

## Open letter from Save the Children New Zealand in the wake of Christchurch Terror Attacks

Today marks five days since the terror attacks that have irrevocably changed New Zealand and many of us are feeling overwhelmed by a tumult of feelings. New Zealand is a small country and we feel very deeply when confronted with significant events such as the terror attacks on Muslim people peacefully at prayer in their mosques on Friday.

Fifty innocent people, including 5 children aged 3 to 16 years, lost their lives in an unspeakable act of violence in Christchurch on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> of March. These people are greater than numbers in a tragedy, they are sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, wives, husbands, aunts, uncles, grandparents, friends – all deeply loved and now leaving gaping holes that can never be filled. Our deepest sympathies and unwavering support go out to all of those affected by these senseless attacks.

While it is terribly difficult to comprehend or understand, it is true that the rights and protections that make up the very fabric of our communities, our nation, have been attacked. People, our children, have the right to be safe from harm, to share their views on issues important to them, to practice their culture and beliefs in safety, to be accepted and cared for without discrimination. The violent attack on these rights on Friday means they can no longer be taken for granted.

As we struggle to come to grips with the terror of Friday, it is important to remember our children are likely to be feeling confused, afraid, heartbroken for others. These are not easy conversations to have but we can help our children by letting them talk to us about the tragedy and how they are feeling as they try to come to terms with such violence. For anyone who feels they may need a little help in talking about this with their children or knowing how to support them, Save the Children has developed [10 steps on how we can help](#) children cope in the aftermath of a disaster.

Save the Children exists to protect the lives and uphold the rights of children all over the world. We currently support children, including Muslim children, facing serious adversity in a number of countries, and we will continue to do everything we can to work toward a world where all children and their families can live in peace and unity and not have to fear violence and discrimination. We call on New Zealanders continue to stand together with Christchurch and Muslim New Zealanders in peace and solidarity.

Together we are Aotearoa New Zealand

On behalf of Save the Children New Zealand