

# **Worldwide Investigation and Prosecution of Nazi War Criminals**

**(April 1, 2014 – March 31, 2015)**

**An Annual Status Report**

**Dr. Efraim Zuroff**



**Simon Wiesenthal Center – Israel Office**

**Snider Social Action Institute**

**December 2015**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. During the period under review, the most significant progress in prosecuting Nazi war criminals has been made in Germany. This is clearly the result of the dramatic change instituted several years ago vis-à-vis suspected Holocaust perpetrators who served in death camps or Einsatzgruppen, who can now be successfully convicted of accessory to murder based on service alone. Previously, prosecutors had to be able to prove that a suspect had committed a specific crime against a specific victim and that the crime had been motivated by racial hatred to be able to bring a case to court. Besides Germany, there were ongoing investigations against Holocaust perpetrators as of March 31, 2015 in several additional countries such as Italy, the United States, Croatia and apparently Canada.

2. During the period from April 1, 2014 until March 31, 2015, no convictions were obtained, but three indictments were filed in Germany against individuals who had served in the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp, and the extradition to Germany of a Nordhausen concentration camp guard was approved in the United States.

3. From January 1, 2001 until March 31, 2015, 102 Nazi perpetrators have been convicted in court with the majority of those successes achieved in Italy (46) and the United States (39). Those countries also filed the majority of the 99 indictments submitted against Nazi criminals during the same period.

4. While significant progress was achieved primarily in Germany, other countries have failed to attain any results whatsoever during the period under review. These countries, which have received a failing grade (F), have been divided into two different categories: F-1 for those countries which in principle are unable to prosecute Nazi war criminals - Norway and Sweden (statutes of limitations) and F-2 for those countries which are able, at least in theory, to take legal action against Holocaust perpetrators and had practical opportunities to do so, but have failed to achieve any positive results during the period under review. The reasons for the failing grade awarded to each country are explained in the report.

## **INTRODUCTION**

As time passes since the crimes of the Holocaust were committed, it would appear that the chances of successfully bringing Nazi war criminals to justice are rapidly diminishing, but in fact that is not the case. Despite the passage of more than seven decades since the end of World War II, the efforts to hold Holocaust perpetrators accountable are continuing with a significant measure of success and there is considerable potential for additional achievements in the immediate future. This assessment is firmly reflected in the figures presented in this year's report which point to ongoing investigations against more than seven hundred suspects as of March 31, 2015.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center views the facilitation of the investigation and prosecution of Nazi war criminals as an important part of its international agenda. Over the past more than three decades, the Center has carried out extensive research in numerous countries to identify Nazi war criminals, document their crimes, trace their postwar escape and ascertain their current whereabouts in order to assist in bringing them to justice. It has also energetically lobbied various governments which have been reluctant to prosecute Holocaust perpetrators, and has sought to convince them of the importance of bringing such criminals to trial. The Center has also exposed the rehabilitations granted to Nazi war criminals in several East European countries and has played a role in the cancellation of dozens of these pardons.

The Center's experience has clearly shown that the existence of political will to bring Nazi war criminals to justice is an absolute prerequisite for the successful prosecution of Holocaust perpetrators. In that respect, the results achieved in this field are often just as much a function of the existent political climate, as of the strength of the evidence available against the suspects in question.

Starting in 2002, the Simon Wiesenthal Center has published an annual report to document the investigation and prosecution of Nazi war criminals worldwide as a public service designed to focus attention on the issue, chronicle its development, and encourage all the governments involved to maximize their efforts to bring as many unprosecuted Holocaust perpetrators as possible to justice. The date chosen for publicizing the primary findings of the report is Yom Ha-Shoa (Holocaust Remembrance Day) as designated by the State of Israel, which this past year was observed on April 16, 2015. In that respect, the Center has always believed that the

prosecution of the perpetrators of the Holocaust is one of the most fitting means of commemorating those annihilated by the Nazis. Famed Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal often noted his sense of personal obligation toward the victims of the Holocaust to do his utmost to maximize the number of Nazi war criminals forced to pay for their crimes. Needless to say, such trials also play an important role in educating the public about the Holocaust, preserving its memory and helping to combat Holocaust denial and distortion, contemporary anti-Semitism, racism, and xenophobia.

\* \* \*

The figures and statistics which appear in this report were primarily provided by the special agencies dealing with this issue in each country, not all of which were willing to provide the pertinent data. We have tried to the best of our ability to point to various problems and lacunae in the information supplied. The Center welcomes any pertinent information, comments and/or suggestions relating to the contents of the report, which can be mailed or faxed (972-2-563-1276) to our Jerusalem office or sent by email to [swcjerus@netvision.net.il](mailto:swcjerus@netvision.net.il). This report in its entirety will be posted on our website [www.operationlastchance.org](http://www.operationlastchance.org)

Dr. Efraim Zuroff

Chief Nazi-Hunter, Simon Wiesenthal Center

Director, SWC-Israel Office and Eastern European Affairs

## **THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW: APRIL 1, 2014 – MARCH 31, 2015**

In attempting to record and analyze the worldwide efforts to investigate and prosecute Nazi war criminals during a specific time period, there are four major criteria which have to be taken into account:

1. the number of “convictions” (including denaturalizations, deportations and extraditions) obtained;
2. the number of indictments filed;
3. the number of investigations initiated;
4. the number of ongoing investigations.

During the past year, there was a small decrease in the number of convictions, but an increase in the number of indictments, whereas the number of new cases dropped considerably, but the figure for ongoing investigations rose slightly.

The most dramatic developments during the period under review were the initial practical results of the new prosecution policy implemented by the German judicial authorities in the wake of the conviction in Munich of Sobibor SS guard Ivan Demjanjuk as an accessory to murder in May 2011. Based on that decision, the German Zentrale Stelle decided to investigate all the hitherto unprosecuted persons who had served in any of the six Nazi death camps (Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Belzec, Chelmno, Sobibor and Majdanek) or in Einstazgruppe (mobile killing units) A, B, C, and D, which operated in the territories of the Soviet Union.

The results achieved during the period under review were quite significant. Three indictments against Auschwitz operatives were filed and one of these persons was brought to trial in the spring of 2015. Four additional trials are slated for 2016 in Germany, and six investigations of individuals who served in the Auschwitz or Majdanek death camps are currently in their final stages.

