Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg has expressed regret over Norway's involvement in arresting and deporting Jews during the Second World.

Speech by Prime Minister Stoltenberg

Dear Friends,

This year it is 70 years since the German cargo ship SS Donau set sail from this dock on its shameful mission.

Five hundred and thirty-two Jews had been brutally rounded up and stowed on board.

Only nine of them were to return.

The last of the survivors who is still alive is Samuel Steinmann.

I am especially pleased to have you here with us today.

Today we are commemorating the millions of innocent people who were exterminated in the most terrible case of genocide in history.

We are commemorating all the Norwegian Jews who were murdered.

We are commemorating the Romani people, the disabled, the homosexuals and other victims of Hitler's evil regime.

The Holocaust will always be a dark chapter in the history of mankind.

The Holocaust came to Norway on Thursday 26 November 1942.

Ruth Maier was one of the many who were arrested that day.

It is thanks to Gunvor Hofmo and Jan Erik Vold that we know her story.

On 26 November, just as the sky was beginning to lighten, the sound of heavy boots could be heard on the stairs of the boarding house “Englehjemmet” in Oslo.

A few minutes later, the slight Jewish girl was seen by her friends being led out the door of Dalsbergstien 3.

Ruth Maier was last seen being forced into a black truck by two big Norwegian policemen.

Five days later the 22-year-old was dead.

Murdered in the gas chamber at Auschwitz.

Fortunately it is part of being human that we learn from our mistakes.

And it is never too late.

More than 50 years after the war ended, the Storting decided to make a settlement, collectively and individually, for the economic liquidation of Jewish assets.

By so doing the state accepted moral responsibility for the crimes committed against Norwegian Jews during the Second World War.

What about the crimes against Ruth Maier and the other Jews?

The murders were unquestionably carried out by the Nazis.

But it was Norwegian who carried out the arrests.

It was Norwegians who drove the trucks.

And it happened in Norway

In the course of the war, 772 Norwegian Jews and Jewish refugees were arrested and deported.

Only 34 survived.

Without relieving the Nazis of their responsibility, it is time to for us to acknowledge that Norwegian policemen and other Norwegians took part in the arrest and deportation of Jews.

Today I feel it is fitting for me to express our deepest apologies that this could happen on Norwegian soil.

But learning is just as important as apologising.

And it is even more important for us to commit ourselves to combating attitudes and actions that rob us of our decency and humanity.

I regret to say that the ideas that led to the Holocaust are still very much alive today, 70 years later.

All over the world we see that individuals and groups are spreading intolerance and fear.

They are cultivating violent ideologies that could lead to anti-Semitism and hatred of minorities.

Norwegian Jews also tell that they are living in fear.

In the newspaper Vårt Land, we read that some of our Jews are afraid to be visible as Jews.

We cannot accept this in Norway.

No one should have to hide their faith, cultural identity or sexual orientation.

All people have equal worth.

Everyone has equal rights.

And that is how it has to be in Norway.

It can, of course, be tempting to turn our backs on what we don’t want to see.

To overlook the first signs of evil.

But have no right to do that.

We would fail as human beings.

We would fail ourselves.

Instead we must promise each other to respond to totalitarian views with firmness.

We must counter them arguments deeply rooted in the principles of humanity and equality.

We all have a responsibility to use knowledge to expose such views for what they are.

To protect vulnerable groups from threats and violence.

The goal is the same

To make Norway a safe place for Jews.

No one – no individual, no minority – should have to live in fear in this country.

Thank you.

Today's Jewish concerns

Saying whilst there was no question the Nazis carried out the murders, the PM declared, “but it was Norwegians who carried out the arrests. It was Norwegians who drove the trucks.”

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Out of the 772 Norwegian Jews and Jewish refugees that were deported during WWII, just 34 survived. A total of six million Jews, 1.5 million of them children, were murdered by the Nazis in the Second World War under Adolf Hitler’s “Final Solution”. TOT News