

Holocaust Memorial Day 2022

Theme vision



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY TRUST

One Day

'You didn't think about yesterday, and tomorrow may not happen, it was only today that you had to cope with and you got through it as best you could.'

Iby Knill, survivor of the Holocaust

The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) 2022 is **One Day**. There are many ways to interpret the theme, some of which are outlined here.



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One Day for Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day is **One Day – 27 January** – that we put aside to come together to remember, to learn about the Holocaust, Nazi Persecution and the genocides that followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur, in the hope that there may be **One Day** in the future with no genocide. We learn more about the past, we empathise with others today, and we take action for a better future.

One Day in history

To mark HMD, you could pick **One Day** in history and learn about that day.

What happened in **Warsaw on 19 April 1943**? Nazi Germany had entered Poland four years earlier in 1939, and started establishing ghettos in spring 1940, to segregate, dehumanise and control the Jews. The largest of the ghettos was in Warsaw, where more than 400,000 Jews were crowded into 1.3 square miles of the city with poor sanitation, limited food and cramped conditions. It is estimated that more than 92,000 people died in the Warsaw ghetto because of the squalid conditions. **On 19 April 1943, the Jewish inhabitants of the Warsaw Ghetto fought back against the Nazi Regime.**



Warsaw Ghetto fighters surrendering © The Wiener Holocaust Library

Or **12 July 1995 in Bosnia**? Against the backdrop of a war, after Bosnia declared independence from Yugoslavia, Bosnian Serb troops descended on the town of Srebrenica. They began separating Bosniak men from women and children despite the area having been designated by the UN as a 'safe area'. Over the next couple of days more than 8,000 Bosniak men and boys were murdered in and around Srebrenica. **12 July 1995 was the last day that many women saw their husbands, fathers, sons and brothers.**

Or **17 April 1975**? On this day the Khmer Rouge entered the Cambodian capital and **Mardi Seng** noted 'on that same bright, warm, glorious and victorious day, a new era began: not of peace and tranquillity, nor of hope and prosperity, but of suffering, torture, hunger, diseases, work camps, re-education, and systematic killing'. **The arrival of the Khmer Rouge on 17 April 1975 brought five years of terror, with more than two million people murdered.**

How many lives changed on each of those dates, and what happened to the people involved?

You could also choose the same date in different years and look at what was happening in different countries and different years:

27 January – what was happening in Berlin in 1941, in Cambodia in 1976, in Rwanda in 1994 in the lead up to the genocide? And 27 January 2022, what is happening around us in the world today?

One Day when life changed

Survivors of the Holocaust and of genocide often talk about the **One Day** when everything changed, sometimes for the worse and sometimes for better.

Iby Knill feels that from **One Day** to the next, everything changed and yet nothing had changed:

'One day Gretl, my school friend...greeted me with an embrace. The next day she ran across the road and turned her head away so as not to acknowledge me.'

Franziska Schwarz Mikus was sterilised by the Nazis because she was deaf, as part of their process of persecuting anyone who did not fit their ideal – in this case, because they believed that disabled people were imperfect and worthless. On that **One Day**, the Nazis took control of Franziska's body, of her life choices. The Nazis wanted to prevent people they deemed 'unfit' from being able to procreate. It has been estimated that between 1933 and 1939, 360,000 individuals were subjected to forced sterilisation, because they had physical or mental disabilities – or were perceived to have disabilities.

For **Faiza**, there was a defining day. Following a civil war in 2003, which has left millions of people displaced, the Sudanese government has supported Arab militia who have destroyed hundreds of villages, and murdered thousands of people. Faiza was targeted by the Sudanese Government for supporting victims of the genocide, and so, she says:

'One Day I decided to leave my country. It was a hard decision, but there was no other way. I left my home, my friends, my people; I left all my belongings. There is a book on a table near my bed open to page 49 waiting for me.'

One Day at a time

It may be hard to pick out just **One Day**, as for many, to keep going through each and every day was a huge struggle, with no end in sight and no glimmer of hope that the next day would be any better.

The genocide in Rwanda lasted 100 days, beginning after the plane carrying the President was shot down on 6 April 1994. The genocide followed decades of tensions between Hutus and Tutsis. **Beatha Uwazaninka** recalls how, having watched fellow Tutsis around her being murdered, and on many occasions thinking she was going to be murdered, *'every one of those hundred days was dangerous'*.

For many, one day was grindingly and dully like all the others, with no chance of improvement or change. **One Day** seemed to last for years, and *'every day of their life was a day of suffering and torment'* (Chil Rajchman, The Last Jew of Treblinka).

One Day in the future

Those who were targeted and persecuted held out for the **One Day** in the future when all their suffering would be over, hoping they would *'all see the day of liberation'* (Elie Wiesel, *Night*).

On Holocaust Memorial Day we learn from genocide for a purpose – to build a better future. When we look ahead to '**one day** with no genocide', what do we need to do today to achieve this? We can use this theme to motivate us to speak out when we see injustices, prejudices and identity-based violence.

On Holocaust Memorial Day 2022, this **One Day**, we will all come together in our communities, to learn from the Holocaust and genocides – for a better future.

One Day is a snapshot

One Day is just a snapshot in time and therefore cannot give the full picture, the context, the background that is needed, but it can help bring a piece of the full picture to life. The age or gender of the victim, or their geographical location ensured that no **One Day** during the genocide was typical. The same date would be experienced very differently by Jews hiding in France, Jews incarcerated in Auschwitz, Jews awaiting their fate in Hungary, for example. For those who suffered for days, weeks, months, years focussing on just One Day is a starting point, a way in for us to learn more about what happened during the Holocaust and the genocides that followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

Further resources

See hmd.org.uk for resources on this theme, including this year's life stories, resources on marking Holocaust Memorial Day, suggestions for further reading and for links to sister organisations.



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