

Wiesenthal Center: On Seventieth Anniversary of Nazi Invasion, “Lithuanian Activist Front” Should Be Denounced, Not Glorified

Jerusalem — The Simon Wiesenthal Center today called upon the Lithuanian authorities to refrain from honoring the “Lithuanian Activist Front” which sought to reestablish Lithuanian independence following the Nazi invasion of the country launched seventy years ago on June 22, 1941. In a statement issued here today by its Israel director, Holocaust historian Dr. Efraim Zuroff, the Center noted the vicious incitement against the Jews of Lithuania by the Lithuanian Activist Front prior to the invasion and their appeal for Lithuanians to take measures on their own against Jews. These calls, it should be noted, led to widespread physical violence which claimed the lives of at least hundreds of Jews by local vigilantes, before the arrival of the Nazis in at least forty different locations.

According to Zuroff:

“Any attempt to glorify the Lithuanian Activist Front is not a tribute to Lithuanian patriotism, but rather a ringing endorsement of the mass murder of Lithuanian Jewry and a horrific insult to the numerous victims of the Holocaust murdered by Lithuanians. The seventieth anniversary of the Nazi invasion should be an occasion for repentance and reflection on the role of Lithuanians in Holocaust crimes, and a day to honor those brave Lithuanians who risked their lives to save their Jewish neighbors. They were the true Lithuanian patriots, not the anti-Semites of the Lithuanian Activist Front .”

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