

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 6, 2018

The Honorable Dalia Grybauskaite  
President of the Republic of Lithuania  
Office of the President of the Republic of Lithuania  
S. Daukanto aikste 3  
Vilnius 01122  
Lithuania


Dear President Grybauskaite:


We write to you today to express our concern about the Lithuanian government's plan to renovate the Vilnius Palace of Concerts and Sports. As you know, this Sports Palace is located on the sacred site of the Snipiskes Jewish Cemetery, the oldest Jewish cemetery in Vilnius, dating back to the late fifteenth century.

The Holocaust decimated the very community in whose care the preservation of the cemetery would have been entrusted. The decision of the Soviet regime to build the Palace of Concerts and Sports on the cemetery grounds not only desecrates the holy site, but also reflects a callous disregard for its tragic history. This historical cemetery is culturally significant to Jewish communities both locally and around the globe. While we appreciate the proposal to include a wing memorializing the cemetery in the conference center, renovating the facility could further desecrate the remains of many of Vilnius' preeminent Jewish scholars and leaders. We respectfully urge the relevant Lithuanian authorities to reconsider plans to begin renovating the Vilnius Palace of Concerts and Sports in 2021 and instead dismantle and move the facility to another site without disturbing the remains of those buried in the cemetery.

We sincerely appreciate the constructive approach your government has taken to addressing this issue and your willingness to engage with all communities in and outside of Lithuania. It is in this spirit that we make this appeal and hope that we can remain engaged in dialogue about this issue.

Sincerely,

  
Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

  
James E. Risch  
United States Senator

  
Pat Roberts  
United States Senator