

INAUGURAL EVENT

Groundbreaking Asian Shoah commemoration

AJN STAFF

SYDNEY communal leader Jeremy Jones was the keynote speaker at the first International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, for South East Asia, held on International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

“For a number of participants, this was their first opportunity to hear from a Jewish speaker on the subject of antisemitism, human rights abuses and the importance of knowing about, and drawing lessons from, the Nazis’ attempt to kill every Jewish person on the planet,” said Jones, who is director of community and international

affairs of the Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC).

The event was organised by the Polish-based Never Again Association.

Participants came from Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Germany, India, Israel, Malaysia, Myanmar, Norway, Poland, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, UK, USA, and Vietnam.

Jones noted that in the South East Asia region, there is “little awareness of Jews or the Holocaust”.

“The presentations and questions made for a unique experience, as the only understanding most of the Buddhist, Hindu and other participants would have had



Speakers at the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, for South East Asia event.

of Jews is drawn from popular culture and knowledge of the small Jewish communities in some parts of South East Asia,” Jones said.

“There was not only interest in the Holocaust, racism and geno-

cide, but also in understanding the way it has shaped both the western world and Jewish identity.”

The event was chaired by Natalia Sineava, an internationally renowned scholar who specialises in both the Shoah in Central and Eastern Europe and Holocaust education.

Other speakers were Sayana Ser, the translator of *The Diary of Anne Frank* into the Khmer language, Nickey Diamond, a human rights specialist and scholar based in Myanmar, the Venerable Labul Barua, a Buddhist monk based in Thailand with expertise on Bangladesh, and Professor Rafal Pankowski of the Never Again Association.