

## FACT SHEET: THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT'S STEPS TO COMBAT ANTI-SEMITISM

Anti-Semitic voices in Hungarian society, which undoubtedly exist, do not reflect the majority opinion in Hungary and are marginalized both in and outside of the halls of Parliament. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has repeatedly stressed that the government has a “zero tolerance policy” towards anti-Semitism and anti-Roma attitudes. Incidents of anti-Semitism have been promptly followed-up by high-level official condemnations on the part of the Hungarian government or by legislative changes. In combating anti-Semitism, the government focuses on 1) law enforcement and legal measures; 2) Holocaust education and remembrance; 3) support for Jewish cultural renaissance in Hungary.

### SPECIFIC MEASURES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT

#### 1. LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

- **Agreement on compensation of Holocaust survivors living in foreign countries:** State Secretary János Lázár concluded an agreement with the Jewish Heritage of Hungary Public Endowment and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany so that Holocaust survivors of Hungarian origin living in foreign countries may receive compensation as soon as possible. In order to speed up payments, the Government has authorized the Jewish Heritage of Hungary Public Endowment to transfer **USD 5.6 million** to the Claims Conference, which is in charge of handling payments.
- **The 4th Amendment of the Hungarian Fundamental Law** now states that the “freedom of expression may not be exercised with the aim of violating the dignity of the Hungarian nation or of any national, ethnic, racial or religious community” and individuals can file a civil law suit on grounds of hate speech. This legislative change has been hailed as a historic step by many – in particular by the Jewish communities.<sup>1</sup>
- **No statute of limitation for Nazi crimes:** the preamble of the new Hungarian Fundamental Law denies any statute of limitations for the inhuman crimes committed against the Hungarian nation and its citizens under the national socialist dictatorship.
- **Making Holocaust denial a crime:** the Parliament has amended the Hungarian penal code to make the public denial of Holocaust a criminal offence punishable with up to 3 years of imprisonment.<sup>2</sup> The following crimes are also punishable under law: (1) violence against a member of

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<sup>1</sup> This provision has already proved to be important when a group of far-right motor bikers planned to stage a demonstration in Budapest, scheduled for April 21st, 2013 the day of the "March of the Living" with the slogan of "Give Gas!". Based on the above Amendment of the Hungarian Constitution the Court banned the motorcade on the 15th of April, in order to prevent a disruption of the commemoration.)

<sup>2</sup> Article 333. of the Penal Code: A person who denies or questions the occurrence or belittles the significance of the genocides and other grave crimes against humanity committed by the National Socialist or Communist regimes, or attempts to justify such crimes in public, shall be liable to punishment for a felony offence by imprisonment for up to three years. Recently Tibor Ágoston (Jobbik) was found guilty by the District-Court of Debrecen for Holocaust denial.

a community; (2) incitement against a community; (3) publicly denying the crimes of National Socialist and Communist regimes; and (4) the use of symbols of totalitarian regimes.<sup>3</sup>

- **Banning paramilitary groups**: The rules of the Criminal Code have been tightened regarding “uniformed crime”. The Hungarian courts have ruled that the paramilitary organization “Magyar Gárda” (Hungarian Guard) cannot exist as a legal entity. The Government enforces this decision by penalizing participation in the disbanded organization. The Government penalized the use of non-official uniform-like clothing to avoid intimidation by paramilitary groups. The ban on the use of such attire by paramilitary groups is intended to catch similar organizations. (December 5, 2012)
- **Tightening the House Rules on hate speech by MPs**: The Parliament amended the House rules after MP Gyöngyösi’s (Jobbik Party) hateful remarks. The presiding chairman of the parliament now has a stronger disciplinary authority – he/she may launch an offensive against hateful speeches made by representatives and may suggest the exclusion of the politician for the remaining time of the meeting of that day as well as the imposition of fees if the representative uses offensive expressions directed at national, ethnic, religious groups or individuals. Thanks to another amendment, MP immunity does not apply in cases of incitement against a community or denial of crimes of totalitarian regimes, he pointed out.
- **50% Holocaust pension increase**: The Parliament amended its yearly budget to include a 50% increase of the life annuities of Holocaust survivors in an effort to ensure a dignified retirement of those who suffered under Nazi totalitarianism. This measure affects about 8,000 people. (January 23, 2013)
- **Compensation for persecuted persons**: The government raised the pension-like benefits of politically persecuted persons, with a 9.9 percent retroactive increase from November, 2014 and a 2.4 percent increase from January, 2015. According to the Government’s decision, such benefits must be higher than the average pension. (December 18, 2014)
- **The Alliance of Jewish Faith Communes (MAZSIHISZ) welcomed** Parliament’s nearly unanimous decision to allow for an expedited naturalization process for people of Hungarian descent, including Jewish Hungarians who had lost their Hungarian citizenship for any number of reasons. MAZSIHISZ called the new Act a “historic restitution” for Holocaust survivors and their descendants. (May 10, 2010)
- **Monitoring system to provide a comprehensive professional analysis of anti-Semitic phenomena in Hungary**: the Government initiated the development of a monitoring system to provide a comprehensive professional analysis of anti-Semitic phenomena in Hungary. The monitoring of anti-Semitic acts of hate is performed by the Brussels Institute of the Action and Protection Foundation (TEV), an independent non-governmental organization founded in 2012 and is

