

Speech: Sajid Javid's speech at the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation survivor consultation

Thank you all for joining us here today at what is a truly remarkable gathering of truly remarkable people. I've had the privilege of meeting with a number of you in the past. And one thing I've learned from that is that no two survivors are alike, no two stories are the same.

But those unique experiences, those unique views, are precisely why you've been invited along today.

There are deeply moving monuments to the murdered Jews of Europe in cities around the world. The thousands of concrete columns that comprise the vast memorial in Berlin. The heart-wrenching bronze shoes that line the banks of the Danube in Budapest. The symbolic glass towers that stand opposite City Hall in Boston.

They are all ideally suited to the cities and countries they are in.

But we want a [UK memorial](#) that is truly national, one that speaks to the thoughts and feelings and experiences of British survivors.

And that's why your opinions – your honest, open opinions – are so important.

If you think one of the designs is head and shoulders above the rest, don't be embarrassed about saying so. But if you don't rate a design, we want to hear that too. And if you can think of ways to improve a design, share those thoughts too. These are just initial ideas, there's a lot of work still to be done.

I can't promise that the jury will pick your personal favourite. I can't promise that we won't pick your personal least favourite, for that matter! But I can promise that your opinions will carry a great deal of weight.

We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build a stunning, inspiring, sobering memorial in a jaw-dropping location. And it's so important that we get the design right.

It's not just important to me, or to the jury. But to the whole country.

Because there are voices out there saying we don't need another reminder of the Holocaust. That it's enough to let it be noted in the history books and the museums. That we should move on.

Such voices couldn't be more wrong.

In recent weeks we've seen people proudly marching through an American city with swastika flags held high. We've seen Jewish children as young as eight

being chased through London by a man shouting the foulest anti-Semitic abuse. We've read report after report about the steadily swelling ranks of neo-Nazis and their efforts to become almost respectable by denying or belittling the crimes of their predecessors.

That's why, as the Shoah slides towards the edge of living memory, it becomes ever more important that we refuse to forget it.

That we stand up as a nation and say "No, we will not let the past be airbrushed. We will not allow this country forget what happens when hatred and ignorance and bigotry are allowed to flourish unchecked."

The UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre will stand as a permanent reminder of what happened.

Constructed right in the heart of our democracy, it will be impossible to ignore or overlook. It will be a lasting tribute both to those who died and to those who survived. And it will be a focal point for reflection and education that will ensure the Holocaust is remembered long after all of us in this room are gone.

And I hope that, with your help, we can choose a design worthy of the 6 million men, women and children who must never be forgotten.