In other respects, the past year was very similar to its predecessor. As usual, the critical importance of political will in bringing Nazi war criminals to justice was increasingly evident. Once again, the results clearly indicate that the chances of successful prosecutions in countries reluctant to bring Holocaust perpetrators to justice are minimal or nonexistent. This is



particularly evident in post-Communist Eastern Europe, where despite the increased worldwide interest and awareness regarding the Holocaust, the dismemberment of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, all of which have helped create numerous new opportunities for the prosecution of Holocaust perpetrators in the countries in which the crimes of the Shoa were committed, little progress has been made. (These developments have also facilitated prosecution in the overseas countries which granted a haven to East European Nazi collaborators.) Unfortunately, relatively few countries have made an effort to exploit the far greater access to Eastern European archives and witnesses and the renewed interest in the crimes of the Shoa, to launch a serious effort to maximize the prosecution of Holocaust perpetrators. In fact, even those post-Communist countries which have initiated programs to bring Nazi war criminals to justice, have rarely been able to achieve significant successes.

Thus during the period under review, not a single conviction was obtained in Eastern Europe. And while the lack of results achieved to some extent reflects the objective difficulties involved in the criminal prosecution of crimes committed several decades previously, there is no doubt that the absence of political will to pursue such cases remains a major obstacle to greater success, particularly in the Baltics and in countries like Romania, Ukraine, and Belarus.

In fact, during the past seventeen years, only five Eastern European post-Communist countries took any legal measures whatsoever against local Nazi war criminals, and most of them were ultimately unsuccessful, in many cases due to a lack of political will. Thus, for example, at the request of the Lithuanian government, its Genocide and Resistance Research Center prepared a list of 2,055 Lithuanian Holocaust perpetrators which was submitted to the authorities in 2012, but during the period under review, the names on the list had still not been investigated by prosecutors. This lack of action characterizes the total failure to date of the Lithuanian legal authorities. Thus none of the three *Saugumas* (Lithuanian Security Police) members put on trial, including the two top commanders of the Vilnius district (Aleksandras Lileikis and Kazys Gimžauskas), were ever punished despite two convictions (one defendant died in the middle of his trial), since the proceedings were only conducted after the suspects were medically unfit to stand trial. A Lithuanian request for the extradition of murder squad officer Antanas Gecevičius (Gecas) from Scotland failed due to his demise in the course of the extradition proceedings. Similarly, a Latvian request for the extradition of murder squad officer Konrad Katejs from Australia was not carried out for the same reason.

Elsewhere in Europe, with the exception of Germany, Italy remains the only country in which the crimes of the Holocaust were committed, which is still actively pursuing Nazi war criminals

with the requisite political will, which explains why it has achieved the most convictions on criminal charges against German and Austrian perpetrators during the past decade.

By contrast, Austria, which in early 2011 established a working group (Forschungstelle Nachkriegsjustiz), to identify alleged Nazi war criminals and to carry out a comprehensive investigation of 526 public court files which relate to Nazi war crimes, again failed to achieve any positive results. Thus the interim report, which was scheduled to be completed by mid-2011 has still not appeared, let alone the final report scheduled for 2012. Such a comprehensive investigation effort was particularly welcome given Austria's consistent failure during the past three decades to bring Holocaust perpetrators to justice. Despite a large number of potential suspects, Austria has not punished a single Nazi war criminal for crimes committed against Jews during the Holocaust in more than thirty years.

Although statutes of limitations on cases of murder exist in many countries, until recently there were only two countries in the Western world which proscribed the prosecution of crimes related to genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The countries in question were Norway and Sweden, which therefore refused in principle to investigate, let alone prosecute, Nazi war criminals. On March 7, 2008, Norway finally cancelled the statute of limitations on genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity and in February 2010, Sweden did so as well. Unfortunately those changes were not made retroactive and thus neither country can prosecute Nazi war criminals.

This issue became of practical relevance in Norway during the previous period under review in the wake of an October 2013 interview with Olav Tuff, a Norwegian Waffen-SS veteran who served in the Viking Division on the Eastern front. Tuff related that his unit had committed serious war crimes against the civilian population in the Ukraine, but under the existing law, it is impossible to prosecute such crimes in Norway (or in Sweden). During the period under review, the Wiesenthal Center initiated a project to identify additional Norwegian perpetrators still alive in order to attempt to convince the Norwegian government to consider changing the law, but those efforts have not hitherto yielded significant results.

As far as the countries of refuge are concerned, the only positive results were achieved in the United States, which obtained an extradition order against Nordhausen concentration camp guard Johann Breyer on July 23, 2014. Unfortunately, Breyer's death on the same day prevented his extradition to Germany. Canada (in 1987), Australia (in 1989) and Great Britain (in 1991) all passed special laws to enable criminal prosecution, but the results achieved in recent years have

been minimal. Canada, which in 1994 switched to the "American model" of denaturalization and deportation, initially took successful legal action (denaturalization) against 8 persons (and 2 others voluntarily left the country), but to date not a single person who was stripped of his Canadian citizenship has been successfully deported from the country, a stark contrast to the impressive success achieved by the United States under relatively similar conditions.

As far as Australia and Great Britain are concerned, both countries have closed down their specialized prosecution agencies and it is therefore extremely unlikely that they will be able to obtain any convictions while they continue to insist on prosecuting these suspects on criminal charges. This is particularly true in Australia, where all witnesses in such cases must appear in person, a factor which would make a successful prosecution next to impossible, given the country's geographic distance from the scene of the crimes committed. Another problem encountered in Australia was the 2012 decision of the High Court to refuse to allow the extradition to Hungary of Karoly (Charles) Zentai to face an allegation of murder during the Holocaust. Unless any other cases will be successfully prosecuted in Australia, the refusal to extradite Zentai will have marked the end of the Australian effort to bring Holocaust perpetrators to justice, which can be categorized as a total failure in practical terms, since the Australian judiciary failed to take successful legal action against a single Nazi war criminal living in the country.

In July 2002, the Wiesenthal Center and the Targum Shlishi Foundation of Miami, headed by Aryeh Rubin, launched "Operation: Last Chance," a project designed to assist in facilitating the prosecution of Nazi war criminals by offering financial rewards for information which would help bring about their conviction and punishment. The project was originally initiated in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, and a year later was expanded to Poland, Romania and Austria. In 2004, it was launched in Croatia and Hungary and in 2005 in Germany. In 2007 it was started in Argentina, Chile, Brazil and Uruguay, and during the period under review, it was initiated in Norway.