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<sup>3</sup> In an important decision which will establish legal precedent in Hungarian jurisprudence, the Hungarian Courts sentenced György N. to 1 year and 6 months of suspended jail term for publicly denying the Holocaust during a demonstration in 2011. As an extra punishment, the court ordered him to visit the Budapest Holocaust Memorial Center at least three times and summarize his thoughts on these visits in an essay. The ruling offers a second option to the convict: he can choose to make a pilgrimage to the Auschwitz memorial in Poland or the Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem.

carried out according to methods developed and recommended by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

- **Establishment of an anti-Semitism Hotline:** The sources for the monitoring work, which registers incidents according to seven different categories, include among others: sources of the Institute's own Research and Incident Tracking Group and information found in the press and public media, in addition to which an agreement concluded with the Government also makes possible the use of relevant information found in the databases of the justice system, law enforcement and other fields of public administration. The Institute has set up and operates a HOTLINE (061-510-0000) through which anti-Semitic and anti-Jewish incidents and phenomena may be reported. (August 2, 2013)

## 2. EDUCATION AND REMEMBRANCE – RIGHTING HISTORIC WRONGS

- **Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year 2014:** The Hungarian Government dedicated the year 2014 to commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Hungarian Holocaust, an important step in confronting our history. UNESCO has undertaken to be chief patron of the Holocaust Memorial Year. In 2013, a **Holocaust Memorial Committee** headed by the State Secretary in charge of the Prime Minister's Office, MP János Lázár was set up to coordinate the event-series.
- **Construction of a major New Holocaust Memorial site:** In the spring of 2014, new Holocaust memorial site will be inaugurated at the Józsefváros Train Station in Budapest to commemorate the child victims of the Hungarian Holocaust. The constructions will cost an estimated HUF 5 billion. The Hungarian Government **intends** to put together the professional program of the House of Fates, a memorial center for child victims of the Holocaust with support from Hungarian Jewish organizations and help from the international Jewish community János Lázár, Minister in charge of the Prime Minister's Office declared after the Jewish Community Roundtable's meeting. (September 9, 2014.)
- **Jewish Memorial Unveiled in Makó** At the unveiling of the Memorial János Lázár Minister in Charge of the Prime Minister's Office **said** the Hungarian Holocaust was a fratricide: Hungarians took part in committing crimes perpetrated against Hungarians. This is such a simple and true statement, yet today there is no consensus on this issue, as should be the case in a strong, free and safe community, the Minister said. Mr. Lázár stressed that "we still have work to do to ensure that the truth of this statement can serve as the basis for the raising and teaching of future generations", so that what happened seventy years ago can indeed never happen ever again. A portion of the perpetrators, and a significant portion, were Hungarian, and not just the guards who escorted the transports. Certain leaders of the Hungarian state have a heavy personal responsibility for the deportation of the Hungarian Jewry and for sentencing to death their own citizens, Mr. Lázár said. (September 5, 2014)
- **Over 1.5 billion Hungarian forints for civil society initiatives:** the government **established** a 1,5 billion HUF tender programme with the aim of supporting civil and regional initiatives realised throughout the Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year in 2014. The goal is to support initiatives by local councils or civil foundations regarding the Holocaust Memorial Year of 2014. Local councils and an active civil society are also key factors in fostering an open and constructive national discourse about the Hungarian Holocaust and in processing lessons of the past.

