

Seven foreign ambassadors express dissatisfaction over anti-Semitism in Lithuania

VILNIUS, Nov 25, BNS — Following an article criticizing the Nuremberg trials in the Veidas weekly by Lithuanian historian Petras Stankeras, working for the Ministry of Interior Affairs, ambassadors of seven European countries sent a letter expressing dissatisfaction over manifestations of anti-Semitism in Lithuania.

The letter, a copy of which was received by BNS, was signed by British, Estonian, French, Finnish, Dutch, Norwegian and Swedish ambassadors. The letter was also sent to the Lithuanian Presidential Palace, the government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Stankeras said in his article that the killing of 6 million Jews during the Holocaust is a legend unproved by documents, and the Nuremberg trials was "a clearly wrong judicial investigation."

He wrote in his article: "It is also important that the Nuremberg process provided a legal basis to the legend about the six million supposedly murdered Jews, although the court didn't have even a single document signed by Hitler on the extermination of Jews (no one has found this document to this day, if it even exists, although a million dollar prize has been promised)."

"This amounts to denial of the Holocaust and merits the strongest condemnation. Indeed, it would certainly be liable to legal process under the laws of many countries. It is extraordinary that a reputable publication such as Veidas should have consented to publish this false assertion and that there should until now have been no public or official condemnation of Mr. Stankeras's views," the ambassadors' letter states.

The letter also reminds of the fact that some Lithuanians collaborated with the Nazis in the killing of Jews during the World War II and anti-Semitic manifestations are still observed in the country.

"A court in Klaipeda is able to declare it acceptable to display a swastika in public as a traditional Lithuanian symbol. Spurious attempts are made to equate the uniquely evil genocide of the Jews with Soviet crimes against Lithuania, which, though great in magnitude, cannot be regarded as equivalent in either their intention or result," the ambassadors also said.

They urged the Lithuanian government "to repudiate the views expressed by Mr. Stankeras and to take such further actions as seem appropriate in the case."

The Lithuanian Ministry of Interior Affairs has reported on Thursday that taking into account the fact that the author's evaluations of historic events insulting the Jewish nation cast a cloud on the institution he works for, Minister Palaitis asked Stankeras to consider whether his evaluations are compatible with the civil servant ethics.

Stankeras handed in his resignation letter on Thursday. He worked as a senior specialist at the Planning and Organization Division of the Ministry of Interior Affairs and was in charge of drawing up the ministry's strategic and action plans, the department's action plans and reports and ministerial college meetings, BNS was informed by the ministry.

held no significant position at the ministry and worked at the Administrative Department that is in charge of day-to-day functions of the ministry, documents etc.

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