Honorable Lithuanian Ambassador to Israel
Mrs. Lina Antanavičienė
12 Aba Hillel Silver Street, 17th Floor
Ramat Gan 5250606

Dear Ambassador Antanviciene,

Re: Republic of Lithuania Independence celebration

Thank you for the "save the date" to the Lithuania Independence Day celebration to be held on 16 March 2020. Unfortunately, we shall not attend. **The Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel accepted a decision in its board of directors meeting of 20 February 2020 to not participate in the festivities until we have a sound solution to the proposed resolution to the Seimas by Mr. Gumuliauskas to absolve Lithuania and Lithuanians of their active participation in the Holocaust and in the murder of Jews during the period of World War II.**

We have cooperated fully with the restored Independent Republic of Lithuania regimes in combating anti-Semitism and promoting historical recognition of that dark period of World War II between the years 1941-1945.

In my meeting with the Seimas Chairman Mr. Viktoras Pranckietis held in Jerusalem on 23 January 2020, the Chairman assured me that the proposed resolution would not be approved by him. To the best of my knowledge, in accordance with the Constitution of Lithuania, any bill approved by Seimas must obtain the approval of the President, and if the President does not approve - the Seimas Chairman can approve and sign and only thereafter the proposal is valid.

We have received Mr. Pranckietis's assurance that he will not approve the resolution even if most of the elected members decide to approve, but we still have not received a response from the President of Lithuania regarding his position that he will neither support nor approve this resolution.

Following the demonstration that we held outside of the Lithuanian Embassy on 24 January 2020, we sent a letter addressed to President Nauseda on that subject. Some 200 Litvaks attended on a blistery cold and wet day to voice their concerns. Alas, President Nauseda has chosen not to reply to us. This is of grave concern. Without the pledge on behalf of the President, we will no longer cooperate with official activities of the Republic of Lithuania nor attend the Independence Day celebration.

Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel will encourage other Litvaks and Litvak organizations in Israel to not attend the Independence Day celebration.

I write this letter with great regret and lack of choice as a result of the situation. I am certain you understand my position.

Respectfully,

Arie Ben-Ari, Chair
Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel