



**(Friends of) Romano Lav**

Registered SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) number: SC044474

**Press Statement: Justice for Stanislav Tomáš**

On Saturday, 19 June 2021, a Romani man appears to have been murdered by police officers in Teplice, Czech Republic. Video footage of the incident that preceded his death is being widely shared on social media. During this horrific footage, we can see that one of the three police officers involved in the arrest knelt on this man's neck for over three minutes, whilst another held his feet. The man then died in an ambulance called to the scene by police. We do not yet know the name of the man currently being dubbed 'the Romský George Floyd'. What we do know is that one more police murder is one too many.

Romano Lav is shocked and disgusted by these disgraceful scenes of police brutality. The evident police violence depicted is indicative of how far we have to go in the fight against anti-Gypsyism in Europe, and in the struggle for racial justice globally. We condemn the Czech police's narrative that this man was under the influence of drugs; this is immaterial. This does not legitimise the police brutality and at least potentially lethal use of force that the video so clearly evidences. The police now claim that the man's death was drugs related, rather than the outcome of their assault. Yet his body appears to be still at the end of the video, before the ambulance arrives. A full and independent inquiry must be conducted into the circumstances of this man's death.

Yet beyond our outrage at this act itself, we are also shocked, given the contemporary foregrounding of the movement for racial justice and the resonance of this police murder with the case of George Floyd, that to our knowledge, at the time of writing, not a single UK media outlet, in broadcast or in print, has covered this story, with the exception of the BBC, which has opted for a despicable headline that includes the phrase 'no Czech Floyd'. This article foregrounds the police defence, despite the fact that the evidence shows that the police officer knelt on the man's neck for over three minutes, despite him already being in cuffs (a detail the BBC itself concedes at the very end of its article). This framing and the broader media silence begs the question: do Romani lives matter?

Romano Lav demands that journalists address this. We urge every UK and international media outlet to cover this outrageous act of police violence and anti-Roma racism. We urge our colleagues, friends, and allies in Roma NGOs, race equality organisations and networks, and human rights institutes to demand the same.

Romano Lav stands in solidarity with Roma communities, locally and internationally, alongside the global movement for racial justice, and with all those who struggle against police brutality and for

freedom. We echo the sentiment expressed at the community vigil in Teplice that "*Na romských životech záleží*" ("Romani Lives Matter").

But far from separate concerns, we see the movement against anti-Gypsyism and anti-Roma racism as fundamentally *part* of the movement for Black Lives. Our struggles may have their specificities, but are united by one common enemy: the scourge of structural racism. We are, and must be, united in the fight to abolish all forms of racism; our struggles are indivisible.

#WeCan'tBreathe #BlackLivesMatter #RomaniLivesMatter #RomaniLivesAreBlackLives  
#EndPoliceBrutality #StopAntiRomaRacismNow

Ashli Mullen  
Davie Donaldson  
Colin Clark  
Fatima Uygun  
Jim Monaghan