In the wake of the Demjanjuk conviction by a German court in May 2011 and its potential implications for the increased prosecution of Nazi war criminal in Germany, the Wiesenthal Center and Targum Shlishi launched "Operation: Last Chance II" in Berlin on December 14, 2011. This new project sought to focus on those who served in death camps and in the Einsatzgruppen and who, in the wake of the Demjanjuk precedent, can now almost automatically be successfully prosecuted in Germany, even if there is no evidence that they committed a specific crime against a specific victim. As a result of this new legal situation, the hitherto

biggest obstacle to the prosecution of Nazi war criminals in Germany has been eliminated, making it theoretically much easier to bring these Holocaust perpetrators to justice in Germany than it has been during the past almost five decades.

The reward being offered for information on such cases was increased from \$25,000 (US) to 25,000 euros and the conditions for its receipt were made more favorable to the informants. Until now, the rewards in “Operation: Last Chance” were granted only if the suspects brought to our attention were convicted and punished. (Partial rewards of \$5,000 were awarded in the cases of Milivoj Ašner (2004) and Lazslo Csatory (2012) due to exceptional circumstances.) In O:LC II cases, however, an initial reward of 5,000 euros will be awarded if a suspect is indicted, another 5,000 euros will be given if a conviction is obtained, and the informant will receive an additional 100 euros for every day the criminal is incarcerated for the first 150 days of his or her imprisonment.

Prior to the launch of “Operation: Last Chance II,” the Wiesenthal Center had received the names of 605 suspects, 103 of which were submitted to prosecutors, either in the country in which the crime was committed or in the suspect’s country of origin or of current residence. From December 4, 2011 until April 1, 2013, the names of 47 additional suspects were sent to our office, three of which were submitted to prosecutors.

As far as Operation Last Chance II is concerned, the previous period under review must be divided into two parts, from April 1 until July 23, 2013, and from the latter date until March 31, 2014. The reason for the division is the launch on July 23 of a poster campaign in Berlin, Hamburg, and Cologne under the slogan of "Spät aber nicht zu spät" (Late but not too late), which generated an unusually large amount of information. Thus during the period from the launch of the poster campaign until a second round of posters went up in seven additional German cities (Frankfurt am Main, Munich, Stuttgart, Nuremberg, Leipzig, Dresden, and Magdeburg) in late November 2013, the Center received the names of 111 suspects, among them the names of a male guard from Dachau who had admitted that he had committed murder in the camp, and a female guard who served at Auschwitz. The names of these two individuals, and two others were submitted to German prosecutors during that period. From December 2013 until March 31, 2014, several dozen additional names of suspects were recorded but none were deemed worthy for submission to the German judicial authorities.

During the period under review, the Center received the names of 24 suspects, most of them Germans or Lithuanians currently living in the United States. Among the names were also those

of four Norwegian suspects received after Operation Last Chance was launched in Oslo on December 3, 2014. Two of the suspects were local volunteers who had served with the Waffen-SS in the Ukraine, where there is evidence that Norwegians participated in Holocaust crimes. The other two suspects were alleged to have served in Norwegian concentration camps.

In summation, despite numerous obstacles and difficulties, some progress was made during the period under review in the efforts to bring the perpetrators of the Holocaust to the bar of justice. As time goes by, however, the political dimension of these efforts becomes increasingly problematic, as can clearly be seen by the analysis of the records of the individual countries.

**CONVICTIONS OF NAZI WAR CRIMINALS OBTAINED**  
**DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW**

April 1, 2014 – March 31, 2015

No convictions were obtained but on July 23, 2014, the United States succeeded in obtaining an extradition order in the federal court in Philadelphia certifying Nordhausen concentration camp guard Johann Breyer for extradition to Germany.

**CONVICTIONS OF NAZI WAR CRIMINALS:**  
**COMPARATIVE STATISTICS 2001-2015**

	1.I.2001 – 31.III.2002	1.IV.2002 – 31.III.2003	1.IV. 2003 – 31.III.2004	1.IV.2004 – 31.III.2005	1.IV.2005 – 31.III.2006	1.IV.2006 – 31.III.2007	1.IV.2007 – 31.III.2008	1.IV.2008 – 31.III.2009	1.IV.2009 – 31.III.2010	1.IV.2010 – 31.III.2011	1.IV.2011 – 31.III.2012	1.IV.2012 – 31.III.2013	1.IV.2013 – 31.III.2014	1.IV.2014 – 31.III.2015	Total
United States	6	5	7	5	5	6	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	<b>39</b>
Italy	0	0	0	0	10	15	1	6	3	0	9	1	1	0	<b>46</b>
Canada	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	<b>7</b>
Germany	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	<b>6</b>
Lithuania	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
Poland	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
France	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>102</b>

**NEW CASES FILED DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW**

April 1, 2014 - March 31, 2015

Germany - 3

1. In September 2014, Auschwitz guard Oskar Groening was charged in Hannover with 300,000 counts of accessory to murder in the deaths of individuals killed in the death camp in 1944. He also was accused of collecting and processing currencies stolen from the deportees and sent back to Berlin for use by the Nazi authorities.
2. In February 2015, Auschwitz guard Reinhold Hanning was charged in Dortmund with 170,000 counts of accessory to murder during his service in the death camp from January 1943 until June 1944.
3. In February 2015, Auschwitz medic Hubert Zafke was charged in Schwerin with 3,681 counts of accessory to murder during his service at the SS hospital at the death camp from August 15 to September 14, 1944.



**NEW CASES FILED: COMPARATIVE STATISTICS 2001 – 2015**

	1.I.2001 – 31.III.2002	1.IV.2002 – 31.III.2003	1.IV.2003 – 31.III.2004	1.IV.2004 – 31.III.2005	1.IV.2005 – 31.III.2006	1.IV.2006 – 31.III.2007	1.IV.2007 – 31.III.2008	1.IV.2008 – 31.III.2009	1.IV.2009 – 31.III.2010	1.IV.2010 – 31.III.2011	1.IV.2011 – 31.III.2012	1.IV.2012 – 31.III.2013	1.IV.2013 – 31.III.2014	1.IV.2014 – 31.III.2015	Total
United States	4	10	5	3	2	6	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	<b>35</b>
Italy	0	0	0	0	2	0	5	2	16	2	5	1	0	0	<b>33</b>
Germany	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	2	3	1	0	1	2	3	<b>17</b>
Canada	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>4</b>
Hungary	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
Denmark	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Lithuania	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Poland	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Spain	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	<b>5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>99</b>

**NEW INVESTIGATIONS OF NAZI WAR CRIMINALS**  
**INITIATED DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW**

Germany <sup>1</sup>	68
Austria	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>

<sup>1</sup> In Germany, new investigations were opened against 68 individual suspects in 50 cases.

