

MEDIA ADVISORY:
EVERYONE HAS A PART TO PLAY IN DEFENDING OUR PEACE:
PRESIDENT HALIMAH YACOB

“We mark Total Defence Day on the 15th of February every year to remind ourselves that as an independent nation, defence is our own responsibility. We must do our utmost to protect our sovereignty and way of life,” said President Halimah Yacob. She was speaking at the 51st War Memorial Service, held in commemoration of the civilian victims of the Japanese Occupation, and the Total Defence Day Commemoration Event, co-organised by the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCCI) and Nexus – MINDEF’s Central National Education Office. Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) & Second Minister for Defence Mr Ong Ye Kung, who is also the Chairman of the Chinese Community Liaison Group, was present at the event.

Since our late founding Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew unveiled this memorial in 1967, SCCCI has organised the Civilian War Memorial Service every year on 15 February, the day Singapore fell to the Japanese in 1942. This is the first time the President is officiating at the War Memorial Service as well as the Total Defence Day Commemoration Event. In her speech, President Halimah Yacob emphasised how Total Defence continues to be our best response in this new security environment where we can no longer just rely on security agencies to deal with new threats like self-radicalisation and cyberattacks. Everyone – at work, in school or at home – has a part to play.

SCCCI President Roland Ng said: “This is the first time in 51 years that we organise our memorial service in conjunction with the Total Defence Day Commemoration Event. It is the most opportune time as the story of the Civilian War Memorial is a solid testimony of Total Defence in action. It shows the resolve of Singapore, as a young nation, to never forget, stay united, and rise above one of the darkest times of our history to build a better and brighter future together. For the business community, we appreciate the peace we now enjoy and the importance of safeguarding our country.”

Standing before the four tapering columns of the Civilian War Memorial, symbolising the shared experiences and unity among the people of different races in Singapore during the war, close to 1000 guests, included representatives from the SCCC, MINDEF, ACCORD, diplomatic corps, religious organisations, National Youth Council, business and clan associations, uniformed groups, schools, veteran leagues, together with the families of the victims and members of the public joined the President in reaffirming the principles of multiracialism and total defence that will continue to underpin the strength and cohesion of our society, and keep us resilient even in the face of a crisis.

When everyone takes these principles and puts them into action, we can be confident that Singapore remains strong, secure and sovereign for future generations.

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