



Press release

German prosecutors call killing of refugees on the border of the ČSSR an international crime and suggest liability for murder for the responsible commanders. Thus the acts have not expired.

Prague, 27 March 2017. The Platform of European Memory and Conscience has received two letters already from German prosecutors concerning its comprehensive criminal complaint of 18 August 2016 on the killing of refugees on the borders of Communist Czechoslovakia. According to the German Federal Prosecutor General, the killing of refugees was an international crime. From the point of view of the prosecutor's office in Weiden the killing of refugees suggests murder from base motives on the level of those responsible for the system of the border protection. In the coming days, the Platform will forward further documents unknown as yet to the prosecutors in Weiden, among them a secret order by former minister of interior and later prime minister of the ČSSR Lubomír Štrougal on the systematic and planned penetration of the secret services and the border guards into the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany and Austria.

On 18 August 2016, the Platform filed a criminal complaint to the German Federal Prosecutor General against 67 representatives of the Communist regime of former Czechoslovakia in the case of killings of 5 Germans on the Iron Curtain. Last week, the Platform has received the second letter already from the German prosecutors.

In the beginning of October 2016, the Federal German Prosecutor's office characterised the deliberate killing of unarmed civilians on the border as an international crime, because it violated the human rights to life and freedom of movement protected by international law, as well as the imperative of justice, in an elementary way.

In the middle of March 2017, the prosecutor's office in Weiden states that at least for the commanders contributing to the creation and maintenance of the border protection measures, the characteristic of murder from base motives is suggested. In the case of a Bavarian hiker who was killed by Czechoslovak border guards while chasing after an escaped refugee on the sovereign territory of the Federal Republic of Germany, the office however expressed its doubts regarding the killing intention in the chain of command. Therefore, the Platform will submit further documents unknown so far, among them a secret order of one of the main suspects, the minister of interior and later prime minister of the ČSSR Lubomír Štrougal, which proves the systematic and planned penetration of the Communist secret services and border guards into the territory of neighbouring Western countries.

"The fundamental statements made so far by the German criminal prosecutors are groundbreaking for the victims of the Czechoslovak Iron Curtain, because until now no official or academic office in the Czech or Slovak Republics has dared to state that these are imprescriptible acts," says Platform Managing Director Neela Winkelmann.

For more information, please contact:

Göran Lindblad, President, president@memoryandconscience.eu, +46-706710366

Neela Winkelmann, Managing Director, director@memoryandconscience.eu, +420-222 561 053

The Platform of European Memory and Conscience brings together 55 public and private institutions and organisations from 13 EU Member States, Ukraine, Moldova, Iceland, Albania, Canada and the USA working in the field of coming to terms with the legacy of totalitarianism on European soil. We represent about 200,000 Europeans and over 1,100,000 North American citizens with European roots.

Londýnská 43 ■ 120 00 Praha 2 ■ Czech Republic ■ tel.: +420-222 561 053 ■

The Platform of European Memory and Conscience is an interest association of legal persons founded according to the Civil Code of the Czech Republic and registered by the Municipal Court of Prague under section L, insert 58675. Id.-No.: 72559071

Bank account EUR: No. 4977492/0800, Česká spořitelna, a.s., Czech Republic

IBAN: CZ160800000000004977492 BIC: GIBACZPX

Bank account CZK: No. 5004692/0800, Česká spořitelna, a.s., Czech Republic

IBAN: CZ030800000000005004692 BIC: GIBACZPX