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## Lithuania's ruling party drafting bill exonerating nation from Holocaust crimes

Simon Wiesenthal Center protested the planned legislation, calling it an 'outrage' and the 'final stage of a long attempt to whitewash massive complicity by Lithuanians'

By JTA

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Dr. Efraim Zuroff, The Simon Wiesenthal Centre's leading Nazi hunter

A committee of the Lithuanian parliament is drafting legislation declaring that neither the Baltic nation nor its leaders participated in the Holocaust, a lawmaker working on the bill said.

Arūnas Gumuliauskas, chairman of the Freedom Fights and State Historical Memory Commission at the Seimas, said this at a conference last month, the 15min.lt news site **reported** on Dec. 28.





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The Simon Wiesenthal Center's Eastern Europe director, Efraim Zuroff, protested the planned legislation, calling it an "outrage" and the "final stage of a long attempt to whitewash massive complicity by Lithuanians" in the murder of more than 95 percent of about 250,000 Jews who had lived in Lithuania when the Nazis invaded in 1941.

The bill will be titled "The Lithuanian state, which was occupied in 1940-1990, did not participate in the Holocaust," according to Gumuliauskas. He is a member of Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis' Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union party.

"The Lithuanian state did not participate in the Holocaust because it was occupied, just as the Lithuanian nation could not participate in the Holocaust because it was enslaved," Gumuliauskas was quoted as saying at the conference. "But individual representatives are obviously involved and it is up to the court to decide."

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum has a different view of the Holocaust in Lithuania.

"The Lithuanians carried out violent riots against the Jews," it **writes**. "In June and July 1941, detachments of German Einsatzgruppen, together with Lithuanian auxiliaries, began murdering the Jews of Lithuania."

Zuroff said he hoped "common sense will prevail and the legislation is dropped."

Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, president of the Conference of European Rabbis, said the bill "seeks to deny the involvement of Lithuanian citizens in the Holocaust. This is a direct affront to hundreds of thousands of Lithuanian Jews whose murders were aided and abetted by Lithuanian political and military leaders, as well as local Lithuanian populations."

The Lithuanian Government must face up to its history, not seek to ignore or deny it. The facts are clear: under Nazi occupation, the Provisional





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Lithuanian Government, Lithuanian paramilitary battalions and local Lithuanian populations were complicit in the slaughter of more than 90 per cent of approximately 220,000 Jews living in Lithuania.”

The rewriting of history for political gain can never be tolerated and we urge the Lithuanian parliament to withdraw this bill with immediate effect.”

<https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/lithuanias-ruling-party-drafting-bill-exonerating-nation-from-holocaust-crimes/>