- **Restoration of Jewish Cemeteries in Hungary:** Csaba Latorcai, Deputy State Secretary for Social Affairs announced the Government's plans to restore Jewish cemeteries. He highlighted the program's importance for protecting our heritage, as well as its use as a youth education tool on local Jewish history. The funding for the programme is expected to be several million euros, he added. (December 18, 2014)
- **Rácalmás Jewish Cemetery renovated with state funding** – Parliamentary State Secretary László L. Simon from the Prime Minister's Office said that the government's intention is that the 70th anniversary of the Holocaust should be remembered in a way that helps individual small communities to identify with the commemoration of the Holocaust. Mr. L. Simon emphasised that the most important message of the Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year was to remember the events of 70 years ago and face them with responsibility "from the perspective of both the country and the individual", to enable us "to learn from our mistakes while looking to the future" so that similar atrocities can never happen again. (August 27, 2014)
- **Compulsory Holocaust education in public schools:** The observance of the Holocaust Remembrance Day in public schools was introduced by the first Orbán government (1998-2002) in the 2000-2001 school year. The education of the Holocaust is compulsory and is an integral part of the national curriculum: 1) for 5th-8th graders the Holocaust in Europe and Hungary, 2) for 9th-12th graders the path to the prosecution and genocide of Jews. Several civil society organizations (eg. USC Shoah Foundation, Yad Vashem Institute, Zachor Foundation for Social Remembrance, Jewish Community Roundtable) are engaged in Holocaust education, which enables the multi-faceted and comprehensive representation of the topic.
- **Hungarian presidency of the IHRA in 2015** (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance): The IHRA, founded in 2000, has 31 members and 10 permanent observers, including both states and international organisations. The aim of the Alliance is to promote and support Holocaust education and remembrance. The Hungarian presidency will be a continuation of previous events initiated by the Government: the Raoul Wallenberg Year in 2012, dedicated to the Swedish diplomat's legacy, or the Holocaust Memorial Year in 2014, commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Hungarian Shoah.
- **Support for the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation:** the government announced that it will also join the group of countries that contribute to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation. Hungary will contribute 120 000 euros to the maintenance of the Memorial Site and Museum at Auschwitz-Birkenau. (August 15, 2013)
- **Wallenberg Year 2012:** In 2012, wide-scale, nation-wide events honoured the 100th anniversary of the birth of Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who saved thousands of Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust. The government worked hand-in-hand with partners from Sweden, Israel and the United States to highlight Wallenberg and other rescuers' personal heroism in standing up against the Nazi regime.
- **Recognition of János Esterházy.** The Hungarian government honoured the memory of János Esterházy, who was recognized with the "Courage to Care" award by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in New York on November 4, 2011. Esterházy, an ethnic Hungarian politician, was the only representative in the Slovak Parliament who refused to vote for the deportation of Slovak Jews in 1942. President of the Republic János Áder presented the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of Hungary (civilian division) to Alice Esterházy, daughter of János Esterházy. (May 17, 2013)

- **Recognition of the heroes who saved Jewish lives in Hungary during the Holocaust:** major roads and sections of the Danube quays in Budapest were renamed in honour of heroes (Raoul Wallenberg, Carl Lutz, József Antall Sr., Margit Slachta, Angelo Rotta, Gábor Sztehlo, Friedrich Born, Jane Haining, Sára Salkaházi) who risked their own lives to save the lives of those persecuted by the Nazis and their Arrow cross allies.
- **Task Force on Holocaust Education:** Hungary is a member of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research and considers the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust binding, which, among others, pledges to promote education about the Holocaust in schools, universities, and communities and encourages education on the topic in other institutions. Based on a 1997 agreement with Yad Vashem, more than 500 Hungarian teachers have benefited from the opportunity to take summer courses at the Holocaust Memorial Center. The cooperation was renewed in May 2012, and the training now includes reformed methods of teacher training in Holocaust education, morality, tolerance and fight against racism.
- **The Tom Lantos Institute** organized an important conference on “Jewish Life and Anti-Semitism in Contemporary Europe” in Budapest. The conference took place at the Upper Chamber of the Hungarian Parliament with the support of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in October 2013 and was attended by top level Hungarian representatives including Deputy Prime Minister Tibor Navracsics and Minister of State Zsolt Németh. Speakers of the event also included Israeli Minister of Finance Yair Lapid, widow of the late Congressman Tom Lantos Mrs Annette Lantos. The main topics discussed at the conference were the concern of resurgence of anti-Semitism in the region and the ways of combating it, and the renewed Jewish religious, social and cultural life in parts of Europe. After the conference thematic workshops were set up to discuss topics such as Holocaust education and the teaching of Jewish history and culture in Central Europe. (October 1-2, 2013)
- **Establishment of the Holocaust Memorial Center** – The first Orbán government established the Holocaust Memorial and Documentation Center, which plays a key role in examining, and educating the public about the overall history of the Holocaust.

### 3. SUPPORTING THE JEWISH RENAISSANCE IN HUNGARY

- **Active Jewish public life in Hungary:** David Lau, Israel’s Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi remarked on the increasing vibrancy of Jewish public life in Hungary after meeting Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén (December 10, 2014).
- **Support of the Jewish community and religious life in Budapest.** The Jewish community in Budapest is the largest in Central Europe. Aside from the 24 actively functioning synagogues, a complex Jewish educational system operates from kindergarten to university.
- **New Wallenberg memorial in central Budapest.** Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade stated at the inauguration that the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg and other heroes that saved people embarked on bringing hope to Hungarians in a hopeless situation. These people saved

Jews and others, risking their own life and often sacrificing it; the memorial is a sign that the Holocaust must never happen again in history, he added. (June 18, 2014)

