**Four charged with racially motivated attempted murder over petrol bomb attack on Romany family’s home**

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In April many in the Czech Republic were horrified by a petrol bomb attack on a Romany family’s home that left a two-year-old girl fighting for her life. Now, four months later, police in north Moravia have made a major breakthrough in the case, charging four men with racially motivated attempted murder.

**Listen:** [RealAudio](http://helix.radio.cz:8080/ramgen/rm/EN/09/08/EN090814-13-high.rm?start=04:39.53&end=07:55.04)

**Download:** [MP3](http://old.radio.cz/mp3/podcast/en/curraffrs/090814-four-neonazis-charged-with-racially-motivated-attempted-murder-over-petrol-bomb-attack-on.mp3)

[The house in Vítkov after the attack CTK](http://www.radio.cz/en/article/119284/pictures/ctk0908/vitkov1.jpg#pic)

Just before midnight on April 18 three petrol bombs were thrown into a Romany family’s small bungalow in Vítkov, north Moravia. There were nine people in the house at the time and three of them were injured. The worst affected was a two-year-old girl named Natálka, who suffered burns on 80 percent of her body and at one point was close to death.

It appears from a new conference given by police in Ostrava on Friday afternoon that the people who firebombed the house had been planning such an attack for some time, though the particular family they targeted was chosen at random.

Four months after a crime that shocked many in the Czech Republic, the investigation took a major step forward on Wednesday, when police arrested 12 people – nine men and three women – after a series of raids in the north Moravia region.

Charges of racially motivated attempted murder have now been filed against four of the 12, all men in their mid 20s. Police said some of them had confessed and some had expressed regret. Three are accused of directly carrying out the firebombing; the other was their driver. If found guilty they could get 12 to 15 years in jail, or longer if they receive what in Czech law is called an “exceptional” sentence.

All four charged are members of the neo-Nazi movement. Police presented a number of neo-Nazi materials found at their homes – including a swastika flag and racist literature – at Friday’s news conference. One officer said the police operation had been the most successful intervention against far-right extremists ever carried out in the country.

As for two-year-old Natálka, she is said to be showing some signs of improvement. Doctors recently took her out of an artificial coma and her mother told reporters the child was now communicating with her hands and eyes. Nevertheless, Natálka is still in a very serious condition; she has undergone a series of skin transplants and will require medical treatment for the rest of her life. She may also be psychologically traumatised by the horrific burns she suffered.

**Pre-reading activities**

1. *In pairs/groups discuss these questions.*
2. Have you heard what happened to the Roma girl Natálka? Where do you see the reason for such behaviour?
3. Is there something rotten in the Czech/European society when young white men want to burn to death a non-white family including little children?
4. If you had the power, what would you do to prevent such crimes to happen?
5. *Do you understand these expressions? Try to give their English explanations.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| major breakthrough | to charge with | attempted murder |
| to affect | investigation | at random |
| swastika flag | artificial | serious condition |

*How do you understand these expressions? Into which out of the given areas do they belong to?*

Areas: medical, judicial, terrorist.

1. To file charges against –
2. To carry out the firebombing –
3. Exceptional sentence –
4. To undergo a series of skin transplants –
5. *Give the words of opposite meaning to the following ones.*
6. major
7. at random
8. regret
9. guilty
10. improvement

**Reading activities**

1. *Scan the text and decide if these statements are true or false.*
2. The incident happened in south Moravia.
3. There were 9 people in the house including the three who were injured at the incident.
4. The attack and the particular house were long planned.
5. The police arrested 12 young men accused of the attack.
6. All charged men are members of neo-Nazi movement.
7. The little Natálka’s condition is good now.
8. *Listen to the article and describe these points.*
9. Describe how the attack was carried out.
10. Describe the police investigation after the attack.
11. Describe Natalka’s current health condition.

**Grammar revision: reported speech**

*In the text find the examples of reported speech and explain the principle of reported speech, questions, imperative.*

**Post-reading activities**

1. *Divide into pairs and imagine that one of you is a judge who is to sentence the attack culprits and the other one is their defence lawyer. Each one of you will try to do your best within your competences.*
2. *Discuss the latest development of this cause.*