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Manifestations of Extremism and Prejudiced Hatred

Summary Situation Report First half of 2023

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1. Information on the development of the extremist situation in the first half of 2023

1.1. Summary

In the first half of 2023, the traditional extremist and xenophobic populist scene was completely overshadowed by the so-called anti-system movement. It currently consists of a wide range of heterogeneous groups with a limited number of members and a short duration.

Compared to the original and to some extent „weary" groups of the "pre-Covid" era, this movement is more vital. Representatives of some of the entities operating under its auspices advocate various conspiracy theories or try to give them a spiritual or esoteric dimension. The supporters of this movement are not young people, but people over 40 years of age. Thus, we can speak of a revolt of middle-aged or elderly people who have existential concerns and feel alienated.

The social networking environment has continuously generated the personalities of the anti-system movement since the coronavirus pandemic. They compete with each other or make short-term alliances. People who purposefully exploit the frustrations of others to gain popularity, financial profit, or political capital have also "stuck" to the movement. Even some traditional extremists have found a place within the anti-system movement. A well-functioning symbiosis with the quasi-media scene has emerged.

The Czech prejudiced hate ecosystem has been strongly influenced by Russian hybrid influence. The long-standing covert undermining of Czech democracy has had a profound effect on the thinking of a part of society.

1.2. Right-wing extremists

Mainly the Nationalist and Workers' Youth groups represented the Czech neo-Nazi movement in the period under review. The Nationalists focused mainly on events abroad and on maintaining contacts with their foreign counterparts. The Workers' Youth presented itself with increasingly virulent speeches in social media and made no effort to disguise its neo-Nazi orientation.

The National Democracy and the Workers' Party of Social Justice did not take any relevant action. They just repeated ideas and information presented by other entities or disinformation media. Their members took part in protest actions organised by other subjects. Their views have traditionally reinforced the narrative coming from the Russian Federation.

Other right-wing extremist subjects played a marginal role.

In monitoring police reports, it is still possible to regularly find incidents involving individuals with neo-Nazi sentiments.

During the reporting period, various causes related to neo-Nazism also ended. The District Court in Šumperk granted conditional release from imprisonment to two of the so-called Vítkov arsonists, Václav Cojocara and Ivo Müller. Hedvika Fiksová, managing director of the publishing

house Bodyart Press, has filed an appeal to the Supreme Court against her conviction for publishing the book *The Myth of 6 Million*.¹

Three activists convicted of supporting and promoting a movement aimed at suppressing human rights and freedoms have filed appeals to the Supreme Court against suspended sentences in the National Resistance and Resistance Women Unity cases. The Supreme Court upheld a complaint by the Minister of Justice in the case of *Naše Vojsko*, which sold Nazi-related items. The case, in which the publishing house and its director faced charges of founding, supporting and promoting a movement aimed at suppressing human rights and freedoms and rioting, was returned to the prosecutor's office for further investigation. The public prosecutor subsequently filed a third indictment in the case.

The High Court in Olomouc has ruled in the appeal case of a young man who was sentenced by the Brno Regional Court to 30 months in prison and suspended for three years for preparing a terrorist attack at three embassies in Prague. The court upheld the sentence but changed his psychiatric protective treatment from institutional to ambulatory.

1.3. Manifestations of prejudiced hatred and other manifestations of xenophobic populist subjects

During the reporting period, there were xenophobic and racially motivated manifestations by persons with no clear connection to the right-wing extremist environment. They were directed against immigrants, Roma and other minorities. The Trend of speeches against Ukrainians or their property continued. Some of the acts were the subject of interest for law enforcement authorities..² In connection with the murder of a young Romani man in Brno, members of the Romani community have registered xenophobic rhetoric against Ukrainians. Attempts by some persons to further incite these tensions on purpose have also been recorded. Some Roma and Ukrainian figures have publicly spoken out and warned against collective guilt. Mutual tensions between the two ethnic groups later escalated, inter alia, after a brawl in Pardubice which ended with a Romani man's face being slashed..³

In the future, we have to take into account that mutual conflicts between some Ukrainians and Romani or Czech people may continue to develop. Since the coronavirus pandemic, both the majority and the minorities have been experiencing a series of situations of stress, which may have implications for their increased sensitivity and reactivity to inter-ethnic conflicts. If this is neglected or underestimated, tensions will rise and extremists and populists will exploit the situation.

