

*NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt*

01/19/23

7:11:28 p.m.

1 minute and 59 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Surprise Resignation]

LESTER HOLT: A stunning announcement from New Zealand's prime minister celebrated around the world for her accomplishments but now suddenly leaving office because she says it's tired her out. Andrea Mitchell has more tonight.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: New Zealand Prime Minister Resigns]

ANDREA MITCHELL: New Zealand's prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, in a surprising and emotional announcement —

NEW ZEALAND PM JACINDA ARDERN: And so, today, I'm announcing that I will not be seeking re-election.

MITCHELL: — and leaving office eight months before the next election.

ARDERN: After going on six years of some big challenges, I'm human. Politicians are human. We give all that we can for as long as we can and then it's time. And for me, it's time.

MITCHELL: A pioneer when elected, the world's youngest head of government and only the second to give birth in office. The first to go on maternity leave to spend time with her newborn daughter, later bringing her to the U.N.

ARDERN [in 2018]: There are plenty of women who carved a path and incrementally have led the way to be able to make it possible for people to look upon my time in leadership and think yes, I can do the job and be a mother.

MITCHELL: Praised for ban aggravated assault weapons when a person targeted two mosques and speaking out against anti-Muslim hate.

ARDERN [in 2019]: They chose to make New Zealand their home. And it is their home. They are us.

MITCHELL: And shutting down early when COVID hit, getting cases down to zero though the aggressive lockdown later sparked a backlash. Through it all, pushing back against gender stereotypes.

NEW ZEALAND REPORTER [on 11/29/22]: A lot of people will be wondering are you two meeting just because, you know, you're similar in age and, you know, got a lot of, you know, common stuff there?

ARDERN [on 11/29/22]: Because two women meet, it's not simply because of the gender.

MITCHELL [TO SHERMAN]: You see this as a setback for this new generation of younger women leaders?

WENDY SHERMAN: I actually see it as an affirmation of the new generation of younger leaders. She knows she's going to have many chapters in her life.

MITCHELL: She hopes her legacy will be that you can be kind but strong. And know when it's time to go. Andrea Mitchell, NBC News, Washington.