 6 million Jews exterminated in the Holocaust; groups persecuted by the Nazi regime (Roma and Sinti (Gypsies); Black people; mentally and physically disabled people; lesbian and gay

people; Slavic peoples; trade unionists and political opponents) and those lost in other genocides

Genocide in the 20th Century and beyond

Since the start of the Second World War, millions have been killed in genocides across the globe. The most well-known include:

- The Holocaust, where the Jewish people were systematically targeted in an attempt to wipe them out. Over six million were murdered by 1945, in addition to the millions of Gypsies, Communists, Homosexuals and Disabled people who were also killed by the Nazis
- In 1975-1978, two million Cambodians were killed by Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge. In their attempt to create a one class society, the Khmer Rouge targeted, among others, Christians, Buddhists, and Vietnamese and Chinese groups. Roughly a quarter of all Cambodians were killed in the atrocities
- In 1994, one million Tutsis were murdered in 100 days by extremist Hutus in an attempt to eradicate the Tutsi population from Rwanda
- The current situation in Darfur, which has claimed approximately 400,000 lives to date, many of whom have been slaughtered by the government sponsored Janjaweed militia

The United Nations has a number of Genocide Tribunals currently operating. The Rwandan Genocide Tribunal has convicted 28 people to date, including the Prime Minister of the time, Jean Kambanda. In November 2007, the UN Cambodian Genocide Tribunal began proceedings against Kaing Guek Eav, the first senior figure in Pol Pot's regime to stand trial for crimes against humanity.