14-20

April 20, 2020

**WIESENTHAL CENTER RELEASES PRIMARY FINDINGS OF ITS LATEST REPORT ON THE WORLDWIDE INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF NAZI WAR CRIMINALS**

**(APRIL 1, 2018-DECEMBER 31, 2019)**

1.       **Trials of Nazi War Criminals**

Three trials of Nazi war criminals commenced during the period under review, two in Germany and one in the United States. Both German trials were of men  who served as SS guards at the Stutthof concentration camp, near Gdansk, Poland, which was the first Nazi concentration camp established outside Nazi Germany on September 2, 1939, and was the last to be liberated by the Allies (the Soviet Army) on May 9, 1945.

Approximately 110,000 men and women were sent to the camp, which was originally designated for Polish religious and political leaders and intelligentsia. The first large number of Jewish inmates arrived in Stutthof in July 1944, about a year after the Nazis built a gas chamber and crematorium in the camp, and it was then that the camp began to play an important role in the implementation of the Final Solution. Those deported were 25,053 Jews (among them 16,123 women) from the Baltics, mostly the remnants of Lithuanian ghettos, and 23,566 (of whom 21,817 were women) who had previously been deported from Hungary to Auschwitz. The estimated number of victims in Stutthof is 63,000-65,000, among them 28,000 Jews.

The first trial during the period under review was that of Johannes Rehbogen, who served at the camp as an S.S. guard from June 1942 until September 1944, which opened in Muenster on November 6, 2018 and was permanently closed due to illness on April 3, 2019. The second defendant, Bruno Dey, served as an armed S.S. watchtower guard at Stutthof from August 1944 until April 1945. His trial has been temporarily halted due to the Corona virus.

The third trial which was conducted in Memphis, Tennessee, in the United States, was of Friedrich Karl Berger, who served as an armed guard at Meppen, a subcamp of the Neuengamme concentration camp near Hamburg began on May 10, 2019. The verified death toll of that camp is 42,900; 14,000 of whom were murdered or died in the main camp; 12,800 in the subcamps and 16,100 in the death marches in the final weeks of the war. Berger was accused of forcing the inmates "to work outdoors to the point of exhaustion and death." He was tried by the Human Rights and Special Prosecution Section of the U.S. Justice Department, and was ordered deported to Germany on February 28, 2020. (Nazi criminals cannot be prosecuted in the United States for their Holocaust crimes, and are therefore tried for violations of immigration and naturalization law, i.e. concealing their wartime service with the forces of the Third Reich or it allies.)

**2.       Investigations of Nazi War Criminals**

A.      New Investigations-April 1,2018-December 31, 2018              January 1, 2019-December 31, 2019

Poland-194                                                                                        Germany-27

Germany-23                                                                                      Russia-2

Austria-1                                                                                            U.S.-1

Canada-1

Italy-1

U.S.-1                                                                                                                                                                                                                          -1

B.      Ongoing Investigations As Of January 1, 2020\*

Germany-24 investigations against 40 suspects

Russia-2

Estonia-1

France-1

\*Please note  that these figures are not complete since many countries have still not responded to our questionnaire due the  Corona virus.

In conclusion, what emerges from the above data is that prosecution of Nazi war criminals is still possible, but increasingly  difficult.

In that respect, the Corona virus is an unforeseen calamity, which may put an end to the final efforts to hold Nazi war criminals accountable for their crimes.