- **Hungary hosted the World Jewish Congress in 2013.** The WJC's visit to Budapest provided a welcome opportunity to show the world that the Jewish community in Hungary is indeed experiencing a renaissance and that the government is a determined ally in the fight against anti-Semitism. The WJC's coming to Budapest, served as a poignant reminder of the important role that Jewish heritage and culture has played in Hungarian life for centuries and how it's reviving that role again today.
- **The government-sponsored annual Jewish Summer Festival** of Budapest has become one of the most important and largest cultural events since its foundation in 1998. In 2013, the week-long cultural festival had a record breaking, over 100,000 attendants from around the world and was co-organized by the Israeli Jewish Congress. In 2013, the Prime Minister's Office sponsored the event with 58 million HUF.
- **Historic new synagogue construction:** For the first time in 80 years, a new synagogue is being built in Hungary, on Csepel Island, which was home to hundreds of Jews prior to World War II. On the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the ceremonial laying of the foundation stone took place, attended by leaders of the Jewish community as well as Israeli Ambassador Ilan Mor, Cardinal Péter Erdő, Defense Minister Csaba Hende, State Secretary János Fónagy, and the Mayor of Csepel, Szilárd Németh. (January 28, 2013)
- **Rededication of Budapest's oldest synagogue:** Israel's Chief Rabbi, Yona Metzger, rededicated Hungary's oldest synagogue in Óbuda. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that "the reopening of this synagogue is a true symbol of the Jewish renaissance in Hungary." (September 5, 2010)
- **Opening of the first Israeli Cultural Institute in Budapest.** Israel's former Deputy Prime Minister, Nathan Sharansky, opened the world's first Israeli Cultural Institute in Budapest. Hungarians and Israelis together with the Jewish Agency for Israel initiated the establishment of the institute, which is supported by the Hungarian Government. (September 2, 2010)
- **Intensive governmental dialogue with Jewish communities.** The Government has renewed its dialogue with Jewish communities (the Jewish Communities' Roundtable) and now conducts regular consultations with all major Jewish organizations and religious communities in Hungary.

#### **4. THE GOVERNMENT'S HIGH-LEVEL PUBLIC CONDEMNATIONS OF ANTI-SEMITIC ACTS AND RHETORIC IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER**

- **János Lázár, Minister heading the Prime Minister's Office** said in a speech given on April 16, 2015 the Memorial Day for Hungarian Victims of the Holocaust, "today we must not remain silent and passive in the face of vicious ideologies in Hungary. He pointed out that, after what happened in the winter of 1944 on the banks of the Danube in Pest or at Auschwitz, in the Hungarian language anti-Semitic or anti-Roma insults can never be harmless, and intimidating denigration can likewise never be harmless".

- **Deputy State Secretary Csaba Latorcai** stated that there is no excuse for incitement to hatred, or for hate crimes, after condemning the barbaric deed of those who desecrated graves in the Jewish cemetery of Gyöngyös. (March 23, 2015)

- **Prime Minister Viktor Orbán** said on January 26, 2015 that “we cannot remain silent about the memory of the Hungarian Jewish victims of the concentration camps of World War Two. This was a tragedy of the Hungarian nation and an irrevocable loss of the Hungarian Jewish community”, adding that while the Hungarian army in World War I provided advancement for its soldiers regardless of their background, two and a half decades later we were “heartless and indifferent when we should have helped, and many, many Hungarians chose evil over good, shameful over decent.”

- **Tibor Navracsics Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade** said on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the outbreak of WWII, that we still look back with pain to what we can say was an irrecoverable loss for European Jewry – and therefore also for the Jewish community in Hungary. The first day of September nineteen thirty-nine opened the book on a series of tragedies for Europe, but the real tragedy was for the Jews: individuals and families were barbarically murdered with industrial means, communities were eliminated, and attempts were made to eradicate their traditions. This is why we stand here today at this memorial erected by the Emanuel Foundation – a memorial which reminds us of the Holocaust’s Hungarian victims. We bow our heads to their memory, to Jewish culture, and to the traditions and life of Hungary’s Jewish community. (September 1, 2014)

- **Minister of Defence Csaba Hende** said during a wreath-laying ceremony held at Posthumous General Ferenc Koszorús’ memorial plaque in Dohány Street, Budapest “The Shoah has occupied its deserved place in our history, among our greatest historical tragedies. It belongs to us, being inseparable from us, and its shame, loss and grief is ours”. On the victims of the Hungarian Holocaust the Minister also stated that “They were given to death, with the active cooperation of the Hungarian state and so many Hungarians”, (July 4, 2014.)

