

**Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre:  
Roma Holocaust 71<sup>st</sup> anniversary commemoration, 2 August 2015  
Statement by Rita IZSÁK  
UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues**

On the 71<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Roma Holocaust, it is my honor to address you in my capacity as the UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues. I welcome the participants of this commemoration organized by the Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre and congratulate to their important work to increase awareness and knowledge on Porrajmos/Pharrajimos.

Indeed, there is still little knowledge in the general public that Roma were targeted by the Nazi regime and subjected to arbitrary internment, forced labor, and mass murder. German authorities murdered tens of thousands of Roma in the German-occupied territories of the Soviet Union and Serbia and thousands more in the death camps.

On this day, we remember that on the night of 2 to 3 August 1944, all remaining 2,897 Roma men, women and children in the so called 'Gypsy family camp' in Auschwitz-Birkenau, were taken to gas chamber V and were murdered by the Nazis.

Much remains to be done to establish the right and possibility for Roma to remember and commemorate this day with dignity. In order to allow appropriate commemoration, Roma graves and mass graves, including those that have not yet been marked, must be identified and preserved to enable survivors to remember and mourn in dignity. In countries where evidence suggests that Roma fell victims to the Holocaust, governments should make 2 August an official day of remembrance for the victims of the Pharrajimos. All the world's governments and the international community must make sure that they include reference to the suffering of Roma in their Holocaust education and commemoration events.

Unfortunately, we also know that violence against Roma is not only a matter of history but is a sad reality for many Roma communities today as well. We must realize that the hatred and the dehumanization of the victims of the Holocaust that characterised the Nazi era, still exist in the hearts and minds of some individuals in Europe today who are capable of committing violence against our fellow Roma citizens simply because of who they are.

We must remain vigilant and continue pressing our governments to take appropriate measures against signs of hatred and stigmatization. We must step up our action against hate speech and incitement to hatred before it is manifested in violence and atrocities. We must continue advocating that States meet their responsibilities by implementing effective measures to protect their Roma populations from discrimination and violence based on their identity and establish necessary integration policies and platforms.

On this important day, I wish all of us renewed strength and inspiration to continue our struggle to achieve that Roma will be considered and treated equally, can live in security and raise their children without fear.