

## Clinton thanked Lithuania for efforts to compensate for Jewish property — Azubalis

VILNIUS, Nov 16, BNS - Lithuanian Foreign Minister Audronius Azubalis, currently on a visit in the United States, has said Washington thanked the Lithuanian parliament for a draft law on the compensation for expropriated Jewish property.

Azubalis said he heard the words of thanks during a meeting with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

"She honestly thanked for our government's efforts - for the draft on compensation. America supports and thanks our government for actions to approve a legal document on the compensation of harm Jewish community had suffered," Azubalis told BNS on the phone from Washington late on Monday.

The Jewish Community of Lithuania has also said it is happy with the fact that the draft law on the compensation for nationalized Jewish property has finally reached the country's parliament.

The draft proposes paying compensations in 2012-2013 for Jewish properties nationalized by the Soviets and Nazis. The compensations will have to be used only for religious, cultural, educational, scientific and charity purposes of Lithuanian Jews as well as to support Jewish nationals who lived in Lithuania during the World War II and were victims of occupational regimes.

The compensations would make around 30 percent of the value of properties "nationalized or illegally expropriated any other way by the Soviet or Nazi regimes."

The authors of the draft law hope that it will demonstrate good will to restore historic justice, to improve Lithuanian-Jewish relations as well as show respect for human rights and commitments made to the global Jewish community and international organizations. Besides, there are hopes that property handover will give Lithuania politically-stronger positions during negotiations with Russia on compensation for damage done by the totalitarian regime.

Around 200,000 Jews lived in Lithuania before the World War II. The majority of them were killed during the Holocaust. At the moment some 5,000 Jewish people live in Lithuania.