



## **The Simon Wiesenthal Center Urges Lithuanian Community: “Don’t Build Monument To Honor Nazi Collaborator”**

**Chicago, Illinois – May 2, 2019** – This coming Saturday, on May 4<sup>th</sup>, the Lithuanian World Center, the Lithuanian-American community, and the local Lithuanian Consulate plan to unveil a monument to honor the memory of Adolfas Ramanauskas (“Vanagas”), a hero of the post-World War II Lithuanian anti-Soviet resistance.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center strongly opposes the erection of the monument due to Ramauskas’ support during the Holocaust for the anti-Semitic Lithuanian Activist Front, and his role as the leader of a gang of local vigilantes which persecuted the Jewish community of Druskininkiai during the initial weeks following the Nazi invasion of Lithuania in June 1941. In fact, Ramanauskas himself mentioned these activities in his own memoirs.

As early as October 2017, the Wiesenthal Center’s chief Nazi-hunter Holocaust historian Dr. Efraim Zuroff met personally with the members of the Seimas (Lithuanian Parliament) committee which decided to devote 2018 to honoring Ramanauskas, and explained to them why such a step was morally untenable and offensive to the memory of the Holocaust victims in Lithuania.

Though there is no proof that he himself directly murdered anyone, it is the Center’s position that his leadership during this period of persecution should automatically disqualify him from being declared a national hero.

The Center urges that in addition to canceling the plans to honor Ramanauskas-Vanagas, the community should follow the path of *Silvia Foti*. Silvia, the granddaughter of Jonas Noreika, known as *General Storm* during WWII, was writing a book about her grandfather when her research uncovered the truth that her grandfather was a Holocaust perpetrator. She immediately created a petition urging the Government of Lithuania to tell the truth about her grandfather and to recognize the country’s culpability regarding the Holocaust.

Given what is happening now in Vilnius with the Noreika monument, and Silvia Foti's international petition, and given that the town council of New Britain, Conn. overwhelmingly rejected the same Ramanauskas-Vanagas monument last year, it would be completely misguided to erect a monument, especially one which seriously distorts the accurate historical narrative of the Holocaust. Lastly, today, being Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, it is especially repugnant as we memorialize the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust by the Nazis and their collaborators.

**For more information, please contact Alison Pure-Slovin – (708) 714-0749**

The **Simon Wiesenthal Center** is a global human rights organization researching the Holocaust and hate in a historic and contemporary context. The Center confronts anti-Semitism, hate and terrorism, promotes human rights and dignity, stands with Israel, defends the safety of Jews worldwide, and teaches the lessons of the Holocaust for future generations. With a constituency of over 400,000 households in the United States, it is accredited as an NGO at international organizations including the United Nations, UNESCO, OSCE, Organization of American States (OAS), the Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO) and the Council of Europe.