



**Executive Council  
of Australian Jewry Inc.**

**Terrorist atrocities in Christchurch, New Zealand**  
**18 March 2019**

Words cannot adequately convey the horror, disgust and outrage we feel at the appalling murder by a gunman of 50 innocent people while they were at Friday prayers in two mosques in Christchurch on March 15, and the injuring of many more.

This was a hate crime directed against Muslims simply for being Muslims. To kill ordinary citizens peacefully gathered at prayer in a place of sanctuary, is an act of causeless hatred and monstrous evil. It is a bestial and cowardly crime of a kind that the Jewish people recognise all too well.

We mourn with our Muslim brothers and sisters for what they have lost. For the desecration of their sanctuary. For the loss of their loved ones. For the deprivation of their sense of peace and security. We extend our deepest sympathies to the communities affected, to the people of Christchurch and to the Islamic community in Australia.

This shooter obscenely videoed his own actions during what he described as the “firefight”. It was no such thing. It was a vicious, unprovoked slaughter of innocent people, including a 3 year old child.

The shooter described himself as a soldier in a militant movement fighting back against what he sees as Muslim encroachment into Europe and other Western societies. He is no such thing. He is self-deluded coward, who cannot tell the difference between peaceful immigration by distressed people seeking refuge from persecution and strife, and an organised military invasion by the armed forces of a State.

The ideology that drove this particular terrorist, known as the “white genocide” myth, which supposes that Europeans are being exterminated by non-European immigration and multiculturalism, has been invoked to justify the massacre of African-American worshipers at a church in Charleston, South Carolina in 2015. It was invoked by the terrorist Anders Breivik in 2011 when he murdered 77 innocent people in Norway; and it was invoked again by the terrorist who massacred Jewish worshipers in a synagogue in Pittsburgh just last year.

The old evil of Nazism may have developed a new theme and new ‘enemies’; but its hate-filled, murderous core remains unchanged. It threatens the foundations of civilisation itself, and the bonds of our common humanity. To adapt the words of Winston Churchill, the atrocity in Christchurch “illustrates as nothing else can the utter

degradation of the Nazi nature and theme, and degradation of all who lend themselves to its unnatural and perverted passions”.

Free and democratic societies urgently need to do two things in response.

First, we must examine and improve the way we conduct political debate. As the Nazi Holocaust and the mass crimes in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia demonstrated all too clearly, genocide does not begin with killing. It begins with words. Political, community, religious and civil society leaders all have a duty to lead by example, by setting the right tone of discourse from the top.

Secondly, our law enforcement agencies must take to heart the fact that the threat of terrorism does not emanate exclusively from one source. The old saying that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance remains as true as ever.

We are not helpless before these new threats to our way of life. Far from it. The quiet determination of peace- and freedom-loving peoples is infinitely superior to the mania of fanatics. It is our resolve, not theirs, which will ultimately prevail.

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