

**SUBJECT: RESOLUTION DENOUNCING LITHUANIA FOR ITS EFFORTS TO DISTORT THE HOLOCAUST AND ATTEMPTS TO REHABILITATE THE REPUTATIONS OF SOME OF ITS LEADERS WHO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN THE MASSACRE OF MILLIONS OF JEWISH INDIVIDUALS**

**INITIATED BY: MAYOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH**

**PREPARED BY: COMMUNITY & LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS DIVISION**  
(John Leonard, Manager)  
(Hernan Molina, Governmental Affairs Liaison)

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**STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT:**

The City Council will consider adopting a resolution denouncing efforts in Lithuania and other European nations to rewrite the historical record of the Holocaust and its atrocities, and rehabilitate the reputation of persons and organizations, which have taken an active part in it.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Adopt Resolution No. 20 - \_\_\_\_\_ "A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD DENOUNCING LITHUANIA FOR ITS EFFORTS TO DISTORT THE HOLOCAUST AND ATTEMPTS TO REHABILITATE THE REPUTATIONS OF SOME OF ITS LEADERS WHO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN THE MASSACRE OF MILLIONS OF JEWISH INDIVIDUALS."
2. Direct Community & Legislative Affairs staff to send copies of the adopted resolution to Senators Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris, Congressman Adam Schiff, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), and other individuals and organizations as deemed appropriate.

**BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:**

The City of West Hollywood was incorporated on November 29, 1984. That milestone was the culmination of a community-driven effort that at its core involved LGBT people, renters, seniors, Jewish-emigrates and people who had suffered persecution because of their religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or national status. That day in November 1984 led to the realization of many progressive and humane policies and the championing of values that promote and celebrate diversity, embrace people and cultures from different parts of the world, and reject divisiveness, racism, anti-Semitism, and hate.

Over the years, the City has worked relentlessly to expand protections and rights of LGBT people, advocated for the fair and humane treatment of immigrants, and took several stands against the defamation of communities like the LGBT community, Jewish

individuals and others. The City, too, denounced efforts by anti-Semitic groups to advance the Boycott, Divest and Sanctions (BDS) initiative, which was aimed against the State of Israel. In 2016, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 16-4821 in support of AB 2844 Public contracts: discrimination (Chapter 581, Statutes of 2016), which was introduced by Assemblymember Richard Bloom, D-Santa Monica. AB 2844 requires current state or prospective state contractors to certify that they are in compliance with the Unruh Civil Rights Act and the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, and that any policy that they have adopted against any sovereign nation or peoples recognized by the government of the United States, including, but not limited to, the nation and people of Israel, is not used to discriminate, in violation of the Unruh Civil Rights Act or the California Fair Employment and Housing. West Hollywood has also implemented similar requirements and contractors are required to certify that they do not ascribe to the BDS.

The City has not only strived for an accurate depiction of the atrocities of the Holocaust, but it has also denounced attempts to deny the Holocaust by countries like Iran. In part with these efforts, the City of West Hollywood has worked diligently to remember the victims of the Holocaust by hosting a yearly Yom HaShoah memorial to never forget the millions of Jews massacred by Nazi Germany and its accomplices, and celebrate those who bravely survived their confinement in concentration camps and hostilities during the war. In addition, every year, the City acknowledges the massacre of Babi Yar, Ukraine in 1941, where more than 33,000 Jewish people were massacred. The City also periodically hosts the Human Rights Speakers' series, an event that features authors, social scientists and advocates for human rights and tolerance from different walks of life.

### **REWRITING HISTORY TO DENY INVOLVEMENT, REHABILITATE REPUTATIONS**

For some time now, some European politicians and their respective political parties have attempted to rewrite history surrounding their parties' and countries' support and collaboration with Nazi Germany during the Holocaust. One of those nations is Lithuania, where it is estimated that more than 95 percent of about 250,000 Jews who lived in the country when the Nazis invaded in 1941, were slain.

In January 2020, Arūnas Gumuliauskas, leader of Lithuania's ruling party Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union, and who serves on a committee of the Seimas (unicameral parliament) announced that his party would sponsor legislation declaring that neither the state of Lithuania nor its then-leaders participated in the Holocaust. This is consistent with other statements made by the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry and other Government representatives.

