



Wednesday, July 23, 2025

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The Honorable Gintautas Paluckas
Prime Minister of Lithuania

To my friend, Prime Minister Gintautas Paluckas,

With deep shock and sorrow, we read today's announcement on the Government's website: that you, Mr. Prime Minister, are endorsing the return to a morally disgraceful and spiritually wounding Conference Center project – in that grim, abandoned concrete structure built on part of our sacred *Shnipishok* cemetery.

<https://lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/legendiniu-vilniaus-sporto-rumu-likimas-aiskus-virs-konferenciju-centru-iamzins-istorija-jzgM/>

The Republic of Lithuania has reclaimed its sovereignty and good name by upholding justice, honoring dignity, and preserving historical memory. But this decision – to revive a building whose very foundations pierce the holiest of Jewish religious sites in Lithuania, the Pantheon of Litvak Jewry – threatens to undo everything that has been restored since independence.

We must speak openly, honestly and from the heart: the horrific crimes committed here in Lithuania by Nazis, Soviets, Fascists, and Communists against our people – and especially the desecration of our most sacred cemetery – can in no way serve as justification for renewed desecration. No renovation or modernization project built upon holy bones can ever be justified. Evil repeated two, three, or four times does not become right. All genuine and authoritative rabbinic leaders have spoken out clearly and unequivocally—again and again—against this travesty.

The only morally just outcome is for the entire cemetery area—including the Sports Palace and surrounding land—to be returned unconditionally to the custody of authentic Lithuanian Jewish religious jurisdiction, so that in cooperation with the Vilnius City Government, a dignified, noble, and respectful memorial may be created.

The planned Conference Center project, if carried out, will unfortunately not bring blessings to Lithuania, but will instead bring upon it a heavy and lasting curse.

We await your prompt, clear, and honest response to this painful and humiliating injustice.

Rabbi Elchonon Baron
President