



MINISTERSTVO VNITRA  
ČESKÉ REPUBLIKY

Security Policy Department

Prague, January , 2024

Number of pages: 12

# **Manifestations of Extremism and Prejudiced Hatred**

## **Summary Situation Report 2nd half of 2023**

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# **1. Information on the development of the extremist situation in the second half of 2023**

## **1.1. Summary**

The second half of 2023 also clearly shows a clear dominance of the so-called anti-systemic movement over the traditional extremist and xenophobic populist scene.

In response to the pandemic, economic changes, or foreign conflicts, a very favorable climate has emerged domestically for the entities described below. The main risk associated with these groups lies in their ambition for the Czech Republic to withdraw from NATO and the European Union. In that event, the country would lose its security guarantees and become less resistant to hostile actions by foreign powers, especially the Russian Federation. The implementation of these plans would pose a threat to the overall security, sovereignty, defence and, as a result, the functioning of democracy in the Czech Republic. It is also necessary to consider the risks associated with lone wolves. Attacks by lone wolves do not only cause casualties and physical injuries, but also have long-term psychological effects, including on persons with no direct link to such acts.

In the period under review, the conflict in the Middle East initiated a new impetus to some of these actors. A number of groups did not see the Hamas terrorist attack and subsequent events as a regional conflict, but rather as part of their ideological worldview.

A new phenomenon has been the discord between some members of the Roma and Ukrainian communities, caused by real or fictional situational conflicts escalated in the social network environment.

## **1.2. Right-wing extremists**

The Czech neo-Nazi movement has not been publicly visible at all. Older veterans participated only in private events. Their mobilisation was limited by, among other things, their dependence on alcohol or other narcotics. Members of the group Nationalists continued to focus more on foreign events and foreign colleagues. Several individuals forming the neo-Nazi group the Workers' Youth did not influence the extremist scene in any particular way.

The traditional right-wing extremist parties have completely lost their relevance. All the activists who had the potential to increase their popularity have long since abandoned them. The leaders of these parties were no longer attractive even to the so-called patriotic groups that have emerged within the anti-system movement. They therefore focused mainly on online narratives that were more or less covertly in line with the hybrid action of the current Kremlin regime.

In response to the Hamas terror attack in October, some right-wing extremists sided with the Palestinians, or interpreted this act as an inevitable reaction to the policies of the state of Israel. There has also been a conspiracy theory that Israel itself was behind the attack.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the right-wing extremists, however, this conflict was not a major issue, nor did they pay any longer term attention to it.

Despite the decline and aging of the domestic neo-Nazi movement, young sympathizers of the new movements that are spreading in international online communities appear also in the Czech Republic. These communities work with more modern and punchier presentations and often motivate people to commit direct violent actions. An example of this global trend can be seen in the case of the preparation of a terrorist attack on three embassies in Prague. In March, a young man was given a 30-month sentence suspended for three years by the High Court of Appeal in Olomouc. The case of his co-defendant colleague was heard by the Regional Court in Brno in November..

The Prague 5 District Court has again begun hearing the case of the Naše Vojsko publishing house, which sold items with Nazi motifs. The publishing house and its director face charges of funding, supporting and promoting a movement aimed at suppressing human rights and freedoms and rioting. The Supreme Court rejected an appeal by Hedvika Fiksová, who commissioned the translation and publication of *The Myth of 6 Million*.<sup>2</sup>

### **1.3. Manifestations of prejudiced hatred and other statements by xenophobic populist subjects**

Traditional hate speech against Muslims and migrants continued during the period under review.<sup>3</sup> Attacks against Ukrainians have intensified. They were blamed for high crime rates, ingratitude towards Czech citizens, sympathy for (neo)Nazism, or the security situation in their homeland was downplayed.<sup>4</sup> As a result of several real and fictional incidents between Roma and Ukrainians, tensions between some members of these communities have increased. Some disinformation agents have tried to escalate the situation, and for this purpose they have become "defenders" of Roma rights. On the other hand, some of the so-called "lajfkafi" also participated in the radicalisation of part of the Roma community.<sup>5</sup> The situation was defused thanks, in part, to the work of the police, who reacted quickly to the initial incidents and informed the public about the investigation in a clear and timely manner. The online space was increasingly flooded with various anti-Semitic conspiracy theories.<sup>6</sup> Various fabrications about secret behind-the-scenes plans of the Jews to take over the world or Western civilization were adopted from abroad. After the Hamas terrorist attack, the police initiated criminal proceedings in several cases for anti-Semitic acts. The

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<sup>2</sup> For the offence of denying, questioning, approving and justifying genocide, she was sentenced by the District Court in Žďár nad Sázavou to a total fine of CZK 15 000. The Regional Court in Brno rejected the appeal of the prosecutor and the accused.

<sup>3</sup> It was about portraying migrants and Muslims as rapists, terrorists, parasites who will never change their alleged negative characteristics.

<sup>4</sup> One such example is the case of a man who used a drilling machine to puncture the tyres of cars with Ukrainian licence plates. The District Court for Prague 8 imposed a fine on him for this.

<sup>5</sup> These are Romani influencers who present their opinions via live broadcasts on social media. Some personalities of the Roma community, on the other hand, have tried to defuse the tension.

<sup>6</sup> The case of the website of the so-called National Resistance Council, on which hateful anti-Semitic texts were published, has attracted the attention of the media and the public. A man was subsequently charged in connection with this case with the offences of supporting and promoting terrorism, threatening to commit a terrorist offence, inciting hatred against a group of persons or restricting their rights and freedoms, denying, questioning, approving or justifying genocide, or making false accusations, for sending anti-Semitic messages to public institutions, threatening state and judicial officials and calling for their public execution. The man also called on citizens, authorities and combat-ready men to resist. He also made comments on Russian aggression against Ukraine, siding with the Russian Federation and supposedly downplaying the crimes of its armed forces. In November 2023, the Regional Court in Prague sentenced him to five years' imprisonment for assault resulting in death. The man beat his sick mother in 2019. The Municipal Court in Prague took the man into custody. His wife, who was supposed to help him with his "resistance" activities, has also been indicted..

hateful Czech spectrum in the period under review was complemented by antigypsyism or homophobic expressions.<sup>7</sup>

Disinformation media and specific individuals who fill the online space with often half-truthful or completely fabricated information about various incidents or injustices have contributed to the escalation of tensions to a significant degree. Some of the alarmist reports have been dealt with by law enforcement authorities. In many instances, this content was complemented by statements about the Russian Federation, where law and justice allegedly still function and where the state protects its population and 'traditional values' against minorities and decadence.

#### **1.4. Paramilitary and militia groups**

Paramilitary organisations have not been engaged in significant public activities.

Criminal investigators from the Prague Department of Extremism and Terrorism have completed the pre-trial proceedings and have submitted to the prosecutor of the District State Prosecutor's Office for Prague 4 a file on the case of Nela Liskova, a former representative of the National Militia who called on her Twitter account for the de-Ukrainianization and de-Nazification of the Czech Republic. The public prosecutor then filed a motion to punish the suspect for the crime of inciting hatred against a group of people or restricting their rights and freedoms.

The High Public Prosecutor's Office has previously returned the case of five individuals from the Czechoslovak Soldiers in Reserve for Peace group to investigators of the National Centre for Counter-Terrorism, Extremism and Cybercrime for further investigation. Those individuals were charged with crimes of terrorist attack, financing terrorism, and supporting and promoting terrorism

#### **1.5. Anarchist movement**

The subculture of anarchist individuals has been utterly unsuccessful in winning new supporters. Manifestations of insurgent anarchism have virtually disappeared, and could only be registered in the online space.

The conflict in the Middle East has brought a certain revival for anarchists. Some of them have condemned the actions of both the Israeli state and Hamas, arguing that their leaders must be deposed.

The District Court in Most has resumed the hearing of a case linked to the so-called "Phoenix 2" network of revolutionary cells.<sup>8</sup>

#### **1.6. Orthodox communists**

The orthodox communists have failed to come out of their social bubble, which is immersed in the past, or paid fragmentary attention to selected domestic and international events.

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<sup>7</sup> Attacks against the LGBT+ community have traditionally occurred during the Prague Pride events..

<sup>8</sup> The Regional Court in Ústí nad Labem reversed the acquittal of five anarchists who faced charges of supporting and promoting a movement aimed at suppressing human rights and freedoms.

Some communist groups have strongly echoed events in the Middle East. In response to the Hamas terrorist attack, statements were made by some communist leaders seeking to explain the action by previous Israeli actions and finding sympathy for Palestinian resistance. The communists' reflection on the specific crimes of the terrorists was minimized.

