



HRSP NEWSLETTER

U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Division, Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section

April 2021

DOJ to Receive Holocaust Museum's Highest Honor

On April 22, 2021, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) conferred its highest honor, the Elie Wiesel Award, on the U.S. Department of Justice's enforcement program in the World War II Nazi cases, previously based in the Criminal Division's Office of Special Investigations (OSI), and since 2010 in the Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section (HRSP). The USHMM stated that the award was given in recognition of the program's "tireless work to secure a measure of justice for Holocaust survivors" since its 1979 creation. The award has been given to thirteen recipients in the past, among them the Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel, the late Rep. John Lewis, and the Syrian White Helmets organization.

"It is deeply gratifying that the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has recognized the Justice Department's extraordinary work in pursuing justice on behalf of the victims of Nazi genocide," said Attorney General Merrick B. Garland. "The Department remains steadfast in its resolve to pursue justice on behalf of victims of human rights abuses committed in a tragically long list of countries both during and since World War II."

OSI was established by Attorney General order to identify, investigate, and bring to trial people living in the United States who participated in Nazi crimes against humanity. Staffed by prosecutors, investigators, and historians, OSI sought out Nazi perpetrators living in the United States. Between its founding and 2010, when it was merged into a new DOJ component (HRSP), OSI, in partnership with U.S. Attorneys' Offices around the country and other law enforcement partners, achieved the denaturalization and/or removal from the United States of more than 100 Nazi offenders. In addition, with the assistance of the Immigration and Naturalization Service — and since 2002, its successor, Immigration and Customs Enforcement — OSI blocked more than 200 people suspected of participating in Nazi crimes from gaining entry to the United States.

Among other achievements, OSI documented and made public U.S. intelligence agencies' recruitment of such Nazi perpetrators as Klaus Barbie, known as "the Butcher of Lyon," for his torture of Jews and members of the French Resistance and the deportation of Jewish children to Auschwitz. It also denaturalized and deported, among others, John Demjanjuk, the notorious Sobibor extermination camp guard, and Arthur Rudolph, a war-time Nazi slavemaster and later a senior NASA official in charge of constructing the Saturn V rocket. An analysis published last year in *The Washington Post* concluded that, over the past 30 years, the Justice Department has won more cases against persons who participated in Nazi-sponsored acts of persecution than have the law enforcement authorities of all the other countries in the world combined.

In addition to its World War II Nazi-era investigations and prosecutions, HRSP investigates and prosecutes cases against human rights violators for genocide, torture, war crimes, recruitment or use of child soldiers, female genital mutilation and for immigration and naturalization fraud arising out of efforts to hide their involvement in such crimes. HRSP's work is part of a coordinated, interagency effort to deny safe haven in the U.S. to human rights violators. HRSP's attorneys and historians work closely with DHS's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Department of State, among other agencies, to pursue accountability for human rights violators.

The award presentation is available for viewing at [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum \(ushmm.org\)](https://www.ushmm.org); the presentation to the Department of Justice begins at the 34-minute mark.

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