

Sudetengermans and Czech Government

German Expellees suggest Round Table Discussion.

German groups called on the Czech government Saturday to agree to talks as a confidence-building measure between the two sides.

Bernd Posselt, head of the Sudeten German Association, urged the government in Prague to end its 'hysterical fear' of the group and hold round table discussions that would help rebuild trust.

“Sudeten Germans are not cannibals, they are a European human rights group,” he told the annual conference of the ethnic group expelled from the German border regions of then Czechoslovakia after World War II.

Roland Koch, prime minister of the federal state of Hesse, criticized the post-war Czechoslovak Benes decrees legitimizing the expulsion of several million Sudeten Germans.

Referring to the set of laws proclaimed by the late President Edvard Benes which included confiscations of German property, Koch told the meeting it was unacceptable that 'this injustice' remains on a statute books in a European state. 'We could enjoy a relaxed relationship with the Czech government if we told them clearly what we want,' said Koch, who was presented with an award by the Sudeten leadership for his support for their cause.

In post-war Czechoslovakia, the Sudeten Germans were collectively accused of having been Nazi collaborators. They were forced from their homes, and many died in brutal expulsions.

Thousands later settled in Germany and Austria, where they and their descendants still live, preserving their dialect and folk customs.

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