Most of the xenophobic groups that were formed in response to the 2014-2015 migration crisis have lost their relevance or completely ceased to exist..⁴

The only remaining constant on this stage is the Freedom and Direct Democracy movement. In the period under review, it gained attention through contacts between the movement's

¹ In connection with the publication of David Hoggan's pseudo-historical book, Fiksová was sentenced by the District Court in Žďár nad Sázavou to a fine of CZK 15 000 for the crime of denying, questioning, approving or justifying genocide. Her publishing house, Bodyart Press, was fined CZK 45,000. The amount of the penalty was subsequently confirmed by the Regional Court in Brno.

² However, anti-Russian speeches were also registered.

³ Police officers detained three people and initiated criminal proceedings in the case of disorderly conduct.

⁴ However, the topic of migration continues to resonate strongly and is continuously fed by the quasi-media scene .

representatives and the German Alternative für Deutschland, or rather its youth organisation Junge Alternative.

The German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution has described the party as a "suspicious case" in connection with right-wing extremism and the youth organization as a right-wing extremist organization. In February, the Municipal Court in Prague dismissed a lawsuit filed by the movement to protect its reputation against the weekly Respekt. In the past, the media outlet had labelled it "fascist".

The Municipal Court in Prague upheld on appeal the two-year suspended sentence of former MP Lubomir Volný for the crime of spreading a false alarm.⁵

Police in Opava have charged a man with attempted murder for assaulting a homeless couple. He caused stab wounds to the man, mainly to his head and upper half of his body. The woman suffered injuries of a minor nature. His motive was to "clean up" the city of homeless people..⁶

1.4 Paramilitary and militia groups

The boom of xenophobic vigilante groups is a bygone era. This subculture has failed to generate charismatic personalities who would be able to lead such groups. It was paralysed by mutual disagreement and fear of reprisals from the authorities. As a result, the subculture was practically unheard of during the period under review.

Detectives from the National Centre against Terrorism, Extremism and Cybercrime have filed a motion with the High State Prosecutor's Office in Prague to indict five individuals from the Czechoslovak Soldiers in Reserve for Peace group for the crimes of terrorist attack, financing terrorism, and support and promotion of terrorism.

The only one who attracted short-term attention was Nela Lisková, formerly of the National Militia. On her Twitter account, she called for the de-Ukrainianisation and denazification of the Czech Republic. In response to this statement, Prague's criminal investigators from the Extremism and Terrorism Department have initiated criminal proceedings for the crime of inciting hatred against a group of people or restricting their rights and freedoms.

1.5. Anarchist Movement

Anarchist groups have long been stereotyped and ideologically exhausted. Their lengthy sociological polemics have no chance of success in the current era of austere, simple and fast-presented communications. The community is rigid; new members do not come. The supporters of anarchism are unable to agree on a longer-term and conceptual collaboration.

Anarchists continued to comment on the conflict in Ukraine. They have been a traditional voice of support for their imprisoned or prosecuted colleagues abroad. They have long tried to

⁵ Volný said on his Facebook profile "a plan is being prepared to discredit ivermectin by using the deaths (i.e., murders) of several patients who will use it." Ivermectin is a drug that has been mentioned in connection with the treatment of COVID-19. Volný was elected to the Chambre of Deputies on behalf of the Freedom and Direct Democracy movement. However, he subsequently withdrew from it and became involved in other political subjects. He appealed against the verdict of the District Court for Prague 7.

⁶ The attacker was accompanied by a friend who was not directly involved in the attack. Officers charged him with not reporting a crime.

participate in environmental protests, but this has not brought them new supporters. There is little interest in anarchist ideas among young people..

Members of anarchist groups also travelled abroad to support public campaigns of their colleagues..

The Regional Court in Ústí nad Labem overturned the acquittal in the "Phoenix 2" case, in which five anarchists faced charges of supporting and promoting a movement aimed at suppressing human rights and freedoms. The case, which is linked to the so-called Network of Revolutionary Cells, will be reviewed by the District Court in Most.

1.6. Orthodox Communists

Orthodox communists continued to spread mainly pro-Kremlin narratives. The activities of Stalinists who downplay communist crimes and commemorate important anniversaries and personalities from the era of communist totalitarianism can still be registered. Some of them participated in various protest rallies organized by other subjects.

