

## LITHUANIA



Agudas Yisroel has welcomed the Lithuanian government's reversal of its decision to build a conference centre on the Old Jewish Cemetery in the Shnipeshok section of Vilnius. The cemetery is the resting place of all Jews who died in Vilna between 1593 and 1830, among whom are many great tzaddikim including the Chayei Adam and the Be'er Hagolah.

The battle to preserve the Shnipeshok cemetery has been ongoing for many years. Rabbonim and *askonim* across the globe have been deeply involved in the effort. The matter even reached the table of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of America, who sent an impassioned letter in 2020 to Lithuanian President Gitanas Nauseda imploring him to do all in his power to block the proposed development and protect the cemetery.

"The cemetery in Shnipeshok occupies a prominent place in the hearts of Jews the world over. Great sages and scholars, whose piety and leadership are revered still today, and whose written scholarship is studied today, are buried there. All cemeteries deserve respect; the Old Jewish Cemetery in Shnipeshok deserves special respect," they wrote.

"We are pleased to report that the plans for construction were suspended by the government of Lithuania. We commend the government of Lithuania for making the right decision on this important matter," said Rabbi Chaim Dovid Zwiebel, executive vice president of Agudath Israel of America.