**NEW INVESTIGATIONS OF NAZI WAR CRIMINALS:**

**COMPARATIVE STATISTICS 2001 – 2015**

	1.I.2001 – 31.III.2002	1.IV.2002 – 31.III.2003	1.IV.2003 – 31.III.2004	1.IV.2004 – 31.III.2005	1.IV.2005 – 31.III.2006	1.IV.2006 – 31.III.2007	1.IV.2007 – 31.III.2008	1.IV.2008 – 31.III.2009	1.IV.2009 – 31.III.2010	1.IV.2010 – 31.III.2011	1.IV.2011 – 31.III.2012	1.IV.2012 – 31.III.2013	1.IV.2013 – 31.III.2014	1.IV.2014 – 31.III.2015	Total
Poland	48	8	172	306	141	2	142	230	290	409	0	0	X	X	1,748
Germany	9	?	9	27	38	22	31	43	130	161	45	30	115	68	728
Austria	10	3	60	272	1	0	2	16	24	6	9	13	7	1	424
United States	46	16	40	34	27	30	22	5	5	5	6	10	2	0	248
Italy	0	56	18	6	2	2	3	21	4	2*	1	6	6	0	127
Argentina	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Australia	0	9	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
Belgium									1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Brazil	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Canada	?	?	?	?	103	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	0	0	103
Chile	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Croatia	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Denmark	0	0	1	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Estonia	2	17	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20
Great Britain	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	8
Hungary	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	5
Latvia	0	4	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20
Lithuania	100	24	18	2	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	150
Romania	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Serbia	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Slovakia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Slovenia	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Spain	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Switzerland	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>3,625</b>

**ONGOING INVESTIGATIONS OF NAZI WAR CRIMINALS AS OF APRIL 1, 2015**

Germany <sup>1</sup>	725
Italy <sup>2</sup>	18
Austria <sup>3</sup>	5
Lithuania <sup>4</sup>	6
Croatia	1
Canada <sup>5</sup>	?
USA <sup>5</sup>	?
<b>Total</b>	<b>755</b>

<sup>1</sup> We received confirmation that as of January 1, 2014, at least 57 ongoing investigations were being conducted in Germany against at least 725 suspects. The largest number of cases are being investigated by the Zentrale Stelle (13), and the states with the most cases are Saxony (12) and Bavaria (12), while Hessen (681) has the largest number of suspects. Please note that these are partial figures since three provinces did not provide any data: Mecklenberg-Vorpommern, Nordrhein-Westphalia, and Thuringen, and at least one investigation, in Schleswig-Holstein, had an unknown number of suspects.

<sup>2</sup> All of these investigations are being conducted by the Rome Military Court. The number of suspects in these investigations has not been revealed.

<sup>3</sup> Among the pending cases is one against Alois Brunner and an additional case against unknown defendants accused of participating in the Nazis' euthanasia program.

<sup>4</sup> All six cases in Lithuania are currently suspended.

<sup>5</sup> The relevant agencies in both Canada and the United States replied that they are forbidden to provide such statistics.

**ONGOING INVESTIGATIONS OF NAZI WAR CRIMINALS:**  
**COMPARATIVE STATISTICS 2001 – 2015**

	April 1, 2002	April 1, 2003	April 1, 2004	April 1, 2005	April 1, 2006	April 1, 2007	April 1, 2008	April 1, 2009	April 1, 2010	April 1, 2011	April 1, 2012	April 1, 2013	April 1, 2014	April 1, 2015
United States <sup>1</sup>	175	275	285	246	236	221	216	150	87	76	74	?	?	?
Lithuania	110	108	25	21	26	24	17	13	9	?	6	6	6	6
Canada	78	67	194	190	255	255	?	180	180	157	19	?	?	?
Poland	48	13	350	450	365	333	305	270	316	471	458	500	0	X
Germany	27	13	35	46	28	20	30	27	177	582	528	471	680	725
Great Britain	6	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	X
Croatia	3	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
Austria	3	4	27	199	131	83	4	5	28	5	22	5	10	5
Latvia <sup>2</sup>	2	5	5	58	53	55	3	1	0	?	0	0	0	X
Netherlands	1	0	0	6	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	X
Estonia	1	2	3	3	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	X
Costa Rica	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	X
Denmark	0	1	2	11	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Italy	0	0	12	13	5	17	22	52	43	23	0	19	18	18
Romania	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	27	0	3	0
Australia	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hungary	0	0	0	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	0	0
Slovenia	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spain	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Serbia	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	2	0	0	0	0
France	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Argentina	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Brazil	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	X
Chile	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	X
Belgium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	X
Slovakia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	X
<b>Total</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>940</b>	<b>1,252</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>1,019</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>1,328</b>	<b>1,138</b>	<b>1,005</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>755</b>

1. The figure for April 1, 2002 includes only formal investigations, while the figures for subsequent years include formal investigations and preliminary inquiries.
2. Both cases for January 1, 2001 – March 31, 2002 are of persons already deceased. Two of the five cases for April 1, 2002 – March 31, 2003 are of persons deceased.

## **INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION REPORT CARD**

As part of this year's annual status report, we have given grades ranging from A (highest) to F which reflect the Wiesenthal Center's evaluation of the efforts and results achieved by various countries during the period under review.

The grades granted are categorized as follows:

### **Category A: Highly Successful Investigation and Prosecution Program**

Those countries which have adopted a proactive stance on the issue, have taken all reasonable measures to identify the potential suspected Nazi war criminals in the country in order to maximize investigation and prosecution and/or have achieved notable results during the period under review.

### **Category B: Ongoing Investigation and Prosecution Program Which Has Achieved Practical Success**

Those countries which have taken the necessary measures to enable the proper investigation and prosecution of Nazi war criminals and have registered at least one conviction and/or filed one indictment during the period under review and/or actively assisted investigations in other countries.

