



Musée Holocauste Montréal
Montreal Holocaust Museum

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Montrealers Remember the Genocide of Roma and Sinti

Montreal, July 26, 2018 – On August 2, the Montreal Holocaust Museum, in partnership with Romanipe, will host its third annual commemoration of the Genocide of Roma and Sinti. The public is encouraged to attend and recognize the organized murder of Roma and Sinti groups by the Nazis and their collaborators during World War II.

The commemoration will take place at the Montreal Holocaust Museum on **Thursday, August 2 at 7 pm**. Members of Montreal Roma communities will read genocide survivor testimony and **Ethel Brooks**, Associate Professor in the Departments of Women's and Gender Studies and Sociology at Rutgers University and Chair of the European Roma Rights Centre will provide a historical background.

August 2 has been designated by the international Roma and Sinti communities as the day to commemorate the Porrajmos, or Genocide of Roma and Sinti during World War II. On this date in 1944, the last remaining 2,897 Roma and Sinti imprisoned in the so-called Zigeunerlager, or “Gypsy Camp” were murdered in the gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau. The most recent estimate indicates that at least 500,000 Roma and Sinti were murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators during World War II.

The Genocide of Roma and Sinti has yet to be officially acknowledged by the Canadian Government despite its formal recognition in countries such as Germany, Poland and Croatia. There is an ongoing initiative to urge Canadian recognition of the genocide, led by Romanipe and supported by the Montreal Holocaust Museum. “It is surprising that this genocide is unacknowledged more than 70 years later, here in Canada,” said Alice Herscovitch, Executive Director of the Montreal Holocaust Museum. “We know the importance of understanding the past to effect change in the present. This link is a broken one in terms of the Roma community.”

After centuries of discrimination, European Roma and Sinti communities continue to face segregation, persecution and violence. Most recently, Italy's Interior Minister announced his intention to create a Roma census in order to facilitate the deportation of those without Italian citizenship, and resolve the “Roma Question.” “The normalization and perpetuation of anti-Roma crimes and legislation speaks to the dangers of forgetting the past,” says Dafina Savic, Founder of Romanipe. “The continuation of hateful events like these demonstrates the importance of changing this culture of impunity for anti-Roma crimes.”

About the Montreal Holocaust Museum: The Montreal Holocaust Museum educates people of all ages and backgrounds about the Holocaust, while sensitising the public to the universal perils of antisemitism, racism, hate and indifference. Through its Museum, its commemorative programs and educational initiatives, the Montreal Holocaust Museum promotes respect for diversity and the sanctity of human life.

About Romanipe: Romanipe is a not-for-profit organization whose main mission is to defend the dignity and human rights of Roma populations worldwide.

-30-

For more information or to set up an interview, please contact: Sarah Fogg, Program Coordinator at 514-345-2605 ext. 3437 // sarah.fogg@museeholocauste.ca