

HN: One of suspects of Dobronín massacre still alive

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German writer Herma Kennel has been investigating the case for several years. (ČTK)

Prague, Aug 18 (CTK) - One of the suspected perpetrators of the late-May 1945 massacre of 15 German civilians near Dobronin, south Moravia, where the victims' grave has been uncovered these days, is still alive, Michal Laska, detective enquiring into the Dobronin case, says in daily Hospodarske noviny (HN) Wednesday.

Remains of at least four people have been found in the alleged grave so far.

The police have been investigating the crime, to which local ethnic German farmers fell victims shortly after the war, as suspected murder. According to Laska, it could be requalified to suspected genocide, as murder has become statute-barred meanwhile.

"Nevertheless, it is a still open case, complex in legal terms," Laska says.

After the remains are exhumed, experts will have the samples of individual victims' genetic profile taken to be compared with their possible relatives living in Germany, Laska says.

He says the Czech police have gained written materials from German archives that document the case, as well as testimonies of [German] witnesses, often relatives or offspring of the supposed victims.

After the war, ethnic Germans from Dobronin were interned in camps before being transferred from Czechoslovakia.

All local Germans left the Jihlava region [known for its strong German community]. No one remained here. Laska says.

"There existed lists of people to be transferred. We use the lists to identify the victims. Let's say, the list features the name of a family's father, his wife and five kids. In fact, however,

only the wife and the kids left for Germany. It ensues from this that the father must have disappeared in Czechoslovakia," Laska told HN.

He said he has read the book in which its German author, **Herma Kennel**, mentions the Dobronin events.

He has even personally met Kennel, who mentions the names of the alleged culprits in her book. The Czech police have checked a number of possible perpetrators as mentioned by Kennel, Laska says.

One of them is still alive. He is a Czech, Laska adds.

However, to accuse him, the police would need evidence.

"The evidence is rather meagre now, after 65 years. It is impossible to accuse a man on whom someone says that he did it," Laska told HN.

Some say the German farmers were killed by Germans, but it is more probable that the murderers were Czechs, Laska said.

He says that a wave of interest in uncovering old crimes has broken out among Czechs and the Czech media recently.

"I welcome it, we are filling the existing 'white spots' in history. It is not pleasant but it is important to know the truth. As far as the [possible] retrospective check of some cases is concerned, we're faced with very complex questions. Nevertheless, I can imagine us [the Czech police] dealing with such cases one day," Laska said, referring to crimes accompanying the post-war transfer of Germans from Czechoslovakia.

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