

POLITICS (/NEWS/POLITICAL)

Jacinda Ardern tells UN words and 'immeasurable consequences'

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(mailto:craig.mcculloch@rnz.co.nz?subject=Jacinda%20Ardern%20tells%20UN%20words%20and%20actions%20have%20'immeasurable%20consequences')

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has delivered a rebuke over calls for nationalism and implored world leaders to work together, in a speech starkly different from that delivered earlier by US President Donald Trump.

Watch Jacinda Ardern's full speech here:



Speaking to the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday evening local time, Ms Ardern also urged those gathered to take care with their words online.

The address stood in contrast with Mr Trump's earlier remarks to the summit condemning globalism.

Ms Ardern spoke of the need for countries to work together to combat crises like the 15 March terror attack.

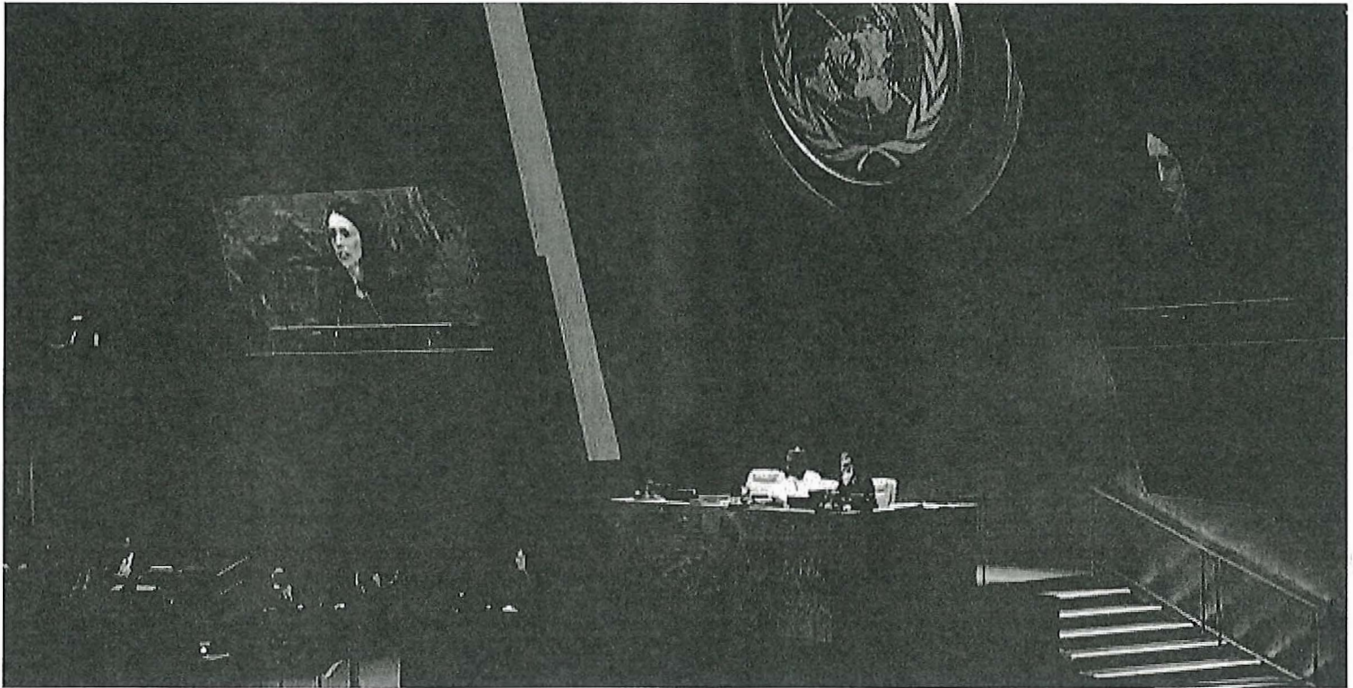
"Experiences in recent years should lead us to all question whether any of us ever truly operate in isolation anymore."

She recounted a brief exchange she'd had with a young Muslim boy in Wellington shortly after the Christchurch mosque shootings.

"He didn't say his name or even say hello," Ms Ardern said. "He simply whispered: 'will I be safe now?'"

She told the summit she feared she alone could not guarantee that - particularly in today's increasingly online world.

Acts of violence and hateful, discriminatory language were felt by people around the world, she said.



PM Jacinda Ardern speaks at the UN Photo: UN Web TV / Screengrab

"Children hear them. Women hear them. People of faith hear them. Our rainbow communities hear them.

"And so now, it's our turn to stop and to listen."

Ms Ardern called on those listening to accept that their words and actions had "immeasurable consequences".

She went on: "And to speak not only like the whole world is listening, but with the responsibility of someone who knows a small child somewhere might be listening too."

Ms Ardern pointed to the Christchurch Call as an example of collaboration between countries and tech companies to work to eliminate violent extremist and terrorist content online.

"We are succeeding because we are working together - and for that unprecedented and powerful act of unity, New Zealand says thank you."

Climate change was another example of how nations needed to work together, Ms Ardern said.

"Our globalised, borderless world asks us to be guardians not just for our people, but for all people."

Photo: UN Web TV / Screengrab

She referenced comments by scientist Robert Sapolsky who encouraged people to move away from "fierce nationalism or self-interest" and instead reform tribes on values of humanity and kindness.

"We may feel afraid, but as leaders we have the keys to create a sense of security, and a sense of hope. We just need to choose."

In contrast, Mr Trump's speech was a celebration of unbridled nationalism.

"Wise leaders always put the good of their own people and their own country first," he said.

"The future does not belong to globalists. It belongs to patriots."

Mr Trump told the packed room that globalism had exerted a religious pull over past leaders causing them to ignore their own national interests.

"If you want democracy, hold on to your sovereignty. And if you want peace, love your nation."

The prime minister's address capped off a busy day of one-on-one meetings with leaders from countries including Fiji, Pakistan and Iceland.