Most orthodox communists are still associated with the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia. Other entities are marginal, heterogeneous and do not cooperate with each other. They differ in their degree of radicalism. Some orthodox communist individuals openly express views that challenge democratic principles.

Josef Skála gained the biggest attention in this category. Over time, he moved away from purely communist ideas and became more oriented towards the so-called anti-system movement. For this purpose, he also cooperates with the quasi-media scene.

The District Court for Prague 7 then sentenced Skála, together with Vladimír Kapal and Juraj Václavík, to an eight-month suspended sentence with a five-year probationary period for a discussion on the so-called "Svobodné rádio" (Free Radio) that questioned historical facts about the Katyn massacre. The Municipal Court in Prague then confirmed the eight-month sentence for the offence of denying, questioning, approving and justifying genocide, but shortened the probationary period to 18 months.

The Criminal Proceedings related to the border guards' shooting at the border were influenced by the high age and health condition of the Communist authorities. Lubomír Štrougal and Vratislav Vajnar died. The prosecutions of Karel Kinc and Jan Fojtík were suspended with reference to expert opinions indicating that they were unable to understand the content and meaning of the procedural acts in the criminal proceedings.

The Constitutional Court has granted German citizen Thomas Bartsch a higher compensation claim for injuries caused by Czechoslovak border guards during an unsuccessful attempt to cross the border. The Cheb District Court rehabilitated another German, Steffen Schlegel, who was also shot by border guards and subsequently handed over to the East German Stasi secret police. Schlegel can apply for compensation in special proceedings.

1.7 Media spreading hateful prejudice

The quasi-media continued to spread a variety of Kremlin narratives. A substantial volume of coverage was devoted to the conflict in Ukraine.

In the Czech Republic, it focused on providing the so-called anti-system movement with situational reports. It continuously produced disparate reports targeted against the system of liberal democracy, the government and the anchoring of the state in the international democratic community. It regularly labelled members of the government as traitors who allegedly sold out the Czech Republic to various foreign entities, allowed foreign troops to be stationed in the country, threatened Czech culture by promoting the Istanbul Convention, etc. In the presidential elections, they expressed support particularly for Pavel Zítek and Jaroslav Bašt. A wide range of disinformation was produced about Petr Pavel. Themes related to the coronavirus pandemic reverberated peripherally..

Xenophobic anti-Muslim and anti-migrant texts have been consistently produced. Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories have traditionally been identified.

Prague criminologists have begun to investigate the editor-in-chief of the Patriotic Newspaper Radek Velička for compiling a "list of persons to be totally eliminated after the revolution". The list includes over 50 people and institutions, including some journalists.

Disinformation media have long produced rather stereotyped hateful content that has lacked inventiveness. Their potential to radicalise society is on the decline. As a result, their readers prefer more punchy and shorter messages circulated on social media, or streamed videos.⁷

1.8 Religiously motivated extremism

There were no significant manifestations of religious extremism in the Czech Republic during the period under review.

After the coronavirus pandemic, the Muslim community resumed its public activities, but remained rather closed to the majority society. The attitude of Czech society towards individual groups of migrants had an impact on this situation. Especially in the Arab community, the fact that Ukrainian refugees were more warmly received than migrants from Muslim countries was badly perceived. Some individuals on social media have criticized this.

The Muslim community, however, remains very moderate in its majority and does not reflect the calls of the proponents of extremist forms of Islam. Only individuals subscribe to the Salafist or Wahhabi brand.

The Plzeň District Court has revoked the protective psychiatric treatment of Jan Silovský, which he took after his conditional release from prison. The man, who wanted to join the Islamic State in 2016, was diagnosed with schizoid disorder.

In the period under review, the Police of the Czech Republic began to address the issue of sects in a more detailed and more systematic manner. Police officers focused in particular on groups that form various types of dependencies in parallel social structures, where lower-ranking members are forced to commit profit-generating crimes (e.g. fraud) or selected forms of crimes against human or sexual dignity and against the family and children.

⁷ Smaller and less moderated platforms, such as Telegram, where more explicit hateful and extremist content is circulated, have gained popularity.

Several quasi-religious groups that operate with various disinformation narratives are also active in the Czech Republic. These subjects are notable for their sympathy for the current Kremlin regime.