Josef Skála, convicted with two other people for questioning historical facts about the so-called Katyn massacre in a discussion programme on the so-called Svobodné rádio to an eight-month suspended sentence for the offence of denying, questioning, approving and justifying genocide, has filed an appeal to the Supreme Court.

Criminal investigators have opened an investigation on the suspected offence of denying, questioning, approving and justifying genocide in the case of the display of a Russian flag with the letter Z at an event organized by communists in Nymburk.

Police and judicial authorities continued to focus on crimes committed during the communist regime. On 30 June, the Office of Documentation and Investigation of Crimes of Communism charged Colonel Jan Muzikar, a senior official of the Head Administration of the Border Guard and State Border Protection, with abusing the authority of an official for endangering, injuring and killing several persons during an attempted escape across the Czechoslovak border.

## ***1.7. Media spreading prejudiced hatred***

The quasi-media scene continued to present a range of hate messages advocating hostile action by the Russian Federation against the Czech Republic. Traditionally, anti-Muslim and anti-migrant content has appeared as evidence of the alleged inability of the European Union and its Member States to successfully integrate these groups into society. Furthermore, articles were published against Ukrainians in relation to the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Various anti-Semitic conspiracy theories have also been appearing with increasing frequency. In response to the Hamas terrorist attack, fabrications have emerged that Israel itself secretly organised the crime. Disinformation has also been spread that Ukraine provided weapons to Hamas from supplies provided by Western countries. As time passed, anti-Israeli narratives began to emerge condemning the Israeli state's activities against the Palestinians. However, anti-Semitic narratives coexisted with the Islamophobic ones. Their authors are not motivated to defend the rights of Jews or Palestinians, but merely copy the pro-Kremlin propaganda against the West.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Anti-Semitic conspiracies are also used against the West, which sided with Israel after 7 October. In the context of the narrative of the 'Islamisation' of a supposedly weak Europe and the continuous dissemination of Islamophobic content, it was for their authors impossible to stand up for the Palestinians. For more reflection on events in the Middle East, see: <https://www.mvcr.cz/chh/clanek/reakce-kvazi-medialni-a-extremisticke-sceny-na-terroristicky-utok-proti-izraeli-v-roce-2023.aspx>.

The Prague 4 District Court imposed a 10month suspended sentence with a 20month probation on Radek Velička, publisher of Vlastenecké noviny, for the offense of violence against a group of citizens and against an individual. Velička published death threats on the Internet addressed to several persons.

## **1.8. Religiously motivated extremism**

The Czech Republic, like many other countries in the world, was affected by the Hamas terrorist attack. From the outset, the Czech Republic has declared its clear support for Israel and condemned this terrorist act.

Criminal investigators from the National Centre for Counter-Terrorism, Extremism and Cybercrime have initiated criminal proceedings in the case of the death of a Czech citizen who was the victim of terrorists. A woman who was born in Czechoslovakia and imprisoned in Terezín also fell victim to terrorists.

After 7 October, terrorist organisations such as Hamas, Al Qaeda and the Islamic State called for attacks on Jewish targets. On 13 October, Hamas declared a 'Day of Rage'. Demonstrations were held in various parts of the world, and violent attacks and expressions of anti-Semitism took place. A number of countries had to adopt increased anti-terrorist security measures.

Hateful anti-Semitic speech has not avoided the Czech Republic, especially in the online space. In connection with the Hamas terrorist act, the police have initiated criminal proceedings in several cases for expressions of anti-Semitism. In one of the pro-Palestinian rallies in Prague, there was an incident in which one of the participants wore a sweatshirt with the inscription "Olympics 1972", which can be interpreted as a reminder of the anti-Israeli terrorist attack during the Munich Olympics, perpetrated by the Palestinian organisation Black September. There have also been reports of, for example, the tearing down of posters with pictures of persons kidnapped by Hamas.

In response to the above-mentioned events in the Czech Republic and abroad, the Czech Jewish community began to express concern for its safety. These concerns were voiced by Jewish communities, the Lauder Schools and Israeli Jews studying at Czech universities..

According to the Czech intelligence services, however, there was no recorded evidence that the terrorist organizations' calls for direct action against Jewish targets were responded to domestically. Nor has any information been registered that would indicate the radicalisation of the domestic Muslim community. The level of the terrorist threat was not increased. However, the intesecurity forces increased the protection of Jewish sites, intensified the exchange of information and paid increased attention to relevant public gatherings.

The Municipal Court in Prague did not uphold the action against the expulsion of a Libyan whose application for a temporary residence permit for a family member of an EU citizen was rejected by the Ministry of the Interior..

The situation where some citizens find themselves in a certain spiritual vacuum and seek ground in various conspiracy theories also provides fertile ground for the emergence and activities of sects. The Municipal Court in Prague has begun hearing the case of the Kutná Hora sect associated with manipulative and violent practices. Two women are facing charges of murdering the sect leader.

## **1.9. Other relevant events related to extremism and terrorism**

The so-called anti-system movement has once again overshadowed the traditional extremist and other xenophobic entities. Its representatives participate in various public events and are involved in activities on social networks, especially by streaming or otherwise presenting audiovisual content. The unifying element of this movement is criticism, disrespect or non-recognition of the institutions of the Czech state, and adoration of the current regime in the Russian Federation. The anti-system movement and its activities are widely covered by the disinformation media. The personalities of the so-called anti-system movement do not offer any specific political programme, as a rule they only present false or misleading information and conspiracy theories.

Some of these personalities have attracted the attention of law enforcement authorities for publicly presenting threats and other hateful content, or for other criminal activity. The most notorious case is that of Tomáš Čermák, who was convicted of several crimes, including supporting and promoting terrorism. Čermák failed to serve his prison sentence and was subsequently caught by police in Poland. He was then portrayed as a hero and martyr within the anti-system movement and a fund raising campaign for him was organised.

Some activists publicly show their disrespect of the Czech state and its institutions, calling the Czech Republic a corporation with which it is possible to "terminate the contract" and become completely independent thereof.<sup>10</sup>

Aggressive manifestations of the anti-system movement have moved from the online space to the real environment. Police officers have charged eight people who took part in the May riots during the trial of Jana Peterkova with criminal disorderly conduct.<sup>11</sup> The Prague 1 municipal authority fined several people who were detained during a March demonstration in Prague's Wenceslas Square, during which they violently attempted to tear down the Ukrainian flag from the National Museum.

The range of pro-Kremlin manifestations among supporters of the anti-system movement is wide. It includes admiration of the Russian regime, copying pro-Russian attitudes towards the war in Ukraine, or even, for example, presenting the symbols of the so-called Wagner group.<sup>12</sup> Anti-Ukrainian and anti-Ukrainians speeches are not infrequent.<sup>13</sup>

The judicial authorities have 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 Municipal Court in Prague imposed a twenty-one-year prison sentence on Alojz Polák for the crimes of terrorist attack and participation in a terrorist group. The Supreme Court upheld the

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<sup>10</sup> On the basis of this nonsensical theory, in the past they destroyed their personal documents, broke out of alleged contracts with this "corporation", refused to follow the instructions of the authorities, and even carried out so-called "seizures of property". This activity involved a group of activists occupying the building of a public institution, marking it as their property and giving various threatening ultimatums to their representatives.

<sup>11</sup> The police charged five of those persons with violence against a public authority and one person with contempt of court. Subsequently, they filed a motion for indictment against seven persons, while the eighth person could not be charged due to his health condition..

<sup>12</sup> Public presentation of the symbols of the so-called Wagner Group was investigated by law enforcement authorities.

<sup>13</sup> Typically, it was dissatisfaction with the hoisting of Ukrainian flags on the buildings of some public institutions.



appeal of the Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office in the Martin Sukup case and returned it to the High Court in Prague for review. It subsequently imposed the same sentence on him as on Polák.<sup>14</sup>

In the second half of 2023, the activities related to the hybrid action against the Czech Republic continued. Most of these activities are related to the Czech support for Ukraine and the country's integration into the international democratic community. The National Cybersecurity Bureau reported attacks on Czech entities by the pro-Russian NoName057(16) hacktivist group.

Threats of violence, usually addressed to various politicians, and alarmist messages have become a regular subject of interest for law enforcement authorities.

Officers of the National Counterterrorism, Extremism and Cybercrime Center helped their US counterparts at the FBI apprehend a man in the United States who was planning to commit a shooting at a local school.<sup>15</sup>

A number of conspiracy theories and disinformation have surfaced in connection with the acts of the philosophy faculty shooter. Some of them had anti-Ukrainian or anti-Semitic overtones.<sup>16</sup>

The High Public Prosecutor's Office in Olomouc has assigned the District Public Prosecutor's Office in Jihlava to review the motion for retrial in the case of Leopold Hilsner.<sup>17</sup>

The Municipal Court in Prague has ruled on the admissibility of the extradition to the USA of an Indian citizen who planned to assassinate a Sikh separatist leader in New York. The man was detained in Prague in June by the police on the basis of legal assistance from the United States. The Indian citizen has filed a complaint against the court's decision.

Terrorist threat level 1 was still in effect.<sup>18</sup>

## **2. Statistics**

### **2.1. Hate crime in 2023**

#### **Numbers of offences**

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<sup>14</sup> The High Court in Prague first changed Sukup's original qualification by the Municipal Court in Prague to a criminal offence 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.

<sup>15</sup> The American communicated his intention to a Czech through a social network. The case illustrates the existence of international online communities where acts of violence are discussed, planned or instigated.

<sup>16</sup> In response to these tragic events, police have begun investigating several cases on suspicion of endorsing a crime, disseminating an alarmist message or dangerous threats.

<sup>17</sup> The trial of Leopold Hilsner triggered the so-called Hilsneriad, or large-scale anti-Semitic campaign, between 1899 and 1900. Tomáš Garrigue Mararyk spoke out against anti-Semitic prejudice.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.mvcr.cz/cthh/clanek/stupne-ohrozeni-terorismem.aspx>.

Tactical and statistical classification	period 1.1.-31.12.2023	
	registered	clarified
intentional bodily harm (§ 145 - 146a)	16	11
violence and threats against a group of citizens and individuals. (§ 352)	42	21
dangerous threats (§ 353)	17	8
damaging other people's property (§ 228)	7	2
disorderly conduct at sports and public events (§ 358)	2	1
spraying (§ 228/2)	14	1
defamation of a nation, race, ethnic, or other groups. (§ 355)	25	20
inciting the national and racial hatred (§ 356)	58	19
support and promotion of movement (§§ 403, 404, 405)	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>83</b>

#### Number of prosecuted persons

Tactical and statistical classification	period 1.1.-31.12.2023
	number
intentional bodily harm (§ 145 - 146a)	12
violence and threats against a group of citizens and individuals. (§ 352)	23
dangerous threats (§ 353)	7
damaging other people's property (§ 228)	3
disorderly conduct at sports and public events (§ 358)	1
spraying (§ 228/2)	1
defamation of a nation, race, ethnic, or other groups (§ 355)	19
inciting the national and racial hatred (§ 356)	19
support and promotion of movement (§§ 403, 404, 405)	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>98</b>

There were 181 hate crimes recorded in 2023. Of these, 83 were clarified. The most frequent crimes in this period were violence against a group of citizens and violence against an individual with 42 acts.

The Police recorded a total of 98 prosecutions for hate-motivated offences in 2023. The most frequent cases were violence against a group of citizens and against an individual numbering 23 persons.

## Number of offences by victim (object of assault)

Group	period 1.1.-31.12.2023
	registered
Jews	18
Roma	25
LGBT+	13

## 2.2. Hate crime in 2023 by region

### Number of offences

Committed on the territory of the region	period 1.1.-31.12.2023	
	registered	clarified
Capital City of Prague	92	38
Central Bohemia	9	3
South Bohemia	4	3
Plzeň Region	11	8
Ústí Region	22	6
Hradec Králové Region	4	3
South Moravia	7	2
Moravia-Silesia	14	9
Olomouc Region	6	3
Zlín Region	0	0
The Highlands	3	2
Pardubice Region	2	2
Liberec Region	4	3
Karlovy Vary Region	3	1
<b>CZ TOTAL</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>83</b>

### Number of prosecuted persons

Committed on the territory of the region	period 1.1.-31.12.2023
	number
Capital City of Prague	47
Central Bohemian	3

South Bohemian	2
Plzeň Region	9
Ústí Region	6
Hradec Králové Region	3
South Moravia	3
Moravia-Silesia	10
Olomouc Region	3
Zlín Region	1
The Highlands	2
Pardubice Region	3
Liberec Region	5
Karlovy Vary Region	1
<b>CZ TOTAL</b>	<b>98</b>

In 2023, the biggest number of hate-motivated acts was registered in Prague (92), followed by the Ústí nad Labem Region (22). The biggest number of persons prosecuted for hate-motivated acts was registered in Prague (47), followed by the Moravian-Silesian Region (10) and the Plzeň Region (9).