- **President János Áder** underlined in his speech at the March of the Living Holocaust memorial event held at the former Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, that all those wishing to find excuses, to relativize or to question such a crime commit an immorality. Thus they themselves are tainted by guilt. He also added Hungary, which was occupied on 19th March 1944, failed to protect its own citizens. Its authorities collaborated with those who planned to exterminate our fellow compatriots. Every third victim in Auschwitz was a Hungarian Jew. Close to half a million of my compatriots died here. Within a few weeks of the German occupation of Hungary they were herded into ghettos with systematic cruelty, then deported here to Auschwitz with the collaboration of the Hungarian state’s administrative bodies. This place is Hungary’s largest cemetery. (...) We must remember them. We must remember, and remind others. We have no right to compound their immeasurable tragedy with the sin of forgetting. Their martyrdom is an eternal lesson for the whole of Europe and for all humanity. (April 28, 2014)

- **Deputy Prime Minister Tibor Navracsics** pointed out in his speech during the commemoration of the Holocaust in Budapest, that the Holocaust was the tragedy of humanity, the Hungarian people and the Jewish people. (April 27, 2014)

- **Prime Minister Viktor Orbán** sent a letter to the Chairman of the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities (Mazsihisz), on the occasion of the Memorial Day for the Hungarian Victims of the Holocaust. In the letter the Prime Minister stated that the pain of Hungarian Jews is the

pain of all the Hungarian people. Although, he added, the horrors of the Holocaust were inflicted on our Jewish compatriots and destroyed their lives and assets, it was a common loss and pain for the whole nation. Since in our view, the Hungarian Jews were and always will be part of the Hungarian nation. (April 16, 2014)

- **Mayor of 12th district of the capital in Budapest Zoltán Pokorni** said at the Memorial Day for the Hungarian Victims of the Holocaust that the Holocaust is not taken as a matter of a distant European country, but as a part of Hungarian history. He added that the killers were Hungarians and Hungarians were the victims too, so this is our business. It may be recorded and considered, as Zoltán Pokorni said, that all this happened during the German occupation of the country, but that is only an explanation and not an excuse for the Hungarian government and politics of past times. (April 16, 2014)

- **Minister of Interior Sándor Pintér** reiterated the Government's unequivocal standpoint that every manifestation of radicalism must be driven back and this has to be realised in everyday life as well addressing the Yad Vashem Institute's "Righteous among the Nations" awarding ceremony where the Hungarian "For Courage Honours" was also presented. (February 21, 2014)

- **Prime Minister Viktor Orbán** in a letter to András Heisler, President of the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities (Mazsihisz), wrote that "in addition to increasing awareness of the horrors of the Holocaust, it is also important that our children come to know more about the history of Hungarian-Jewish cohabitation." With reference to the April elections he decided to postpone talks about the erection of the German occupation monument until after the elections. (February 20, 2014)

- **State Secretary Lázár**, after a roundtable meeting with the Hungarian Jewish communities said that without their support of the Jewish communities the project of the new Holocaust Memorial and Education Centre in Józsefváros would be meaningless. Regarding the planned German occupation monument, he said that it would be a falsification of history to deny that Germans and Hungarians were together, both responsible for the deportations. The crimes committed by the Germans do not diminish the crimes of the Hungarians involved either actively as perpetrators or passively as bystanders. (February 6, 2014)

- **Prime Minister Viktor Orbán**, at the official International Holocaust Remembrance Day commemorations in Budapest highlighted that the Hungarian Holocaust cannot be regarded as anything other than the tragedy of the whole Hungarian nation and that the branding, humiliation or mistreatment of anyone because of their religion or ethnicity cannot be accepted. This is why the Government has introduced a policy of zero tolerance. (January 28, 2014)

- **Hungarian Ambassador to the UN Csaba Kőrösi** apologized for the first time at the United Nations for the Holocaust on behalf of Hungary saying that "We owe victims an apology as the Hungarian state was guilty in the Holocaust. Firstly because it failed to protect its citizens from extermination, secondly because it assisted and provided financial resources for the genocide." His remarks were delivered at the opening ceremony of an exhibition entitled „The memory of the Hungarian Holocaust”, organised by the Carl Lutz Foundation, the Tom Lantos Foundation, the American Hungarian Coalition, the Hungary Initiatives Foundation and the Hungarian Mission, opened in the UN. (January 27, 2014)

