

REPORT

Multiculturalism Advisory Committee

To: Mayor Cote and Members of Council **Date:** December 13, 2021
From: Multiculturalism Advisory Committee **File:** 05.1033.20-2021
Item #: 2021-627
Subject: **International Holocaust Remembrance Day**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council declare January 27th as International Holocaust Remembrance Day, add it to its official observances calendar, light up the Anvil Centre in yellow lights, and that the City recognize this day with a proclamation.

PURPOSE

To seek Council's endorsement of a recommendation from the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee regarding recognition of International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

BACKGROUND

During the February 17, 2021 meeting of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee, Lizz Kelly, a Committee member, reminded Committee members of the Holocaust Remembrance Day which took place on January 27, 2021, and requested that New Westminster participate in the memorial in 2022. Committee members agreed to discuss Ms. Kelly's request further at the September 8, 2021 meeting (Attachment 1).

At the September 8, 2021 Committee meeting, Ms. Kelly presented the following recommendation for the Committee to submit to Council. The recommendation was passed by the Committee (Attachment 2):

**MOVED AND SECONDED
WHEREAS**

- *In 2005, the U.N. General Assembly designated January 27 – the anniversary of the liberation of the largest Nazi concentration and death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau – as International Holocaust Remembrance Day (IHRD). 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of liberation;*
- *The U.N. resolution that created IHRD rejects denial of the Holocaust and condemns discrimination and violence based on religion or ethnicity;*
- *Canada offers refuge and new hope to immigrants, refugees and survivors, some of whom have escaped more recent genocides – and it is a place where people can learn from each other and share cultures;*
- *IHRD has become a symbol of great importance to the broader Jewish community to commemorate and honour the victims of the Nazi era;*
- *International Holocaust Remembrance Day is officially observed by the United Nations, countries including Canada, Italy and Germany, as well as many cities such as Calgary, Ottawa and Montreal;*
- *Antisemitism is on the rise around the world, in Canada, and in Vancouver. Hatred has flourished in the digital age. It is more important than ever that the lessons learned and horrors of the Holocaust remain present in the public consciousness so they are never repeated;*
- *As we reflect upon that dark period in history and remember the atrocities perpetrated during the Holocaust, New Westminster has the opportunity to join with New Westminster's Jewish community and Canadians from all walks of life in demonstrating our commitment to stand against antisemitism, hate and genocide; and,*
- *By proclaiming January 27th as International Holocaust Remembrance Day, it will be an opportunity to create greater public understanding and awareness of this horrific period in history where over 6,000,000 innocent Jewish men, women and children were systematically murdered by the Nazi regime and its collaborators from 1933 to 1945.*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT *the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee recommends that Council declare January 27th as International Holocaust Remembrance Day, add it to its official observances calendar, light up the Anvil Centre in yellow lights, and that the City recognize this day with a proclamation.*

CARRIED.

All members of the Committee present voted in favour of the motion.

STAFF COMMENTS

Staff acknowledge the importance of ensuring that the will of the Committee is actioned and, therefore, present this report to Council for their consideration, recognizing that the Committee's recommendation is in keeping with the City's mandate of inclusivity.

If the recommendation is passed by Council, staff will work with Ms. Kelly to create a formal proclamation for International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

OPTIONS

The following options are presented for Council's consideration:

1. THAT Council declare January 27th as International Holocaust Remembrance Day, add it to its official observances calendar, light up the Anvil Centre in yellow lights, and that the City recognize this day with a proclamation; or,
2. THAT Council provide alternate direction to staff.

Staff recommends Option 1.

CONCLUSION

This report provides Council with a recommendation made by the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee on September 8, 2021.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Multiculturalism Advisory Committee Minutes Extract from February 17, 2021 regarding Holocaust Remembrance Day

Attachment 2: Multiculturalism Advisory Committee Minutes Extract from September 8, 2021 regarding Holocaust Remembrance Day

This report was prepared by:

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk
Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner

This report was approved by:

Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer