

UK MPs call on Lithuania to tackle anti-Semitism

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VILNIUS, Feb 8, BNS - A group of British parliamentarians and scholars are calling on Lithuania to combat anti-Semitism and distortion of the Holocaust as its London embassy begins a series of Jewish cultural events this week, the Jerusalem Post writes.

A delegation led by MP Denis MacShane and Lord Greville Janner, both leading campaigners in the UK against anti-Semitism, handed in a letter to the embassy on Monday. It was signed by 20 MPs and academics, and called on Lithuania to crack down on anti-Semitism and reverse a court decision declaring the swastika part of the country's "historic legacy," thereby allowing its use by anti-Semites at political rallies.

The letter also highlights that while the Lithuanian government is sponsoring events abroad that promote Jewish life, it is engaged in an increasingly energetic campaign to stop the full the truth about the Holocaust and events of the Second World War from being discussed.

It expresses concern about "the irony of the Lithuanian Embassy in London hosting an exhibition about pre-World War Two Jewish life, titled 'The Sounds of Silence,' when debate about the Holocaust is being silenced and distorted in Lithuania."

"Lithuania is at the forefront of a right-wing European campaign saying that the Holocaust was no different from the crimes of communism. The signatories said this "double genocide" campaign was aimed at devaluing the centrality of the Holocaust and was supported by "anti-Jewish political groups in the Middle East and other anti-Semitic politicians," the Jerusalem Post writes reported.

Mac- Shane said Lithuania is not alone in East European and Baltic states, where nationalist populist politicians have made anti-Jewish themes part of contemporary political discourse. He also mentioned Poland and Hungary as negative examples.

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