- **State Secretary János Lázár** at the UNESCO Holocaust Remembrance Day said that the Holocaust is Hungary's national tragedy. He also acknowledged that "some of the leaders of the Hungarian state were personally and severely accountable for deporting Hungarian Jews....On the other hand, the Hungarian state was incapable of protecting its own citizens, and did not do everything in its power to do so." He stressed that objective of the Hungarian Government is to make the memorial year of the Holocaust in Hungary a time, when it faces its past. To make it a turning point in the life of free Hungary. (January 27, 2014)
- **Prime Minister Viktor Orbán** in his letter to MAZSIHISZ leader András Heisler regarding the German occupation memorial said that "the respect we have for the victims cannot allow us to ignore the fate of the imprisoned, abducted and murdered without bowing our heads in reverence." He also stressed that "a show of respect for the memory of the victims requires no further explanation. This is a question of humanity, and not one of politics or party affiliation." (January 22, 2014)
- **Prime Minister Viktor Orbán** in his annual Hannukah message to the Hungarian Jewish community pledged that "the government will do everything in its power to ensure that the [Jewish community's] religious traditions and faith can be practiced without fear" (November 29, 2013)
- **Foreign Minister Martonyi** in an oped published in the Jerusalem Post wrote that "the Hungarian Holocaust was committed by and against Hungarians; both the perpetrators and the victims were Hungarians. And ... this is our biggest national trauma we have to live with, confront and cope with." (November 24, 2013)
- **Deputy Prime Minister Tibor Navracsics** speaking at the opening of the conference entitled "Jewish Life and Anti-Semitism in Contemporary Europe" organized by the Tom Lantos Institute in Budapest, said "We know that the institutions of the Hungarian state were responsible for the Holocaust." "The perpetrators were Hungarians, it was Hungarians who fired the shots and it was Hungarians who died, and this is a huge responsibility that we here in Hungary and in Central Europe must face." He pledged that Hungarians will learn from the past and that Hungarian democracy will defend itself against anyone who wants to incite hatred. (October 1, 2013)
- **Foreign Minister János Martonyi** said that "the Holocaust had been committed by Hungarians against Hungarians; this is the greatest national trauma for us, which we must face". He reaffirmed that he believes Jewish life has a future in Hungary and is proud of the flourishing Jewish cultural life in Hungary. Minister Martonyi also stated that foreign policy has to be based on values and one must never forget about responsibility. (October 3, 2013)
- **Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Zolt Németh** at the same conference welcomed and highlighted the importance of Jewish renaissance in Hungary and said that 70 years after the holocaust the society still needs to fight against anti-Semitism. He stated that "There are no bridges between the democratic political powers and those who openly or indirectly play with the dangerous fire of anti-Semitic and racist sentiments." In reaction of the emerging anti-Semitic parties across Europe. (October 1, 2013)
- **State Secretary János Lázár** at the meeting of the Hungarian Holocaust-2014 Memorial Committee said, that a new holocaust memorial will be opened at Józsefváros train station in Budapest. He stressed the importance of establishing memorials for the child victims of the Holocaust. He also stated that the government is planning to open more community memorial sites in

2014 as part of the Holocaust Memorial Year. The public education and civil initiatives will also receive support from the government to serve the remembrance of the victims and the ones who tried to save them. (September 12, 2013)

- **Israel's Ambassador** in an interview to **Hungarian Kossuth Radio**, said his country acknowledged Hungary's commitment to eliminate anti-Semitism: "Israel knows very well that the Hungarian government does everything it can to fight anti-Semitism." (July 12, 2013)

- **Prime Minister Viktor Orbán**, Addressing the 14th Plenary Assembly of the **World Jewish Congress**, a group of over 500 representatives from some 100 countries, said that "anti-Semitism today in Hungary is unacceptable, and we will show zero tolerance in regards to it." (May 6, 2013)

- **Deputy Prime Minister Tibor Navracsics** declared on Hungary's Holocaust Remembrance Day, that we commemorate not only the victims of the Holocaust but also those who could not be born because of it. He emphasized that several generations of talented and outstanding people are today missing from the Hungarian nation as a result. (April 16, 2013)

- **Fidesz Member of the Parliament Zoltán Pokorni**, participating in Hungary's Holocaust Remembrance Day, suggested in 2000 as Minister of Education that a remembrance day should be held each year for the victims of Holocaust on 16, April. Zoltán Pokorni stated, that the Holocaust is part of Hungarian national history; adding that those who were killed were Hungarians and those who killed were also Hungarians. (April 16, 2013)

- **Monika Balatoni** Minister of State for Public Diplomacy and Relations at the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice – said at the March of the Living remembrance event that 'Remembrance is not only a duty, but also an opportunity to ensure that human life is never again allowed to become a target for groups or individuals who declare themselves to be superior.' (April 9, 2013)

- **Prime Minister Viktor Orbán** categorically rejected all attempts to undermine human dignity. In the Parliament, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán ordered Minister of Interior Sándor Pintér to ensure that on the day of the March of the Living, it will be impossible to organize events of a political nature that may violate the marchers' human dignity. The Prime Minister stated that the safety, undisturbed remembrance and human dignity of the participants of the March of the Living would be assured with all available means. (April 8, 2013)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The Prime Minister declared his decision in reaction to a speech by socialist MP Pál Steiner and went on to say that he agreed that all attempts to disregard and even purposefully violate the dignity, history and pride of certain ethnic groups while insulting human dignity are not just performed in poor taste, but are deeply hurtful and contrary to the spirit of the Constitution. "I categorically reject all such behavior", he remonstrated. He emphasized that the March of the Living is about the victory of life, and especially for a community, which has suffered to such an extent, that the citizens of Hungary and all good-minded Hungarian people bow their heads in sympathy at the appropriate time. In the spirit of these sentiments, Viktor Orbán ordered Minister of Interior Sándor Pintér to ensure that it would be impossible to organise events of a political nature that may violate the marchers' human dignity on the day of the March of the Living. In his reply, Pál Steiner thanked the Prime Minister for his direct answer and determined action.

