



New Zealand pledges to stay united after awful terror attack

The terrorist wanted no space for non-white people, but the prime minister says New Zealand has no space for such ideas.

On 15 March, a hate-filled terrorist entered two **mosques** in New Zealand where Muslims were gathered for Friday prayers. He sprayed bullets at the defenceless worshippers, murdering at least 50 people.

The attack is part of a terrible war going on in the world today. Countries like Singapore and New Zealand believe that different racial and religious groups must treat one another as equals. This is what we mean when we say the Pledge. However, there are some people who believe their own group should be in charge. They think other groups should be in a lower position, or even pushed out to keep their country “pure”. In countries where the majority of people are Caucasians or whites, the small number of extremists who hold such dangerous ideas are called “white **supremacists**”.

The terrorist who struck in New Zealand is one of them. Muslims make up only around 1 percent of New Zealand’s population, but the terrorist could not tolerate them.

There have been several other acts of terrorism by white supremacists.

Last October, a terrorist entered a **synagogue** in the American city of Pittsburgh and killed 11 Jewish worshippers. In 2017, six worshippers were killed in a mosque in Quebec City, Canada.

One of the worst attacks was in Norway in 2011. A white supremacist went to a youth camp and shot dead 69 people, mostly teenagers. The students at the summer camp were sharing ideas about building a nation that treats all cultures equally. The terrorist wanted to teach them a different lesson — that Norway should be for white people.

Fortunately, such violent acts are only making countries more determined to win the war against these crazy ideas. Immediately after this month’s attack, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern spoke calmly about New Zealand’s true character. Muslims are part of the country, she said. “They are us.” She also had a strong message for the terrorists: “To the people who did this: you may have chosen us, but we utterly reject and condemn you.”

Many ordinary white New Zealanders have come forward to show love and support for Muslims at this sad time. Through such acts, we can be confident that hateful ideas will lose.

VOCAB BUILDER

mosque (say “mosk”; noun) = place where people of the Muslim religion worship.

supremacist (say “soo-pre-muh-sist”; noun) = someone who believes his people must be on top, or “supreme”.

synagogue (say “sin-a-gog”; noun) = Jewish place of worship.

© News For Kids, March 2019

This article is not to be republished or sold separately. For any clarification, please email editors@whatsup.sg. Thank you. — News For Kids, 5 April 2022