

# איגוד יוצאי ליטא בישראל

## Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel



Letter to friends on the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the extermination  
of Lithuanian Jewry

80 years ago, 22 June 1941, the Germans invaded Lithuania. The Lithuanians immediately declared independence and formed a "temporary government" consisting of members of the "Front of Lithuanian Activists" - an underground group headquartered in Germany and composed of nationalist elements who prepared plans for the extermination of Jews and waited for an opportunity to act. The opportunity came on June 22, 1941 with the start of Operation Barbarossa. Before the Nazi army entered the cities and towns of Lithuania, the extermination of Lithuanian Jews began - a 600 year history of coexistence ended in the great tragedy that has no precedence in human history.

Within the first 10 days of the invasion, thousands of Lithuanian Jews were murdered. During the Nazi occupation, 95% of Lithuanian Jewry were brutally murdered.

Lithuanian Jews were the first victims in Europe against whom the German policy of mass extermination was applied. The suddenness of the German invasion, the frightened retreat of the Red Army, the outburst of Lithuanian animal hatred towards Jews and the beginning of mass killings by thousands of Lithuanian murderers who were organized ahead of time, the lack of Jewish leadership (eliminated during the Soviet era) led to the eradication of most of this great community.

We must remember and remind all about the great tragedy of Judaism during World War II, a memory is more durable than time. Many of our fathers fought bravely, heroes against the Nazis, to the bitter end. They fought on the hardest fronts, and some sacrificed their lives, but they knew there was no different way - they chose the way to victory!

The State of Israel today receives unprecedented admiration, especially from those countries whose lands are soaked in the blood of our brethren.

We, the generation born after the war, have a duty to build a new world, based on dialogue, understanding, cooperation and other recognition and all this is subject to strict preservation of the historical truth.

We commemorate this day with the memory of the six million, remember them, and their memory motivates us to be strong and determined in the face of all haters of Israel.

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