- **Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén** visited the Holy Land. During his official visit, he met with Chief Rabbi of Israel Yona Metzger, visited the Yad Vashem Museum and laid down a wreath at the memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. (February 1, 2013)
- **Deputy Prime Minister Navracsics** made an official visit to the United States. Minister Navracsics had talks with Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy, and laid wreaths at the monuments of Lajos Kossuth and Raoul Wallenberg in the United States Senate. The Deputy Prime Minister had a meeting with Philip Gordon, Assistant Secretary at the United States State Department, and Senator Ben Cardin, Co-President of the Helsinki Commission. Minister Navracsics also visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and participated in the Lantos Human Rights Prize award ceremony. (January 29, 2013)
- **Defense Minister Csaba Hende** said, speaking at an event organized by the “March of the Living” Foundation on International Holocaust Remembrance Day, that „never again can it happen that somebody is excluded, deprived of all properties and murdered because of his or her religion or descent. Never again can it occur that the thousand-year-old Hungarian state cannot protect its citizens.” The minister stressed that it must be understood what the nation and Europe lost with the loss of “our Jewish compatriots”, and what a shame it is that “we were not able to protect them”. (January 30, 2013)
- **Prime Minister Viktor Orbán** said on the Holocaust Remembrance Day that “The 1944-45 tragedy of the Jewish people is thus also the tragedy of the Hungarian nation. The Hungarian Government feels that it is its moral and political obligation to consistently confront the dictatorships of the 20th century and the atrocities they committed.” He added that “It is my firm belief that Hungary is a country in which people can never again suffer a disadvantage or indignity because of their origin or faith. We shall protect the country's every citizen and know no compromise in this regard. We shall not tolerate and strongly condemn the stigmatizing of minorities in any form, and every expression of anti-Semitism.” (January 27, 2013)
- **Deputy State Secretary for International Communications Ferenc Kumin** held talks with a delegation from the Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism. The International Spokesperson informed the delegation about the Government’s measures aimed at being unrelenting with regards to anti-Semitic tendencies. He highlighted in particular, the current amendments to the parliamentary house rules aimed at preventing extremist ideas being expressed, and recalled the creation of the Holocaust Memorial Committee, an organization responsible for preparing the commemorative events during 2014 to mark the 70th anniversary of the deportation of Hungarian Jews. The Holocaust Commemoration Year provides an opportunity for the whole nation to face the past and apologise for its past actions, the International Spokesperson stressed. Although the members of the delegation gave voice to their concerns about extreme voices being occasionally represented in Hungarian Parliament, they also expressed their clear appreciation as to recent actions taken against anti-Semitism and the Government’s firm commitment in this regard. (January 25, 2013)
- **Minister of Human Resources Zoltán Balog** presented this year’s Wallenberg Awards at Budapest’s Holocaust Memorial Centre. At the ceremony, Minister Balog called for a joint effort to fight dictatorial behaviour and stated that democracy was not defined by the number of parties in Parliament, but by the behaviour of democrats in that country. He said, "Politicians should learn democracy from the award winners". Balog talked about the importance of commemorating people

who had helped the victims of dictatorships so that those atrocities should never occur again. (January 18, 2013)

- **State Secretary János Lázár**, the head of the Prime Minister's office, upon the establishment of the Holocaust Memorial Committee said that "For us to call the sin by its name, to search for those who are guilty, including Hungarians, and to make amends with the victims" is part of the mission of the Committee. "Facing the past means the incorporation into law of the command to remember and the prohibition of forgetting." He said that "we also owe the victims an apology" as the Hungarian state was also guilty of the Holocaust. Guilty in two respects: firstly because it did not defend its own citizens from extermination, and secondly because it assisted and provided resources for the genocide", stressing that this apology must be made a part of the national memory and identity by the Hungarian state. (January 17, 2013)

- **Prime Minister Viktor Orbán met with the Chairman of MAZSIHISZ** (Association of Hungarian Jewish Religious Communities) and Péter Feldmájer **expressed his gratitude for the Prime Minister's statement** in Parliament and also expressed his appreciation to Antal Rogán, the group leader of Fidesz for participating and speaking out on the bipartisan demonstration against anti-Semitism. (December, 2012)

- **Prime Minister Viktor Orbán** said that the Jobbik's MP, Márton Gyöngyösi's parliamentary address was unworthy of Hungary. The Prime Minister stated that Jewish compatriots would be protected; adding that Hungary has suffered dictatorship and nothing or no one will derail Hungary from its democratic conviction, the love of freedom and unconditional respect of human dignity. "As long as I am in this post, no one in Hungary can be harmed because of their faith, convictions or origin. I would like to make it clear that (...) we, Hungarians will protect our Jewish compatriots" then adding that "Hungary has suffered dictatorship and nothing or no one will derail Hungary from its democratic conviction, the love of freedom and the unconditional respect of human dignity". (December 3, 2012)

