

Wiesenthal Center Calls Upon Lithuanian EU Ambassador to Afghanistan Ušackas to Apologize for Grossly Insensitive Comments on Nazi Occupation of Lithuania

Jerusalem — The Simon Wiesenthal Center today called upon EU Ambassador to Afghanistan, Lithuania's former Foreign Minister Vygaudas Ušackas, to apologize or retract his grossly insensitive comments regarding the Nazi occupation of his country in his December 2011 op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal*. In an article entitled "My Long, Strange Journey to Afghanistan," Ušackas categorized the Nazi occupation of Lithuania (1941-1944) during which over 96% of the country's Jewish community was murdered, in many cases by Lithuanian Nazi collaborators, as "a respite from the Communists while the Nazis were in control." In a statement issued here today by its Israel director, Holocaust historian Dr. Efraim Zuroff, the Center termed the comment "a grave insult to the victims of the Holocaust and especially to those murdered in Lithuania."

According to Zuroff:

"It is incomprehensible that an individual who represents the European Union can refer to the mass annihilation of Lithuanian Jewry in such grossly insensitive terms, which fail to reflect the historical reality of that period. We urge Ambassador Ušackas to apologize and retract his statement and call upon the European Union to take appropriate measures should he refuse to do so."

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