### **Category C: Minimal Success That Could Have Been Greater, Additional Steps Urgently Required**

Those countries which have failed to obtain any convictions or indictments during the period under review but have either advanced ongoing cases currently in litigation or have opened new investigations, which have serious potential for prosecution.

### **Category D: Insufficient and/or Unsuccessful Efforts**

Those countries which have ostensibly made at least a minimal effort to investigate Nazi war criminals but which failed to achieve any practical results during the period under review. In many cases these countries have stopped or reduced their efforts to deal with this issue long before they could have, and could achieve important results if they were to change their policy.

**Category E: No known suspects**

Those countries in which there are no known suspects and no practical steps have been taken to uncover new cases.

**Category F-1: Failure in principle**

Those countries which refuse in principle to investigate, let alone prosecute, suspected Nazi war criminals because of legal (statute of limitation) or ideological restrictions.

**Category F-2: Failure in practice**

Those countries in which there are no legal obstacles to the investigation and prosecution of suspected Nazi war criminals, but whose efforts (or lack thereof) have resulted in complete failure during the period under review, primarily due to the absence of political will to proceed and/or a lack of the requisite resources and/or expertise.

**Category X: Failure to submit pertinent data**

Those countries which did not respond to the questionnaire, but clearly did not take any action whatsoever to investigate suspected Nazi war criminals during the period under review.

A: Germany, United States

B: Italy

C: Hungary

D: Austria, Canada, Croatia

E: Argentina, Australia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Romania, Slovenia

F-1: Norway, Sweden

F-2: Lithuania, Spain, Ukraine

X: Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Great Britain, Latvia, Luxemburg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Paraguay, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Uruguay



## Category A: Highly Successful Proactive Prosecution Program

1. Germany – The decentralization of the German legal system makes it very difficult to give a grade which accurately reflects the legal situation throughout the Federal Republic. Thus there are states which have been quite active in investigating cases of Nazi war criminals, whereas others have investigated as few as a single case or none at all. And while the significant differences between the states are obviously affected by the number of suspects living in, and the cases assigned to, each area, the figures are also related to the performance of local prosecutors and their determination, or lack thereof, to bring Nazi war criminals to justice.

It is fair to say that the period under review was one of the busiest in years for German efforts to bring Nazi war criminals to justice. The primary catalysts for the increased activity were the rapidly expiring time in which such cases can be prosecuted due to the advanced age of the defendants and health concerns, as well as the landmark 2011 conviction of armed SS Sobibor death camp guard Ivan Demjanjuk. That decision was the first case in more than four decades in which a Holocaust perpetrator was convicted, even though no evidence of a specific crime against a specific victim was presented to the court.

This decision had extremely significant implications, since it meant that any person who served in a Nazi death camp or in any of four of the Einsatzgruppen which operated in the areas of the Soviet Union (mobile killing squads A, B, C, and D) can be convicted in Germany of accessory to murder, even if prosecutors had no evidence that the suspect had committed a specific crime. Until now, such cases generally never reached the courts, even though the suspects were active participants in mass murder over extended periods of time. During the period under review, the Zentrale Stelle (Central Office for the Clarification of Nazi war crimes), headed by Kurt Schrimm, initiated a comprehensive search for death camp guards which bore impressive positive practical results.

Thus, for example, three indictments were filed during the period under review against individuals who served in the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp. In addition, investigations were conducted against additional suspects who were charged in Germany subsequent to March 31, 2015. In fact, the authorities have already announced that at least four defendants from Auschwitz are slated to stand trial in 2016, making Germany the undisputed world leader in criminal prosecutions of Holocaust perpetrators.

2. United States – The legal situation in the United States vis-à-vis the prosecution of Nazi war criminals and collaborators is different than that of all other Western countries, with the exception of Canada. Such individuals cannot be prosecuted in the United States for their crimes since they were committed outside the United States and their victims were not American citizens. Faced by this legal dilemma, the US authorities opted for prosecution on civil charges of immigration and naturalization violations committed by concealing their wartime collaboration with the forces of Nazi Germany when they applied to come to the United States and subsequently to obtain American citizenship.

While this decision made the successful prosecution of these persons more likely to some degree, the legal challenges faced by American prosecutors are still formidable since the burden of proof in these cases is substantially identical to those faced in criminal prosecutions. Thus the results achieved by the Office of Special Investigations (established in 1979) and several years ago renamed the Human Rights and Special Prosecution Section (HRSP) are particularly noteworthy.

On July 23, 2014, HRSP, headed by Eli Rosenbaum Esq., was able to obtain an extradition order against Nordhausen concentration camp guard Johann Breyer. Unfortunately, his death that same day prevented his extradition to Germany.

In addition, during the period under review, the American authorities sought the deportation or extradition to Europe of Trawniki concentration camp guard Jakob Palij, Theodor Szebinskyj, who served as a SS Death's Head guard at the Gross-Rosen, Sachsenhausen and Warsaw concentration camps, and Ukrainian auxiliary policeman Ivan Kalymon who was involved in the persecution of Jews in Lviv, Ukraine. The latter two died during the period under review, however, Szebinskyj on April 24, 2014 and Kalymon on June 29, 2014. Both had been criminally charged in Europe, but their deaths prevented their extradition.

**Category B: Ongoing Prosecution Programs Which Have Achieved Practical Success**

Italy – One of the most positive developments in recent years has been the renewed efforts by Italian military prosecutors to bring to trial German and Austrian perpetrators of crimes against civilians in Italy during World War II. Thus during the years 2005-2014, a total of forty-six Nazi war criminals have been convicted by military prosecutors, by far the highest number achieved anywhere, since the publication of this report was initiated in 2002 to cover the period from January 1, 2001 until March 31, 2002.

It should be noted, however, that unfortunately, all of the cases of Nazi war criminals prosecuted in Italy during the past ten years have been conducted in absentia, with not a single suspect present during the proceedings. Efforts by the Italian judicial authorities to obtain the extradition of the suspects, prior to their trials, all of whom with two exceptions were German citizens residing in Germany, have hitherto been rejected by the Federal Republic and Austria, which refuse in principle to extradite their citizens. In the wake of this refusal, Italy has requested in several cases that those convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment serve their sentences in Germany. Three years ago, one of the officers convicted in Italy, Josef Sheungraber, was convicted in Germany and sentenced to life imprisonment.