1.9 Other relevant events related to extremism and terrorism

While traditional extremist and xenophobic subjects have rather stagnated, the so-called anti-systemic movement⁸ has been undergoing dynamic development. During the reporting period, a wide variety of protest groups began to assert themselves. These groups often consisted of only a few individuals. In their online presentations, however, they tried to give the impression of mass and well-organised entities with high political ambitions, including replacing the existing political system with a different form of government.

A number of politicians and activists have sought to win the favor of these dissatisfied citizens by organizing public rallies and touring Czech cities to do so. These individuals used the disinformation campaign to win supporters.⁹

After the March demonstration in the Prague Wenceslas Square, organized by the Law Respekt Expertise Party, there was a violent attempt to tear down the Ukrainian flag at the National Museum. Violence in connection with this rally was later prosecuted as a criminal or misdemeanour offence. Other criminal prosecutions referred to the wearing of symbols related to the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

The anti-system movement also echoed the idea that the Czech Republic is not a legitimate state.¹⁰ The most important proponent of this idea was the Community of Legitimate Creditors of the Czech Republic. However, it was gradually adopted by more and more persons active in the anti-system movement.¹¹ In the Czech Republic, the concept of so-called sovereign citizens has so far manifested itself mainly through coercive actions against the authorities or by ignoring their appeals. Their activities culminated in extremes at the Prague City Court and the Regional Court in Hradec Králové. These persons attempted to block specific court proceedings against the accused, who were portrayed as victims of an illegitimate system.¹²

Another specific feature was the attempt to downplay Russian crimes in Ukraine and to define NATO countries as warmongers. To this end, various "peace initiatives" were set up. The Defence Cooperation Treaty with the USA has become a target of criticism.¹³ Ultimately, however, these activities play into the hands of the Kremlin regime and its efforts to get the West to stop supporting Ukraine.¹⁴

⁸ A group of dissatisfied citizens who distrust the government, the democratic system and disagree with the foreign course of the country. These people do not share the values of the current system, do not feel that it is beneficial to them. They are therefore looking for an alternative with which they can sympathise and in which they can feel safe, secure and stable.

⁹ An example is Ladislav Vrabel. He was given a four-month suspended sentence by the District Court for Prague 1 for spreading the alarm message that the Czech Republic wanted to use nuclear weapons against Russia in order to provoke retaliation.

¹⁰ According to this conspiracy theory, the Czechoslovak Federal Republic was illegally dissolved. The present Czech Republic is therefore illegitimate and its citizens should not be subject to Czech laws and should not be obliged to follow the instructions of the Czech authorities.

¹¹ It can be assumed that some activists use it only to win popularity, financial donations, or to avoid being held accountable for their activities.

¹² More about the sovereign citizens movement can be found here: <https://www.mvcr.cz/chh/clanek/hnuti-suverennich-obcanu-a-jejich-aktivity-v-ceske-republice.aspx>.

¹³ A range of misinformation has appeared in connection with this treaty, e.g. that it was signed in secret or that it gives the US side disproportionately broad powers and makes the Czech Republic a de facto vassal state.

¹⁴ More on this topic here: <https://www.mvcr.cz/chh/clanek/mir-jako-kremelsky-propagandisticky-narativ.aspx>.

Law enforcement authorities continued to deal with cases of approval, support or downplaying of the Russian aggression.¹⁵

During the reporting period, the courts also dealt with violent activities or alarm messages related to restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic. It was noticeable that some activists, radicalised at the time of the spread of Covid 19, shifted to issues that are more topical and became advocates and promoters of pro-Kremlin narratives. In response to law enforcement's interest in some of the disseminators of such content, the anti-system movement began to speak of "victims of the system" or "truth fighters."¹⁶

The police have dealt with a number of cases of threats and intimidation against politicians, opponents and journalists. Their radicalism is increasing. In many cases, the threats are also targeted at family members of opponents.

