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**WIESENTHAL CENTER CRITICIZES DECISION OF VILNIUS MUNICIPALITY
TO APPROVE NEO-NAZI MARCH IN CENTER OF LITHUANIAN CAPITAL**

Jerusalem-The Simon Wiesenthal Center today harshly criticized the decision of the Vilnius Municipality to permit a march by local neo-Nazis and ultranationalists through the center of the Lithuanian capital this coming March 11, to mark the restoration in 1990 of Lithuanian independence. In a statement issued here by its chief Nazi-hunter, Israel director Dr. Efraim Zuroff, the Center noted the racist, anti-Semitic, and xenophobic slogans and signs of the participants in last year's march on the same day, and called upon the local authorities to change their misguided decision.

According to Zuroff:

“Freedom of speech does not include the right to incite hatred of Lithuania's minorities and foreigners. The fact that racist and anti-Semitic slogans could be shouted with impunity on the main avenue of a capital of a member state of the European Union is incomprehensible. One of the primary factors for the rise of ultranationalist sentiments in Lithuania has been the abysmal failure of successive governments to teach the truth about the extensive complicity of Lithuanians in Holocaust crimes and to punish local Nazi war criminals. Had the truth been admitted, there would be virtually no support in Lithuanian society for racism and anti-Semitism, but instead the government is spending hundreds of thousands of euros on falsifying the history of the Holocaust in Lithuania and seeking support for the lie that Communist crimes were just as terrible as those of the Nazis.”

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