During the period under review, appeals by Alfred Störk, sentenced to life imprisonment in 2013 for the murder of Italian prisoners of war, and by Wilhelm Stark sentenced to life imprisonment in 2011 for the murder of Italian civilians, were rejected by the Military Court of Appeal in Rome. The 2011 sentences of life imprisonment against Helmut Odenwald, Erich Koeppel and Hans Winkler for the murder of Italian civilians were confirmed.

Unfortunately, to date, there has been no effort to investigate Holocaust crimes in Italy or to examine the role of Italians in the deportation of Italian Jews to Auschwitz.

The establishment of a specialized agency to investigate and prosecute all World War II cases could probably considerably facilitate the expedition and the expansion of the research effort to uncover additional suspects.

**Category C: Minimal Success Which Could Have been Greater; Additional Steps Urgently Required**

Hungary – On January 16, 2015, the Military Council of the Budapest Tribunal issued a European Arrest Warrant against Charles Zentai (born Karoly Steiner), based on information that the Australian resident whose extradition to Hungary to stand trial for the murder of Peter Balazs on November 8, 1944 had been denied by the Australian Supreme Court, had travelled to the United Kingdom. The warrant has hitherto not been successful.

## **Category D: Insufficient and/or Unsuccessful Efforts**

1. Austria – During the period under review, the Austrian authorities investigated two cases of death camp guards, one from Majdanek and one from Auschwitz-Birkenau. In the latter case, the death of the suspect ended the investigation, whereas the Majdanek guard was spared prosecution due to a statute of limitations which bars the prosecution of individuals who committed a crime when they were still considered minors.

Additional investigations were also adversely affected by the death of suspects. Thus of six suspects identified the previous year by a research group on Nazi perpetrators, only one was still alive during the period under review.

In that respect, mention must be made of the decades-long failure of the Austrian authorities to successfully hold Holocaust perpetrators accountable for their crimes. The fact that for more than thirty years, not a single Nazi war criminal has been punished in an Austrian court, clearly reflects the lack of political will in Vienna to bring those guilty of Holocaust crimes to the bar of justice.

2. Canada – During the period under review, the only positive achievement by the Canadian authorities was the dismissal by a federal court on January 13, 2015 of an appeal by Helmut Oberlander against his denaturalization.

In general, Canada's recent record in dealing with Nazi war criminals has been quite disappointing, having failed to deport a single person who was denaturalized for concealing their Nazi past. Thus during the past twenty years, since the switch was made from prosecution on criminal charges to the application of civil remedies, the Canadian authorities have obtained ten denaturalizations against defendants residing in Canada, who in theory should have then been deported. To date, however, not a single one of the eight persons who appealed against the decision (two of the ten denaturalized voluntarily left the country) has been deported, and seven of the eight have since died in Canada. (In addition, six defendants died during the course of the proceedings against them, and three were acquitted.) These disappointing results contrast sharply with the successes consistently registered year after year by the American authorities who also apply civil remedies against Nazi war criminals.

Given the fact that the Holocaust perpetrators who immigrated to both countries very much fit the same geographic and biographical profile, the large discrepancy between the impressive results achieved in the United States and the minimal progress made in Canada should be cause for serious concern and analysis in Ottawa.

3. Croatia – Among the unprosecuted Auschwitz guards discovered alive by the German Zentrale Stelle was Jakob Denzinger who was living in Osijek, Croatia. Denzinger served as a guard at five concentration camps, Auschwitz, Plaszow, Mauthausen, Sachsenhausen and Buchenwald. Upon being informed of the fact that Denzinger was alive and living in Croatia, the Croatian judicial authorities began to investigate the case during the previous year, but no discernable progress was achieved during the period under review.

**Category E: No Known Suspects**

During the period under review, there were no suspects known to the Wiesenthal Center or to the local authorities, who were either residing in the following countries or had committed Nazi war crimes there during World War II, nor were any practical steps taken in these countries to uncover such potential suspects:

1. Argentina
2. Australia
3. Bosnia-Herzegovina
4. Colombia
5. Czech Republic
6. Denmark
7. Estonia
8. Finland
9. France
10. Greece
11. Lithuania
12. Romania
13. Slovenia
14. Spain

## **Category F-1: Failure in Principle**

1. Norway – For years, Norway refused in principle to investigate, let alone prosecute, Nazi war criminals due to an existing statute of limitations, which contrary to the situation elsewhere in the Western world with the exception of Sweden, applied not only to murder, but also to genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. On March 7, 2008, however, the Norwegian parliament cancelled the existing statute of limitations on the crimes of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and terrorism. Unfortunately, this development did not change the situation regarding Holocaust crimes, since the amendment to the penal code does not allow for the prosecution of those cases which had already been under statute of limitations when the law was changed. Thus, in principle, Norway still cannot bring Nazi war criminals to justice.

New revelations during the previous period under review regarding war crimes committed by Norwegians, both in Norway as well as in Ukraine, have again pointed to the importance of finding a legal remedy to enable the prosecution of such individuals.

2. Sweden – For years, the Swedish government refused in principle to investigate, let alone prosecute, Nazi war criminals due to a statute of limitations on murder, which was instituted in 1926, and which contrary to the situation elsewhere in the Western world with the exception of Norway, applied also to genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. In February 2010, the Swedish parliament cancelled the statute of limitations in cases of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, but that step was not made retroactive and therefore does not allow for the prosecution of Holocaust perpetrators. Thus Sweden, like Norway, remains one of the only countries in the civilized world which cannot in principle prosecute Nazi war criminals.



