**Online HMD ceremony script**

This suggested script accompanies the template Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony presentation. We encourage you to adapt the text for your audience and personalise it so that your ceremony is even more powerful.

The ceremony lasts approximately 45 minutes.

**Slide 1**

Welcome to [**organisation**]’s Holocaust Memorial Day event. We are pleased that you are able to join us to learn about Holocaust Memorial Day, remember those who were murdered and reflect on how we can take action to create a better future together.

This ceremony will last for approximately 45 minutes and will feature the experiences of people who survived the Holocaust and genocide. We hope you will find the event moving, informative and engaging, and that it will inspire you to take action for a safer future.

In terms of housekeeping, this event is taking place live, so the films cannot be paused. All attendees have been placed on mute, but we would appreciate it if you could put your phones on silent and give this event your full attention. Towards the end of the ceremony, there will be an opportunity for everyone to light a candle and take part in a minute’s silence, so please have a candle and lighter ready if you would like to participate.

We will now move onto an introduction to today’s ceremony from [**name**].

**Slide 2 - Introduction from organisation**

Friends, thank you for joining us to mark Holocaust Memorial Day at [**organisation**]. Your attendance is part of the national picture of Holocaust Memorial Day, with thousands of activities taking place across the UK – supported by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. We know that everyone who attends Holocaust Memorial Day events learns more, empathises more deeply, and goes on to take action to build a better future.

Holocaust Memorial Day is the international day on 27 January to remember the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust, alongside the millions of other people killed under Nazi persecution of other groups and in more recent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

The Holocaust threatened the fabric of civilisation, and genocide must still be resisted every day. Our world often feels fragile and vulnerable and we cannot be complacent. Even in the UK, prejudice and the language of hatred must be challenged by us all.

We meet today at a time when the UK is divided, with many of us experiencing uncertainty, fear and grief. Increasing levels of denial, division and misinformation in today’s world mean we must remain vigilant against hatred and identity-based hostility. Yet we know tens of thousands of people are coming together to mark HMD, to help those in need and to build a better future. Communities are standing in solidarity and experiencing togetherness, even while we are apart.

The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) 2023 is **Ordinary People**. It encourages everyone to reflect on the depths humanity can sink to, but also the ways individuals and communities resisted that darkness to ‘be the light’ before, during and after genocide.

**Be the light in the darkness** is an affirmation and a call to action for everyone marking HMD. We can all stand in solidarity. We can all choose to **be the light in the darkness**.

**Slide 3 – Introduction**

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust is the charity that promotes and supports Holocaust Memorial Day across the UK. The charity’s Chief Executive, Olivia Marks-Woldman, has provided a message to all attendees of today’s event.

**Slide 4 - Bea Green’s testimony**

Bea Green was born in Munich in 1924. When she was a teenager she fled rising violence and persecution of Jews in Germany by coming to the UK on the *Kindertransport*. This is her story.

**Slide 5 - Learning from the past**

Bea Green’s story is a very powerful one, but the experiences she describes are far from unique. In this next film from the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, which is narrated by Imelda Staunton, we learn about the atrocities that we commemorate on Holocaust Memorial Day, and the importance of learning from the past.

**Slide 6 - *Colors* by Michaella Rugwizangoga**

As we learned in the previous film, although world leaders said ‘Never Again’, after the Holocaust, genocide has taken place many times in the years since.

In 1994, Rwanda was devastated by a genocidal conflict which saw members of the Hutu tribe massacre Tutsi men, women and children, as well as moderate Hutus. The Government and Armed Forces encouraged civilians to carry out the murder of their neighbours and friends. In just 100 days approximately one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were murdered.

In this next film, actress Nina Sosanya reads the poem *Colors* - A thought to all the survivors of the 1994 genocide by Michaella Rugwizangoga, an award-winning Rwandan poet. The poem was dedicated to the survivors of the genocide as a message of hope and solidarity.

**Slide 7 - Sokphal Din’s testimony**

The atrocities that took place in Cambodia shocked the world after the radical communist political party Khmer Rouge, under their leader Pol Pot, seized power in April 1975 after years of guerrilla warfare. In this film made by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, Sokphal Din tells his story of surviving forced labour in Cambodia’s notorious killing fields.

**Slide 8**

Despite the horrors of the Holocaust and Nazi persecution of other groups, and in more recent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur, people continue to be subject to persecution and violence based on their identities, in the UK and around the world.

In December 2019, the United Nations passed a resolution strongly condemning rights abuses against Rohingya Muslims and other minority groups in Myanmar, including arbitrary arrests, torture, rape and deaths in detention. Myanmar has been accused of genocide against the Rohingya and more than 700,000 Rohingya refugees have fled to Bangladesh since August 2017 to escape the violence.

In this film from the UK Ceremony for Holocaust Memorial Day 2020, actress Georgina Campbell reads the testimony of Hansu Mala, a Rohingya Muslim from the Rakhine State of Myanmar. This is her story.

**Slide 9 - *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* performed by the Fourth Choir**

The Holocaust and the genocides that followed shook the foundations of society. These tragedies demonstrate the deadly consequences of allowing hatred and prejudice to go unchecked. But genocide doesn’t happen overnight: it is a process which can be stopped at any stage through acts of kindness, resistance and stories of hope.

For the 2019 UK Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony, the Fourth Choir, London’s LGBT+ chamber choir, performed *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*. One of the world’s best known songs, it was written in 1938 by Harold Arlen and Yip Harburg, two Jewish Americans, and it embodies a longing for a better world during troubled times.

**Slide 10 - Statement of Commitment for HMD**

Holocaust Memorial Day was created on 27 January 2000, when representatives from 46 governments around the world met in Stockholm to discuss Holocaust education, remembrance and research. At the end of this meeting, all attendees signed a declaration committing to preserving the memory of those who were murdered in the Holocaust and in the subsequent genocides.

We will now read the Statement of Commitment which was adapted from this declaration, to affirm our support for Holocaust remembrance and ensure that these horrors are never forgotten.

[Read the text on screen from slides 10 to 16]

**Slide 17 - Lighting of Memorial Candles**

I invite you all to join me in lighting a candle. We light each candle in memory of all those who were murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi persecution of other groups and in the more recent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. We remember them.

Please join me in a minute of silence.

**Slide 18 - Closing remarks**

Thank you to everyone who joined us today. Particular thanks go to [**names of individuals/organisations who contributed**] for making this event so special.

This event is one of thousands that will mark HMD this year, taking place in schools, places of work, prisons, churches and many more settings. By attending, each of you has contributed to building a future which is free from genocide.

Despite the horrors of the Holocaust, we know that genocides have taken place since – indeed, the Holocaust prompted the coining of the legal term ‘genocide’ which has come to be used in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. Closer to home on our streets, on public transport and online, people are still facing attacks because of who they are.

Holocaust Memorial Day presents an opportunity when people from all backgrounds come together to learn from the past and create a better future. It serves as a reminder that all of us not only have the ability to resist the forces of hatred – we have a responsibility to do so.

That includes everyone who has joined us today, and is why we are asking each of you to **be the light in the darkness**.

I will close this event by sharing the words of Holocaust survivor Gena Turgel MBE, who sadly passed away in 2018. Gena said: ‘We will continue to do our bit for as long as we can, secure in the knowledge that others will continue to light a candle long after us.’

Thank you.