

# Holocaust: Dutch PM apologises over failure to protect Jews

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Mark Rutte, left, lay a wreath at the Holocaust remembrance event in Amsterdam. left, lay a wreath at

**Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte has apologised on behalf of his country's government for its failure to protect Jews during World War Two.**

Mr Rutte said that while some Dutch officials resisted during the Nazi occupation, too many simply did as they were told.

It was the first such apology to be offered by a Dutch prime minister.

About 102,000 of the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust came from the Netherlands.

Mr Rutte made the remarks at a Holocaust remembrance event in Amsterdam, ahead of the 75th anniversary on Monday of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp.

"With the last remaining survivors among us, I apologise on behalf of the government for the actions of the government at the time," he said.

"I do so, realising that no word can describe something as enormous and awful as the Holocaust."

It was an admission long sought by the Netherlands' Jewish community. Some 75% of the 140,000 Jews who lived in the Netherlands before the Holocaust were murdered by German Nazis and their local collaborators.

Dutch governments in the past had apologised for the way Jews who survived the Holocaust were treated upon returning from concentration camps.

But Mr Rutte is the first to acknowledge the country's role in persecuting Jews and other minorities during the Nazi occupation.

"We ask ourselves: how could this have happened?" he said.

"In all, we did too little. Not enough protection, not enough help, not enough recognition."