## Category F-2: Failure in Practice

1. Lithuania – The Lithuanian government continues to do everything possible to avoid prosecution and punishment of local Holocaust perpetrators. Thus, in 2012, the authorities received a list of 2,055 individuals who had actively participated in the murder of Jews, which was prepared by its own Genocide and Research Center, at the government's request. To this date, none of the names on the list have been investigated by prosecutors, insuring that no legal action will be taken against local Nazi war criminals.
2. Spain – On December 15, 2014, the Plenary of the Audiencia Nacional's Criminal Court closed lawsuit no. 56/2009 against three Nazi war criminals who were denaturalized and ordered deported from the United States for concealing their service in Nazi concentration camps during World War II. The three – Johann Lepprich and Anton Tittjung who served as guards at Mauthausen, and Theodor Szebinskyj who was a guard at Gross-Rosen, Sachsenhausen and Warsaw concentration camps, had originally been indicted under universal jurisdiction which applied in Spain to cases of genocide and crimes against humanity. That law was changed, however, in 2014 to limit such cases to those in which the suspects were Spanish citizens, foreign citizens who resided on a regular basis in Spain, and foreigners living in Spain, whose extradition had been denied by the Spanish authorities.  
The change in the law and subsequent closure of the lawsuit ended the hopes of enabling the criminal prosecution of Nazi criminals who had been ordered deported from the United States, but whom no country had agreed to accept.
3. Ukraine – Since it obtained independence from the Soviet Union, Ukraine has, to the best of our knowledge, never conducted a single investigation of a local Nazi war criminal, let alone prosecuted a Holocaust perpetrator. It has also hitherto refused to admit Ukrainian Nazi war criminals who were ordered deported from the United States for concealing their wartime activities during the immigration and/or naturalization process.

**INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION REPORT CARD:**

**COMPARATIVE STATISTICS 2001-2015**

	2000/1 - 2001	2001/2 2002	2002/3 2003	2003/4 2004	2004/5 2005	2005/6 2006	2006/7 2007	2007/8 2008	2008/9 2009	2009/10 2010	2010/11 2011	2011/12 2012	2012/13 2013	2013/14 2014	2014/15 2015
Argentina	C	X	D	D	X	X	X	D	X	E	X	D	E	E	E
Australia	D	D	D	D	C	C	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2	C	F-2	F-2	E	E
Austria	D	D	D	C	D	F	F-2	C	F-2	D	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2	D
Belarus		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Belgium		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	D	X	X	X	E	X
Bolivia		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bosnia-Herzegovina		X	X	X	D	D	E	X	X	X	E	X	E	E	E
Brazil		X	X	X	X	X	X	D	X	X	X	E	X	E	X
Canada	B	B	C	B	C	C	F-2	B	D	F-2	F-2	F-2	B	D	D
Chile		X	X	X	X	D	X	D	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Colombia		F	F	F	D	D	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E
Costa Rica	C	D	C	X	X	D	X	X	X	X	E	X	X	E	X
Croatia	C	D	D	D	D	B	F-2	F-2	E	E	E	E	E	C	D
Czech Republic		D	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E	E	E
Denmark		D	D	D	B	D	C	D	D	D	D	E	E	E	E
Estonia	D	D	D	D	D	F	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2	E
Finland		D	D	D	D	D	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
France	B	C	D	D	X	D	D	X	X	X	X	D	X	X	E
Germany	B	B	B	B	C	C	F-2	B	B	A	B	A	A	A	A
Great Britain	C	D	D	D	D	D	F-2	X	X	D	X	X	X	D	X
Greece		X	X	X	X	X	X	E	E	E	E	X	E	E	E
Hungary		X	D	D	B	C	C	F-2	F-2	F-2	B	B/F-2	C	D	C

Italy	B	C	C	C	C	B	B	B	B	B	B	A	B	A	B
Latvia	C	D	C	C	C	C	F-2	F-2	E	X	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2	X
Lithuania	C	C	C	C	C	B/F	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2
Luxemburg		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Netherlands		D	X	D	C	D	X	X	D	D	C	D	X	X	X
New Zealand	D	D		D	D	D	X	E	E	X	E	X	E	E	X
Norway		D	F	F	F	F	F-1	F-1	F-1	F-1	F-1	F-1	F-1	F-1	F-1
Paraguay		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Poland		B	C	C	C	B	F-2	C	C	C	C	C	C	X	X
Romania		X	D	F	D	F	D	X	X	X	E	E	E	D	E
Russia		X	X	X	X	X	E	X	E	E	X	X	X	X	X
Scotland	D	D	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Serbia		X	X	X	X	X	C	C	B	B	B	B	X	E	X
Slovakia		X	D	D	D	D	E	X	X	X	C	E	C	C	X
Slovenia				D	D	D	X	X	X	E	E	X	X	E	E
Spain			D	D	X	D	X	X	B	X	B	B	B	F-2	E
Sweden	F	F	F	F	F	F	F-1	F-1	F-1	F-1	F-1	F-1	F-1	F-1	F-1
Switzerland								D				-	-	-	-
Ukraine		X	X	X	X	F	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2	F-2
United States	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	A
Uruguay		X	X	X	X	X	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

### **List of Nazi War Criminals Slated for Possible Prosecution in 2016**

1. Helma Kissner – Germany (Poland) – served as a radio operator in the Auschwitz death camp from April to July 1944 – charged with accessory to murder in 260,000 cases.
  - \*2. Reinhold Hanning – Germany (Poland) – served in the Auschwitz death camp from January 1943 until June 1944 – charged with accessory to murder in 170,000 cases.
  3. Helmut Oberlander – Canada (Ukraine) – served in Einsatzkommando 10A (part of Einstazgruppe D, which murdered an estimated 23,000 mostly Jewish civilians.
  - \*4. Hubert Zafke – Germany (Poland) – served as a medic in the Auschwitz death camp during the years 1943 and 1944 – charged with accessory to murder in 3,681 cases.
  5. Ernst Tremmel – Germany (Poland) – served in the Auschwitz death camp – charged with accessory to murder in 1,073 cases.
  6. Alfred Störk – Germany (Greece) – participated in the September 1943 mass murder of 120 Italian officers on the Greek island of Kefalonia.
  7. Helmut Rasbol – Denmark (Belarus) – during the years 1942-1943 served as a guard in the Judenlager established by the Nazis in Bobruisk, Belarus, during which almost all the Jewish inmates of the camp were executed or died of the horrible physical conditions.
  8. Aksel Andersen – Sweden (Belarus) – during the years 1942-1943 served as a guard in the Judenlager established by the Nazis in Bobruisk, Belarus, during which almost all the Jewish inmates of the camp were executed or died of the horrible physical conditions.
  9. Johann Robert Riss – Germany (Italy) – participated in the murder of 184 civilians in Padule di Fucecchio, Italy on August 23, 1944.
  10. Algimantas Dailide – Germany (Lithuania) – served in the Saugumas (Lithuanian Security Police) in Vilnius – arrested Jews and Poles who were subsequently executed by the Nazis and Lithuanian collaborators.
- \*Trial dates already slated in Germany in 2016.

