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TEXT

TAGS: PHUM, PGOV, PREL, SOCI, LH
SUBJECT: LITHUANIA PROMISES TO PROSECUTE A NAZI WAR
CRIMINAL IF DEPORTED FROM THE U.S.

REF: VILNIUS 1658

1. ACCORDING TO A SEPTEMBER 22 BALTIC NEWS SERVICE
REPORT, THE LITHUANIAN PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE WOULD LIKELY
PROSECUTE **ALEKSANDRAS LILEIKIS**, A MASSACHUSETTS MAN
ACCUSED OF NAZI WAR CRIMES, IF HE IS DEPORTED FROM THE
UNITED STATES. LILEIKIS COULD FACE A MAXIMUM LIFE
SENTENCE IF CONVICTED IN LITHUANIA.

2. MEMBERS OF THE LITHUANIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY WELCOMED

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT

FOR COORDINATION WITH

STATE
DAS/OSI

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THE NEWS. (LILEIKIS ALLEGEDLY HEADED THE LITHUANIAN SECURITY POLICE IN VILNIUS AND TOOK PART IN THE MURDER OF JEWS, INCLUDING A SIX YEAR-OLD GIRL.) EMMANUEL ZINGERIS, A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND PRESIDENT OF THE JEWISH STATE MUSEUM, WELCOMED THE NEWS THAT A NAZI WAR CRIMINAL COULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE IN LITHUANIAN COURTS. ZINGERIS ADDED THAT MANY LITHUANIANS HAVE NOT FACED UP TO THE FACT THAT MANY OF THEIR COUNTRYMEN COLLABORATED WITH THE NAZIS IN THE JEWISH GENOCIDE. (OVER 90 PERCENT OF LITHUANIA'S JEWISH COMMUNITY PERISHED DURING THE NAZI OCCUPATION.)

3. THE CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION LEADER, VYTAUTAS LANDSBERGIS, DECLARED THAT MANY LITHUANIANS OPPOSE THE ACCUSATIONS ON THE BASIS OF RUMORS AND UNSUBSTANTIATED EVIDENCE. LANDSBERGIS ALSO NOTED THAT WHILE MANY NAZI WAR CRIMINALS ARE SOUGHT, AGENTS OF SOVIET-ERA CRIMES ARE OVERLOOKED.

4. THE GOVERNMENT, FOR ITS PART, HAS ACTED IN GOOD FAITH IN SIGNING AGREEMENTS WITH COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES, ON EXCHANGING INFORMATION ON WAR CRIMINALS. THE LITHUANIAN PROSECUTOR HAS "OPENED ITS FILES" TO U.S. OFFICIALS INVESTIGATING LILEIKIS. ON THE EVENING OF SEPTEMBER 22, PRIME MINISTER SLEZEVICIUS DELIVERED A STATEMENT ON NATIONWIDE TELEVISION CONCERNING THE ROLE OF LITHUANIANS IN THE HOLOCAUST. SLEZEVICIUS ADMITTED THAT SEVERAL HUNDRED LITHUANIANS TOOK PART IN THE GENOCIDE AND, ON BEHALF OF ALL LITHUANIANS, EXTENDED HIS APOLOGIES TO THE JEWISH NATION. HE STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF LITHUANIA ASSUMES THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PROSECUTION OF THOSE WHO TOOK PART IN THE KILLINGS AND WILL PURSUE THIS "CONSISTENTLY, HONESTLY AND PUBLICLY." LASTLY, SLEZEVICIUS PROMISED TO COOPERATE WITH THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN LITHUANIA, THE JEWISH DIASPORA ABROAD, AND TO DEVELOP MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL TIES IN ALL SPHERES WITH THE STATE OF ISRAEL.

5. THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT PLAN TO MAKE AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO ISRAEL THIS FALL. WE UNDERSTAND PRESIDENT BRAZAUSKAS IS PALLING A STATE VISIT TO ISRAEL NEXT JANUARY. SWIHART.

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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