

## PRESS RELEASE

The genocide of the Roma and Sinti during the Second World War has remained largely unknown and untaught in Europe to date. While the numbers of victims are controversial, it is beyond any doubt that the Roma and Sinti were targeted by the Nazi regime for systematic and total extermination. They were deported, exploited, murdered in concentration camps, they died of hunger and disease and they were executed in their villages. With the end of the war a new struggle has started for the Roma in Europe who have been fighting for decades for the official recognition and remembrance of the genocide as well as for compensations and restitutions for the survivors and their descendants.

Even less known is the resistance of the Roma during these dark times, which was nevertheless continuous and had both an individual as well as a collective, organised dimension. The most notable attempt took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 1944 when the Roma and Sinti imprisoned in the so called "Gypsy camp" in Auschwitz II-Birkenau resisted against the SS who intended to exterminate them in the gas chambers that night. Following this uprising, half of the inmates were deported to other concentration camps such as Ravensbrück and Buchenwald. The "Gypsy camp" was then liquidated several months later during the night of the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 1944 when the nearly 3,000 remaining inmates were exterminated.

Against this background, in the last few years the Tom Lantos Institute (TLI) has engaged with this significant issue and joined authoritative Roma NGOs and actors in their efforts to advocate for the recognition of the Roma resistance, in particular the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 1944.

Together with ternType International Roma Youth Network and La Voix des Roms, a Paris-based grassroots organisation, TLI launches today a two-year research and advocacy project with the aim to further investigate the resistance of the Roma in the context of the Holocaust; raise awareness and educate about this specific topic and the Roma genocide in general; and, finally, promote public remembrance. It is in our belief that the acknowledgment of state and societal responsibility in the Roma genocide lays the foundations for dialogue and reconciliation.

The project is financed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

The 16<sup>th</sup> of May 1944 will be remembered and celebrated in several cities in Europe, such as Budapest and Paris, where TLI's partner organisations have put together highly interesting and diverse programmes. More information about the Budapest event [here](#) and about the Paris event [here](#).



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