



FACING THE FUTURE

You can't run away from your past, even when facing it forces you to publicly admit your sins and even if your merits outnumber those sins. Monaco, the world's tiniest land, internalized that lesson well and is making amends

BY **Binyamin Rose, Monaco**

PHOTOS **Eli Itkin**

The view from the steep hilltop overlooking the Mediterranean Sea should have been breathtaking.

But when the vista is from a cemetery, one's eyes are blurred with tears.

Yosi Leider, a charman from London, intoned the Keil Malei Bachamin in the small Jewish section of Monaco's only cemetery last week, while a group of rabbis and journalists stood at attention at a monument in memory of Jews who were either deported or arrested while trying to escape Monaco during World War II.

Monaco, a tiny monarchy along France's southeast coast, protected its 300 Jewish citizens during the war, and even issued false papers that enabled some of them to escape before Nazi Germany's occupation began in September 1943.

But the story was different for 92 Jewish noncitizens who sought asylum in Monaco. To their pleas, the government turned a blind eye. Only nine of the 92 survived the war. Monaco's Prince Albert II finally acknowledged this badge of shame on August 28, 2015, when he formally apologized during a dedication ceremony for the monument, on which the names of the victims are etched in black lettering on two tall, white marble tablets.

That's where our group assembled last Wednesday for a memorial ceremony held during a convention sponsored by the Conference of European Rabbis (CER), established in 1956 and today uniting more than 700 Orthodox mainstream synagogue communities in Europe.

Rabbi Michael Schudrich, Poland's chief rabbi, delivered a eulogy. He noted that some historians contend that neither Prince Louis II nor Monaco's minister of state were personally responsible for the deportations, since both were out of the country at the time and ultimate decisions were made by lower-ranking officials.