**The Holocaust Remembrance Day and the Day of Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity**

On Wednesday, January 27, 2021, it was the sixteenth time that Prague Valdstejn Palace hosted a commemorative event on the occasion of The Holocaust Remembrance Day and the Day of Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity. The event was organised by the Federation of Jewish Communities of the Czech Republic and the Foundation for Holocaust Victims in cooperation with the Office of the Senate of the Czech Parliament and held under the auspices of the President of the Czech Senate, Mr. **Miloš Vystrčil**. In his opening address, Mr. Vystrčil noted that the Czech Republic established 27 January as the Holocaust Remembrance Day in 2004, which was one year prior to the establishing this day as the day of remembrance by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Even so, it was as late as 59 years after the WWII. He continued: “*I consider it exorbitant when the people, who demonstrate for example against vaccinations, put a yellow Star of David badge on their clothes. I consider this an endless disrespect to the destiny of the people who had to wear that badge, a disgrace to their suffering.”*

The Chairman of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, **Radek Vondráček,** condemned the current manifestations of anti-Semitism and pointed out parallel between the biblical Amalek and the tyrants of nowadays, including the representatives of Nazism. In the end of his address he appreciated the approach of the Jewish community: *"The Jewish community is always among the first to respond when someone is being offended. When hatred and prejudice are being spread. When anyone is persecuted for their nationality, faith or opinion. Thank you for that!"*

Michaela Vidláková, a Holocaust survivor, followed and **addressed the audience**. She shared her childhood memories of the Holocaust and her tragic time in Terezín in her emotional speech. She contemplated the current situation in the Czech Republic and around the world: "*What can we do? Is there a way? With all the skepticism at place, there is only one thing left: We should never give up! It is necessary to fight against evil as much as possible in its beginnings - everyone can help in this fight with evil by some small act."*

The following speaker was a representative of the Roma minority, **Mr. Čeněk Růžička,** who, on the one hand, truly appreciated the role of the Czech government in the demolition of the infamous pig farm in Lety u Písku, built on the place of former concentration camp for Roma prisoners, and on the other hand, he criticised the way of the redress of the Roma victims: ...*"War traumas strongly affected the lives of us, the post–war children, from whom, moreover, often the details of the suffering experienced and the context of the disappearance of their relatives, were kept secret. We often could not share their fate... This is the reason why I am entitled to ask that we be invited to negotiate at all further compensation and redress talks”.*

The closing speech delivered by the Chairman of the Federation of Jewish Communities, **Petr Papoušek,** was a reminder that one year ago the assembly strongly appealed to the Czech politicians to adopt a law that would prevent commercial use of goods bearing Nazi symbols. The law has recently been adopted by the Czech Parliament. Further, he mentioned one particular human destiny, which depicted the depth and scale of a human tragedy caused by the Holocaust: *"The murdered and the survivors, among them the former prisoner number 170 265, Mr. Miloš Dobrý, my grandfather, were people just like us. Let us thank them for what they gave us, let us not forget and let us not be indifferent."*

The music section of the commemorative event hosted David Dorůžka, Robert Fischmann a Martin Novák who featured, among other compositions, a composition by Gideon Klein, who was killed at the time of the Holocaust.

With respect to the emergency measures introduced by the Czech government, this year’s assembly took place without the participation of the public. Czech TV, Channel CT24, broadcast the event.

Commemorative event on the occasion of The Holocaust Remembrance Day and the Day of Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity was financially supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic.

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Annex: Addresses of the guests



