

300+ Anne Frank books vandalized in Tokyo libraries

TOKYO (AP) — Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* and scores of books about the young Holocaust victim have been vandalized in Tokyo public libraries.

The damage was mostly in the form of dozens of ripped pages in the books. Librarians have counted more than 300 damaged books at 31 municipal libraries since the end of January.

Japan and Nazi Germany were allies in World War II, and though Holocaust denial has occurred in Japan at times, the motive for damaging the Anne Frank books is unclear. Police are investigating.

Chief cabinet secretary Yoshihide Suga called the vandalism "shameful" and said Japan would not tolerate such acts.

The New-York-based Anti-Defamation League, a civil-rights group fighting anti-Semitism, praised Suga's remarks.

The league's national director, Abraham Foxman, called for a full investigation and asked Japan's government "to carefully consider if this act of disrespect for the memory of the millions of Jewish victims who lost their lives in the Holocaust requires a new look at educational initiatives regarding the Holocaust and anti-Semitism."

He said that while there



DIARIES DESTROYED. A ripped copy of Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* picture book is shown by Shinjuku City library director Kotaro Fujimaki at a library in Tokyo. Tokyo Libraries said hundreds of copies of Anne Frank's diary and related books were found vandalized across the city's libraries, sparking fears of an anti-Semitic motive. More than 300 books in 31 libraries had been found damaged after the first damaged book was found in January, prompting a wider search. (AP Photo/Koji Ueda)

has been some history of "journalistic and literary anti-Semitism in Japan, these kinds of incidents are in fact quite rare."

In the Nakano district libraries, the vandals apparently damaged the books while unnoticed inside reading rooms, according to city official Mitsujiro Ikeda.

"Books related to Ms. Anne Frank are clearly targeted, and it's happening across Tokyo," he said. "It's outrageous."

At another library, all the books that were damaged could have been found using the keywords "Anne Frank" in an online database.

At least one library has moved Anne Frank-related books behind the counter for protection, though they can still be checked out.

Anne Frank wrote her diary over the two years she and her family hid in a concealed apartment in Nazi-occupied Netherlands during World War II. After her family was betrayed and deported, she died in a German concentration camp at age 15 in 1945.

Her father survived and published her diary, which has become the most widely read document to emerge from the Holocaust.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center, a U.S.-based Jewish human-rights organization, issued a statement calling the vandalism a hate campaign and urging authorities to step up efforts to find those responsible.

The Israeli Embassy is donating 300 Anne Frank-related books to replace the ones that were vandalized.

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Chansom Sengsirivanh

Chansom Sengsirivanh was born on January 10, 1942 in Vientiane, Laos. He is an accomplished songwriter who wrote his first piece at age 15. His lyrics are often sentimental and his songs fuse melodies with poetry. He has won many contests with his songs, which are still being recorded by artists throughout the world today.



AR Photo Jan Landis

He and his wife Phanida Chittaphong Sengsirivanh have six children, two who live in the U.S. and four in Laos. He arrived in the U.S. in 1991 to live with his son, and in 1998, he moved to Portland. Ajarn Sengsirivanh is very active in the Lao community in Oregon. He is a member of the Lao Senior Association of Oregon, the Lao Women Association of Oregon, the Lao Artist Association, and the Lao temple. His contributions to the community include orchestrating cultural events, such as Lao New Year celebrations and singing contests, and assisting with newsletters. In 2011, Ajarn Sengsirivanh's 55th anniversary of songwriting was celebrated by Lao Musician Fans & Friends (LMFF), a collective of musicians, friends, and fans who are currently documenting Sengsirivanh's work. The event, held in Portland, was attended by performing artists from around the world. In addition, LMFF presented him a "Lifetime Achievement" award. He continues to write songs and publishes his poetry through social media.

The Asian Reporter Foundation is accepting nominations for its 2014 "Most Honored Elder" awards.

The recognition banquet will be held Thursday, April 17, 2014 at northeast Portland's TAO Event Center. Nomination forms and guidelines for eligibility are available for download at <www.ARFoundation.net>.

The nomination deadline is Wednesday, March 26, 2014 at 5:00pm.

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