

**The Address by Lucie Fuková,
Government Commissioner for Roma Minority Affairs,
On the Occasion of
The Day of Holocaust Remembrance and Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity
Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic,
January 27, 2026**

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

Today, we come together to remember the victims of the Holocaust, including the Roma Holocaust. For a long time, this part of history was overlooked—not only in literature, textbooks, and the media, but also within Roma families themselves. Yet there is hardly a Roma family in this country that was not affected in some way.

Who did not lose a relative in a concentration camp, or whose loved ones were not imprisoned or persecuted? In the Czech lands, out of the original 6,500 Roma and Sinti, fewer than 600 returned home after the war. And it must be said that responsibility for this system and for the violence involved did not lie solely with Germans, but also with Czechs.

The end of the Second World War did not bring an end to persecution and repression. Nor did it bring an end to the trauma, which was passed on—and continues to be passed on—to subsequent generations. Survivors, as well as their descendants, often suffered from psychological difficulties that went unaddressed. They did not speak about their trauma even with their closest relatives, let alone publicly.

In Lety u Písku, in a place of a former concentration camp, a pig farm was established; Hodonín u Kunštátu became a place of recreation; and the Roma Holocaust was meant to be erased from history.

Fortunately, this did not succeed, thanks to the work of many survivors, civil society activists, scholars, and also politicians. At the sites of former concentration camps, there are now dignified memorial places, which are visited each year by members of the public, senior representatives of the state, and diplomats.

Gradually, Roma history, culture, and issues of coexistence with minorities are being incorporated into educational materials. Roma literature is being published, and last year, together with the Institute of Contemporary History, we organized a unique three-day Czech-German conference at the Office of the Government on The Legacy of the Holocaust from the Perspective of the Descendants of Survivors.

It is precisely this perspective that is key to how we should view this chapter of history, how we approach memorial sites, and how we interpret history for younger generations.

At the same time, it must be recalled that to this day, there has been no property compensation for the victims of the Roma Holocaust.

Two years ago, Michal Mižigár stood in this very place and spoke the following words: “When antigypsyism—that is, racism against Roma—is taken as seriously as antisemitism, only then will I be able to attend these gatherings as I do today, with the feeling that we have learned from this and that politicians truly mean the words ‘so that it never happens again’ when they lay wreaths.”

In the spring of 2024, the adoption of a definition of antigypsyism by the Senate, the Chamber of Deputies, and the Government of the Czech Republic did indeed take place. This represented a significant shift in recognizing the dangerous nature of anti-Roma attitudes and their impact on the everyday lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

Now we must make every effort to learn how to work with this definition in practice. We must unequivocally condemn all manifestations of hatred, racism, and xenophobia.

These dark currents emerged with full force in the 1990s, when people like me were afraid to go outside, to travel by train, or to attend a concert—when dozens of Roma were murdered and many more injured solely because of the color of their skin. When, in 2009, the then two-year-old Natálka was nearly murdered—and when three of the four perpetrators of this horrific act are today free—we believed that this marked the definitive end of openly expressed anti-Roma racism.

Unfortunately, recent months have shown the opposite. It is as if parts of society have become desensitized. As if people were competing over who can be “less correct,” particularly in the online space. This cannot be taken lightly, because it may lead even those who recently racially attacked young Roma football players on a train to feel that they are doing nothing inappropriate.

And this is without even speaking of structural racism, for example in education, the justice system, the labor market, or housing.

For us, as Roma, today’s commemoration is particularly significant. Roma have survived centuries of oppression, forced assimilation, pogroms, and Porajmos—the Roma Holocaust. They survived thanks to community, families, traditions, faith, culture, and mutual support. Our survival was never guaranteed.

For this very reason, we also bear a responsibility today to speak out against injustice—wherever it occurs and against whomever it is directed.

Today, we pay tribute to all victims of the Holocaust—Jewish, Roma, and others. And we promise that their stories and their message will live on, and that we will not forget.

Thank you for your attention.