## **Simon Wiesenthal Center**

### **Snider Social Action Institute**

The Simon Wiesenthal Center is an international Jewish human rights organization dedicated to preserving the memory of the Holocaust by fostering tolerance and understanding through community involvement, educational outreach and social action. The Center confronts important contemporary issues including racism, anti-Semitism, terrorism and genocide and is accredited as an NGO both at the United Nations and UNESCO. With a membership of over 400,000 families, the Center is headquartered in Los Angeles and maintains offices in New York, Toronto, Chicago, Jerusalem, Paris, and Buenos Aires.

Established in 1977, the Center closely interacts on an ongoing basis with a variety of public and private agencies, meeting with elected officials, the U.S and foreign governments, diplomats and heads of state. Other issues that the Center deals with include: the prosecution of Nazi war criminals; Holocaust and tolerance education; Middle East Affairs; and extremist groups, neo-Nazism, and hate on the Internet.

The Center is headed by Rabbi Marvin Hier, its Dean and Founder. Rabbi Abraham Cooper is its Associate Dean and Rabbi Meyer May its Executive Director.

#### **International headquarters:**

1399 South Roxbury Drive

Los Angeles, California 90035

UNITED STATES

Tel: 310/553-9036 or (toll-free from within the U.S.) 800/900-9036

Fax: 310/553-4521

Email: [information@wiesenthal.com](mailto:information@wiesenthal.com)

Website: [www.wiesenthal.com](http://www.wiesenthal.com)

## **Simon Wiesenthal Center – Israel Office**

Since its establishment in Jerusalem in 1986, the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Israel Office has made the efforts to help bring Nazi war criminals to justice the primary focus of its activities. Founded by Holocaust historian Dr. Efraim Zuroff, who also coordinates the Center's Nazi war crimes research worldwide, the office has played an important role in tracking down and exposing escaped Nazi war criminals and in helping to facilitate their prosecution. During the past twenty nine years, the office has carried out extensive research which has helped identify more than three thousand suspected Nazi war criminals, most of whom escaped to Western democracies after World War II. It also played an important role in helping to convince Canada (in 1987), Australia (in 1989), and Great Britain (in 1991), all of which had admitted numerous Nazi collaborators after World War II, to pass special legislation to enable the prosecution of Nazi war criminals residing in those countries.

Following the dismemberment of the Soviet Union and the fall of Communism, the Israel Office has been particularly active in Eastern Europe, and especially in the Baltics and the Balkans, in helping to identify Holocaust perpetrators and convince often-reluctant governments to bring local Nazi war criminals to justice. It has also exposed the illegal rehabilitations granted in Lithuania and Latvia to dozens of individuals convicted by Soviet courts, who had actively participated in the mass murder of Jews during the Holocaust.

During the past decade, these efforts have intensified and have been expanded to include the fight for historical truth in many of the countries in which the Holocaust took place, as well as the struggle against contemporary anti-Semitism. These three objectives are the goals which in 2002 prompted the Israel Office to launch "Operation: Last Chance," together with the Targum Shlishi Foundation of Miami, Florida, founded and headed by Aryeh Rubin, a project which offers financial rewards for information which will facilitate the conviction and punishment of Nazi war criminals. Utilizing special ads created for the project, "Operation: Last Chance" has not only helped identify numerous Holocaust perpetrators, but has also focused public attention on the important role played by local collaborators in the mass murder of Jews in virtually every country in Eastern Europe.

In December 2011, in the wake of the conviction in Munich of Sobibor death camp guard Ivan Demjanjuk, the Israel Office and Targum Shlishi launched "Operation: Last Chance II" at the Bundestag in Berlin. The new project focuses on death camp operatives and members of the

Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing squads), whose prosecution in Germany has become much easier in the aftermath of the Demjanjuk decision.

The Israel Office has also played a major role during the past several years in the fight against Holocaust distortion, a phenomenon which has become particularly dangerous in post-Communist Eastern Europe, where there is governmental support for efforts to hide or minimize the very important role played in Holocaust crimes by local Nazi collaborators and for the promotion of the canard of equivalency between Nazi and Communist crimes.

## **Contact Information**

### **Israel Office**

Director: Dr. Efraim Zuroff

Office Manager: Fran Schnall

1 Mendele St.

Jerusalem 92147

ISRAEL

Tel: 972-2-563-1273/4/5

Fax: 972-2-563-1276

Email: swcjerus@netvision.net.il

Website: [www.operationlastchance.org](http://www.operationlastchance.org)

Twitter: @Ezuroff

### **International offices:**

Museum of Tolerance – New York

Eastern Director: Michael Cohen

226 East 42<sup>nd</sup> St.

New York, NY 10017

UNITED STATES

Tel: 212/697-1293

Email: [motny@wiesenthal.com](mailto:motny@wiesenthal.com)

Canadian Office (Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies) – Toronto

President and Chief Executive Officer – Avi Benlolo

5075 Yonge St., Suite 902

Toronto, Ontario M2N 6C6

CANADA

Tel: 416/864-9735

Fax: 416/864-1083

Email: [tsteyn@fswc.ca](mailto:tsteyn@fswc.ca)

Website: [www.friendsofsimonwiesenthalcenter.com](http://www.friendsofsimonwiesenthalcenter.com)



European Office – Paris

Director – Dr. Shimon Samuels

66 Rue Laugier

75017 Paris

France

Tel: 33/1/4723-7637

Fax: 33/1/4720-8401

Email: [csweurope@gmail.com](mailto:csweurope@gmail.com)

Website: [www.wiesenthal-europe.com](http://www.wiesenthal-europe.com)

Latin American Office – Buenos Aires

Director – Dr. Ariel Gelblung

Cabello 3872 – PB "C"

( C1425APR) – Buenos Aires

ARGENTINA

Tel 54/11 4802-1744

Fax 54/11 4802-1774

Email: [info@cswlatinoamerica.org](mailto:info@cswlatinoamerica.org)

Midwest Office – Chicago

Director – Alison Pure-Slovin

180 North LaSalle St.

Chicago, Il, 60601

Tel: 312-981-0105

Email: [swcmidwest@wiesenthal.com](mailto:swcmidwest@wiesenthal.com)

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