- **Minister of Human Resources Zoltán Balog**, on the Day of Humanity stated that we must reject all aggression that humiliates human dignity. He said that when lawmakers in parliament denigrate someone else on the basis of their origin, people must speak up. The Minister also declared that it was important for the next generation to learn: "we will never form alliances with such ideologies." At the same time, he said, it is essential to come to an agreement with Jewish organizations on how to teach the history of Holocaust in a worthy and fair manner. (August, 2012)

- **Prime Minister Viktor Orbán** expressed his heartfelt sympathies to Mr. László Róna, leader of the Jewish community of Kaposvár, and instructed the Minister of Interior to pursue an expeditious and firm prosecution after the Jewish cemetery was desecrated on July 22 by unknown perpetrators. The PM again confirmed his zero-tolerance policy against all forms of anti-Semitic incitement. (July 24, 2012)

- **Prosecutor General Péter Polt** met with the leaders of the Alliance of Jewish Faith Communes in his office, where he confirmed the commitment of his office to combating anti-Semitism and his intention to proceed quickly with the investigations. The parties agreed to improve the information exchange between the Jewish community and the authorities in order to help the investigations. (June 19, 2012)

- **Foreign Minister János Martonyi** expressed his solidarity with Rabbi Schweitzer in a personal letter: “It was with deep sadness that I learnt about the outrageous insult committed against you yesterday. Please allow me to express my sincere sympathies. There is no explanation for this act, as there cannot be one.” (June 6, 2012)
- **The Government of Hungary** condemned the insult against Rabbi Schweitzer: “The Government is deeply committed to acting against extremism, racism, anti-Semitism, and all forms of intolerance. The Government does everything in its powers to combat these unacceptable utterances that are clearly incompatible with European norms.” (June 6, 2012)
- **President of the Republic János Áder** condemned the verbal attack on Rabbi József Schweitzer in an open letter to the Hungarian public: “Even though the perpetrator was alone and anonymous, we all have to confront the shame of this attack and similar attacks against any member – or against the values – of our nation. It is not enough to protest – we have no choice but to clear up the filth left behind by others.” (June 6, 2012)
- **Prime Minister Viktor Orbán sent a letter** expressing his solidarity with the Jewish community of Székesfehérvár after the desecration of Jewish graves in the city: “I have learned with distress and indignation about the news that in Hungary, in the city of my beloved alma mater, the cemetery of your community was desecrated. Beyond expressing my condolences and solidarity, I would like to inform you that I have instructed the Minister of Interior to proceed with the investigation as quickly and as directly as possible.” (June 4, 2012)
- **The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Human Resources** firmly condemned the brutal defilement of Raoul Wallenberg’s statue. The **Prime Minister’s Office** condemned the desecration of the Holocaust martyrs’ memorial. On the same day, the **Budapest Police Department** announced that the perpetrators were arrested. (May 25, 2012)
- **President (Speaker) of the Parliament László Kövér** and Deputy Speaker Sándor Lezsák both participated in the “March of the Living” along the Sára Salkaházi quay, named after the Hungarian nun who suffered martyrdom after saving the lives of many Jews during the Holocaust. (April 15, 2012)
- **Prime Minister Viktor Orbán** upon receiving Mr. Slomó Köves, Principal Rabbi of Unified Hungarian Jewish Congregation (EMIH), strongly condemned extremist statements made by Jobbik in the Parliament, and made it clear that the Government of Hungary guarantees that every minority in Hungary can live in safety. The rabbi acknowledged the Prime Minister's defense of human dignity and thanked the Government for ensuring the conditions enabling diversity in Hungary’s religious and cultural life. (April 12, 2012)
- **Ministry of Public Administration and Justice** condemned Jobbik’s parliamentary rhetoric: “As a matter of principle, and as laid out in the new Fundamental Law and Hungarian legislation, the Government of Hungary condemns in the strongest possible terms all statements directed – either explicitly or implicitly – against any social group or minority living in Hungary. The words uttered yesterday evening in the Hungarian parliament by the Jobbik representative Zsolt Baráth were absolutely unacceptable and run counter to every fundamental value of the Parliament and the Hungarian government.” (April 4, 2012)

- **The Ministry of Foreign Affairs** released the following statement condemning the position of certain Jobbik party MPs on the Holocaust: “The Government of Hungary considers the tragic extermination of the Hungarian Jews during the Second World War to be an unprecedented genocide. The Government deems it extremely important that this be given due emphasis in the nation’s memory, in education, in research, and in the compensation granted to victims and their relatives. Hungary rejects all forms of Holocaust denial.” (February 6, 2012)
- **Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has repeatedly reaffirmed** his position that the Hungarian Government rejects every statement that hurts human dignity. He emphasized the principle of “zero tolerance” against all forms of anti-Roma or anti-Semitic manifestations and atrocities. He said that “every minority in Hungary is protected, including the national minorities, but also the Roma and the Jewish minorities.” (January 18, 2012)