

Lithuania strongly committed to honoring, remembering Jewish history - Formin

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VILNIUS, Sep 23, BNS – Lithuania is strongly committed to honoring and remembering more than 600 years of history of Jews in Lithuania, their culture and traditions, as well as the Holocaust, Lithuania's Foreign Minister Audronius Azubalis said in New York on the occasion of Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Lithuania's Consulate General in New York and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research held a solemn ceremony on Sept. 22 to mark destruction of the Vilnius Ghetto. The minister's address was read at the event, the Foreign Ministry said.

"My nation knows very well what it means to suffer from a totalitarian dictate, deportations and massacres. On the other hand, we understand the importance of being fair to yourself and assuming the guilt for shameful moments of the national history, therefore, Lithuania will never dodge the inconvenient memories of its own past," Azubalis said.

He emphasized Lithuania's efforts to preserve and immortalize the six-century Jewish history in Lithuania: the government has allocated money for a Jewish public library, archaeological digging has been carried out at the Vilnius Synagogue and significant attention is being paid to rebuilding of the historic Jewish quarter in Vilnius. Lithuania is also aiming to renovate the Paneriai Memorial and put in order the old Jewish cemetery in Snipiskes, central Vilnius.

Established in Vilnius in 1925, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research has won international recognition. After the start of World War II, part of its funds [= holdings] was shifted to New York where the institute continues its operations until now. Its main mission includes fostering of the Yiddish culture and language.

A YIVO room is planned at the National Library of Martynas Mazvydas in Vilnius shortly. Sept. 23 is marked as the Memorial Day of Jewish Genocide Victims in Lithuania. This year marks 70 years since the start of the genocide in Lithuania.