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Marking the International Holocaust Remembrance Day

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Holocaust, the Hungarian Government has organised several events through the Hungarian Holocaust 2014 Memorial Committee. Within the framework of this series of events, a scientific memorial meeting was organised in the Holocaust Memorial Centre in Budapest on Monday, to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The event was addressed by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's message, which 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.

Minister of State heading the Prime Minister's Office János Lázár addressed a commemoration at the Paris headquarters of UNESCO, which is chief patron of the events of the Holocaust Memorial Year in Hungary. He said that the Hungarian state had not done its utmost to protect its citizens; furthermore, some Hungarian leaders bore a serious, personal responsibility for the deportation of Hungarian Jews. He called the Holocaust a national tragedy, noting that one in ten Holocaust victims and one in three victims in Auschwitz were Hungarian citizens. He added that many of the perpetrators were also Hungarians.

In his statement to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day, President János Áder stated that Auschwitz forms part of Hungarian history. This death camp was the site of the inhuman suffering, humiliation and the death of close to half a million Hungarians. Following President Áder's request, many Hungarian media outlets ceased broadcasting for 70 seconds at 7pm on Monday in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

The victims of the Holocaust were also remembered by other Hungarian diplomatic missions throughout Europe. At the Hungarian Cultural Centre in Rome, an exhibition of works by Hungarian and Italian Jewish artists was opened by Minister of State for Public Diplomacy Monika Balatoni.

At the Vienna headquarters of the United Nations, an exhibition of the 16 best designs of the International Poster Competition 2013-2014 with the theme "Keeping the Memory Alive - Journeys through the Holocaust" was opened. At the event, Ambassador of Hungary to the UN in Vienna Balázs Csuday said that irrefutable historical evidence attests that Hungary is among those European countries that have the greatest responsibility in the Holocaust.

A commemoration was held at the former Sachsenhausen death camp near Berlin, where Hungarian ambassador to Germany József Czukor said that facing the past is a long and painful



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process and that we are now able to declare that the Hungarian state pronounced its citizens enemies and collaborated in their systematic murder. The Hungarian Government supports that hitherto unnamed Hungarian victims of Nazi concentration camps should be identified. It has also proposed the inauguration of a plaque at Sachsenhausen with the names of all Hungarians who were killed there.

"We owe the victims an apology as the Hungarian state was guilty in the Holocaust. Firstly because it failed to protect its citizens from extermination and secondly because it assisted and provided financial resources for the genocide", UN Ambassador Csaba Kőrösi said at the conference last week, which was the opening event of a series of commemorations held at the UN's headquarters in New York. The Ambassador stressed that this apology by the Hungarian state must become part of the national memory and identity.

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