



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA TO THE UN,  
OSCE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA

**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Latvia, Ambassador Bahtijors Hasans  
under the agenda item “Current issues”**

Permanent Council No.1019,  
Vienna, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Mr Chairman,

As you know, Latvia is a democracy and therefore guarantees freedom of speech, expression and association.

Today I would like to bring up an issue that falls within these freedoms, but where Latvia's government considers it necessary to express its clear position to avoid misinterpretations and unfounded accusations.

This concerns a musical that has been staged in Latvia about a man, who used to be a famous pilot in the 1930s. However, this same man, Herberts Cukurs, during the Nazi occupation of Latvia from 1941, became a member of the so-called *Arajs Commando*, a paramilitary police unit subordinated to the Nazi German SD notorious for the crimes of genocide it committed during World War II.

Even though this musical is produced by private individuals who bear full responsibility for its contents, the Minister of Foreign Affairs clearly expressed the position of the Government condemning the decision to devote a show to such people as Cukurs. Latvia's law enforcement agencies have received several complaints and will examine them. The Government underlines that it is unacceptable to offend the memory of victims of totalitarian regimes.

Let me remind you that the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Latvia has initiated criminal proceedings under Section 71 of the Criminal Code for mass killing (genocide) of Jewish civilians on the territory of Latvia during World War Two. These ongoing investigations and proceedings also encompass research on Herberts Cukurs' alleged criminal acts. Cukurs himself has never been tried in the court of law as he was killed in Uruguay in 1965. The investigation concerns the crime of genocide therefore no statute of limitations applies to this criminal process.

Latvia has consistently condemned war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the time that Latvia was occupied by the totalitarian regimes of USSR and Nazi Germany. Latvia commemorates the victims of those regimes. After the end of the Soviet occupation and the restoration of independence in 1991, it has become possible for Latvia to examine and identify the crimes perpetrated by both Nazi and Soviet totalitarian regimes on our territory. Today, we continue to pay particular attention to research and education on the Holocaust and the memory of its victims. We condemn and deplore the Holocaust in particular, and we will never forget this tragedy.

Thank You, Mr Chairman.