The law enforcement authorities also paid attention to facts related to the events in Ukraine. Criminal investigators from the National Headquarters for Counter-Terrorism and Extremism and Cybercrime were involved in a challenging international initiative aimed at investigating Russian war crimes. They also looked into cases of alleged looting by Czech citizens.¹⁷ The Judiciary also dealt with cases of volunteers who joined the conflict in Donbas on the side of the self-proclaimed separatist republics and were prosecuted for terrorist offences. The Constitutional Court rejected a complaint by Alexei Fadeyev.¹⁸ The Supreme State Prosecutor's Office has filed an appeal in the Martin Sukup case.¹⁹ The Municipal Court in Prague sentenced Alojz Polák to 20 years imprisonment for the second time.²⁰

In the reporting period, it was possible to register a large number of activities related to the pro-Russian hybrid action against the Czech Republic for its support of Ukraine and its integration into the international democratic community. In addition to the continuous disinformation and promotion of anti-systemic trends, this includes repeated cyber-attacks, alarm messages and intimidation of opponents. The aim is to permanently undermine and erode the pillars of the democratic system.

The traditional Night Wolves ride took place without much public interest. Three riders were involved in a traffic accident. The potential of the Night Wolves rides seems to have been exhausted. The European branch of the pro-Kremlin club, which was far from being solely dedicated to "commemorating the victory over Nazism", was affected by sanctions imposed by the European Union. The group's pro-Kremlin activities were taken over by the Brat for Brat biker club.

Level 1 terrorist threat remained in force.²¹

¹⁵ These acts are usually qualified as denying, questioning, approving and justifying genocide.

¹⁶ Typical examples are Patrik Tušl, Tomáš Čermák or Jakub Netík.

¹⁷ One person has been placed under custodial prosecution, two are under investigation.

¹⁸ The man was given a 21-year prison sentence in June 2022.

¹⁹ The High Court in Prague changed his original qualification to the crime of participation in a non-state armed group aimed at operating in an armed conflict and reduced his sentence from 21 years to four years

²⁰ The High Court in Prague had previously returned the case to the Municipal Court for a new hearing.

²¹ <https://www.mvcr.cz/cthh/clanek/stupne-ohrozeni-terorismem.aspx>.

2. Statistics

2.1. Hate crime in the first half of 2023

Number of acts

Tactical and statistical classification	period 1.1.-30.6.2023	
	registered	clarified
intentional bodily harm (§ 145 - 146a)	6	2
violence and threats against a group of people and individuals (§ 352)	15	6
dangerous threats (§ 353)	12	3
Damage to another's property (§ 228)	5	2
disorderly conduct at sports and public events (§ 358)	2	1
spraying (§ 228/2)	5	0
defamation of a racial, ethnic or other group (§ 355)	10	8
inciting the national and racial hatred (§ 356)	14	4
support and promotion of the movement (§§ 403, 404, 405)	0	0
TOTAL	69	26

Number of prosecuted persons

In the first half of 2023, 69 hate crimes were recorded. Of these, 26 were cleared. The most frequent crimes in this period were violence against a group of citizens and violence against an individual with 15 offences.

In the first half of 2023, the Police recorded 43 prosecutions for hate-motivated offences. The most frequent crimes were violence against a group of citizens and against an individual and defamation of a nation, race, ethnic or other group of persons numbering 8 persons.

Number of offences per victim (assault object)

Group	period 1.1.-31.12.2022
	registered
Jews	9
Roma	7
LGBT+	4

2.2. Hate crime in the first half of 2023 by region

Number of acts

Committed on the territory of the region	Period 1.1.-30.6.2023	
	registered	clarified
Prague	39	12
Central Bohemia	7	2
South Bohemia	1	0
Pilsen Region	0	0
Ústí Region	3	3
Hradec Králové Region	0	0
South Moravia	2	1
Moravia-Silesia	8	4
Olomouc Region	2	1
Zlín Region	0	0
The Highlands	1	0
Pardubice Region	2	1
Liberec Region	3	2
Karlovy Vary Region	1	0
CZ TOTAL	69	26

Number of prosecuted persons

Committed on the territory of the region	period 1.1.-30.6.2023
	number
Prague	25
Central Bohemia	1
South Bohemia	0
Pilsen Region	0
Ústí Region	3
Hradec Králové Region	0
South Bohemia	2
Moravia-Silesia	5
Olomouc Region	1
Zlín Region	1
The Highlands	0
Pardubice Region	1
Liberec Region	4
Karlovy Vary Region	0
CZ TOTAL	43

In the first half of 2023, the most hate-motivated acts were registered in Prague (39), followed by the Moravian-Silesian Region (8) and the Central Bohemian Region (7). The highest number of prosecutions for hate-motivated offences was registered in Prague (25), followed by the Moravian-Silesian Region (5) and the Liberec Region (4).