In a statement, Gumuliauskas, who is working on the legislation, stated: *"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, but individual representatives are obviously involved and it is up to the court to decide."*

It is also clear from Lithuanian court cases about Jonas Noreika and other Holocaust perpetrators that Lithuanian Courts are unwilling or unable to address this subject, as proposed by Gumuliauskas.

Lithuania, however, is not the only European nation trying to reinvent its past and rewrite history. Poland and Hungary have also embarked on efforts to rehabilitate their images.

In March 2018, Poland adopted a law that punishes anyone who “falsely accuses” the Polish nation of war crimes committed by Nazi Germany. This law explicitly prohibits the use of the term “Polish death camps” when referring to concentration camps that were built in Poland during World War II. Leaders and members of the right-wing Law and Justice Party have embraced the narrative that as Poland was occupied by the Nazis, Poles were prisoners without the freedom or ability to decide who lived or died. This is, however, not true as many Poles actively collaborated with the Nazis in the massacre of thousands of Jews at concentration camps in Poland.

Hungary, too, is grappling with its past of collaborating with the deportation of thousands of Hungarian Jews to concentration camps. As in Poland, some of Hungary’s political figures have also pushed the narrative that the Nazi Germans, not Hungarians, were responsible for the hundreds of thousands of Jews that were murdered during the Holocaust.

According to the Holocaust Remembrance Project (Echikson, et al., 2019), a research study conducted by researchers from Yale University and Grinnell College, historical revisionism is rampant in West Central Europe, whereby Croatia, other Baltic nations and the previously mentioned countries continue to minimize their past, attempt to rewrite history, and even deny their involvement in the Holocaust. The study, which was published on January 25, 2019 to coincide with the United Nation’s Holocaust Remembrance Day is endorsed by representatives from the European Union for Progressive Judaism (EUPJ).

## **RECOMMENDATION**

As the City nears its fourth decade of existence and continues to push progressive policies and lead discussions in several national forums, the City must condemn Lithuania’s efforts to rewrite history and minimize the very real participation. This direction to staff is well justified based on the City’s historic record and trailblazing efforts to denounce hate and reject hateful speech, including defamation of Jews, LGBT people, immigrants, and other minority groups. The efforts by Lithuania and other Western European nations should not go unchecked. For this reason, staff recommends the Council adopt the proposed resolution.

## **CONFORMANCE WITH VISION 2020 AND THE GOALS OF THE WEST HOLLYWOOD GENERAL PLAN:**

This item is consistent with the Primary Strategic Goal(s) (PSG) and/or Ongoing Strategic Program(s) (OSP) of:

- OSP-12: Actively Participate in Regional Issues.

In addition, this item is consistent with the following goal(s) of the West Hollywood General Plan:

- G-1: Ensure that the community is active and engaged in the decision-making process.

**EVALUATION PROCESSES:**

N/A

**ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH:**

N/A

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

Information regarding this resolution and legislative initiatives are regularly made available to the public by Community & Legislative Affairs' division staff by posting information on the Division's web page at [www.weho.org/legislative](http://www.weho.org/legislative)

**OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:**

CITY MANAGER'S DEPARTMENT / COMMUNITY & LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS  
DIVISION

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

None.

**ATTACHMENT:**

Attachment A: "A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD DENOUNCING LITHUANIA FOR ITS EFFORTS TO DISTORT THE HOLOCAUST AND ATTEMPTS TO REHABILITATE THE REPUTATIONS OF SOME OF ITS LEADERS WHO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN THE MASSACRE OF MILLIONS OF JEWISH INDIVIDUALS".

RESOLUTION NO. 20 - \_\_\_\_\_

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD DENOUNCING LITHUANIA FOR ITS EFFORTS TO DISTORT THE HOLOCAUST AND ATTEMPTS TO REHABILITATE THE REPUTATIONS OF SOME OF ITS LEADERS WHO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN THE MASSACRE OF MILLIONS OF JEWISH INDIVIDUALS.

