

Press release: Kristallnacht 80 years on

To mark the 80th anniversary of Kristallnacht, the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation has today (9 November 2018) released a short film with exclusive testimony from 6 British survivors of the Holocaust.

On the 9 and 10 November 1938, Jewish communities in Germany and throughout Nazi occupied territories faced widespread state-sponsored violence against their businesses, homes and places of worship. The pogrom became known as Kristallnacht (in English, crystal night) after the smashed glass that littered the streets on the morning of the 10 November.

Over the course of the evening an estimated 30,000 Jewish men were arrested and incarcerated in concentration camps, including Dachau and Buchenwald.

The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation set out in 2015 to record the testimony of British survivors of the Holocaust. In interviews with broadcaster Natasha Kaplinsky, survivors recall their experiences of Kristallnacht and the aftermath of the violence on their daily lives, their families and their wider communities.

UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation co-Chair Ed Balls said:

Kristallnacht was a moment where prejudice turned into violence, and it is right 80 years on, that we examine this vicious escalation of the Nazi campaign against Jewish communities in Europe.

By understanding the steps that lead up to the Holocaust, we are can remain vigilant to any attempt to create divisions and stir up hate in our society today.

UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation co-Chair Lord Pickles said:

The Foundation was set up to increase the visibility and scope of Holocaust education in the United Kingdom, securing the legacy of the British Holocaust survivors who have dedicated their lives to educating the future generation on where prejudice, intolerance and hatred can lead.

Our hope is that the short film released today, with moving testimony from men and women who recall the impact of Kristallnacht on their own communities, is a small step in achieving these aims.

Kristallnacht was a turning point in the Nazi persecution of the Jewish

communities in their territories. The events of the pogrom, widely reported in the international press, lead to a wide range of responses.

British Jewish community organisations and charities, including World Jewish Relief, rallied the UK government to allow the transport of children from Germany and Austria to the United Kingdom. Less than a month after the shocking events of Kristallnacht, on 2 December 1938, the first group of children arrived on British shores to be placed with foster families. Ultimately, 10,000 child refugees entered the country in what came to be known as Kindertransport.