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

WHEREAS, the City of West Hollywood was incorporated on November 29, 1984. That milestone was the culmination of a community-driven effort that at its core involved LGBT people, renters, seniors, Jewish-emigrates and people who had suffered persecution because of their religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or national status. That day in November 1984 led to the realization of many progressive and humane policies and the championing of values that promote and celebrate diversity, embrace people and cultures from different parts of the world, and reject divisiveness, racism, anti-Semitism, and hate; and

WHEREAS, over the years, the City worked relentlessly to expand protections and rights of LGBT people, advocated for fair and humane treatment of immigrants, and took several stands against the defamation of communities like the LGBT community, Jewish individuals, and others. The City, too, denounced efforts by anti-Semitic groups to advance the Boycott, Divest and Sanctions (BDS) initiative, which was aimed against the State of Israel; and

WHEREAS, the City has not only strived for an accurate depiction of the atrocities of the Holocaust, it has also denounced attempts to deny the Holocaust by countries like Iran. In part with these efforts, the City of West Hollywood has also worked diligently to remember the victims of the Holocaust by hosting a yearly Yom HaShoah memorial and the remembrance of the massacre of Babi Yar, Ukraine in 1941, where more than 33,000 Jewish people were massacred. In addition, the City periodically hosts the Human Rights Speakers' series, an event that features authors, social scientists and advocates for human rights and tolerance from different walks of life; and

WHEREAS, for some time now, some European politicians and their respective political parties have attempted to rewrite history surrounding their parties' and countries' support and collaboration with Nazi Germany during the Holocaust. One of those nations is Lithuania, where it is estimated that more than 95 percent of about 250,000 Jews who lived in the country when the Nazis invaded in 1941, were slain; and

ATTACHMENT A

WHEREAS, in January 2020, Arūnas Gumuliauskas, leader of Lithuania's ruling party Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union, and who serves on a committee of the Seimas (unicameral parliament) announced that his party would sponsor legislation declaring that neither the state of Lithuania nor its then-leaders participated in the Holocaust. This is consistent with other statements made by the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry and other Government representatives; and

WHEREAS, in a statement, Gumuliauskas, who is working on the legislation, stated: "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, but individual representatives are obviously involved and it is up to the court to decide"; and

WHEREAS, it is also clear from Lithuanian court cases about Jonas Noreika and other Holocaust perpetrators that Lithuanian Courts are unwilling or unable to address this subject, as proposed by Gumuliauskas; and

WHEREAS, Lithuania, however, is not the only European nation trying to reinvent its past and rewrite history. Poland and Hungary have also embarked on efforts to rehabilitate their images. In March 2018, Poland adopted a law that punishes anyone who "falsely accuses" the Polish nation of war crimes committed by Nazi Germany. This law explicitly prohibits the use of the term "Polish death camps" when referring to concentration camps that were built in Poland during World War II; and

WHEREAS, leaders and members of the right-wing Law and Justice Party have embraced the narrative that as Poland was occupied by the Nazis, Poles were prisoners without the freedom or ability to decide who lived or died. This is, however, not true as many Poles actively collaborated with the Nazis in the massacre of thousands of Jews at concentration camps in Poland; and

WHEREAS, Hungary, too, is grappling with its past of collaborating with the deportation of thousands of Hungarian Jews to concentration camps. As in Poland, some of Hungary's political figures have also pushed the narrative that the Nazi Germans, not Hungarians, were responsible for the hundreds of thousands of Jews that were murdered during the Holocaust; and

WHEREAS, according to the Holocaust Remembrance Project (Echikson, et al., 2019), a research study conducted by researchers from Yale University and Grinnell College, historical revisionism is rampant in West Central Europe, whereby Croatia, other Baltic nations, and the previously mentioned countries continue to diminish their participation and even deny their past involvement in the Holocaust. The study, which was published on January 25, 2019 to coincide with the United Nation's Holocaust Remembrance Day is endorsed by representatives from the European Union for Progressive Judaism (EUPJ); and

WHEREAS, as the City nears its fourth decade of existence and continues to push progressive policies and lead discussions in several national forums, the City must denounce Lithuania's efforts to rewrite history and minimize their very real participation. This action is well justified based on the City's historic record and trailblazing efforts to denounce hate and reject hateful speech, including defamation of Jews, LGBT people, immigrants, and other minority groups. The efforts by Lithuania and other Western European nations should not go unchecked; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of West Hollywood finds that Lithuania's efforts to minimize or even deny its historical involvement in the holocaust is contrary to the City's long track record of supporting an accurate depiction of the Holocaust and its atrocities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of West Hollywood denounces Lithuania's efforts to distort the historical record, which shows many Lithuanians actively collaborated with Nazi Germany in the assassination of Jewish nationals.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk