



**LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS SEIMO NARĖ
RADVILĖ MORKŪNAITĖ-MIKULĖNIENĖ**

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BBC World Service
Audience Relations Team,
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UNITED KINGDOM

2019-05-15
Vilnius

Dear Madame/Sir,

Let me address you regarding an article by Paul Kirby, published in the European news section of the BBC news website on 8 May 2019. The article features allegations by Efraim Zuroff of the Simon Wiesenthal Center against the Brig.-Gen. Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas, one of the leaders of the Movement for the Struggle for Lithuanian Freedom and one of the last commanders of armed resistance against the Soviet occupation, who was captured, tortured and executed by the KGB in 1957. The same allegations, as those of Efraim Zuroff, were voiced by the Russian embassy in the USA.

Putting A. Ramanauskas-Vanagas in the context of the Holocaust and repressions against Jews is completely unfounded. All claims, that A. Ramanauskas-Vanagas may have participated in violent actions against the Jewish population, have been researched thoroughly and denied. There is no proof whatsoever that A. Ramanauskas-Vanagas committed any crimes against the Jewish population, colluded with Nazis, in any form participated or assisted any repressive actions against Jews. This is confirmed by a court decision in a libel case. This was recognised also by the Ambassador of Israel to Lithuania, who paid tribute to his memory by personally visiting the daughter of A. Ramanauskas-Vanagas. I also should add, that recently the European Court of Human Rights concurred that partisans played a key role in protecting Lithuanian identity and that their systematic killing during the Soviet occupation era should be considered genocide.

Therefore, I sincerely regret that despite all this, such allegations find a platform on the BBC, a news service highly respected and trusted in Lithuania. I want to draw your attention to a wider context of the issue, i.e. that the same allegations are voiced by the Kremlin propaganda. The BBC should have been aware that all claims of Mr Zuroff against A. Ramanauskas-Vanagas are baseless, but still, regretfully, decided to publish the article featuring them, thus enabling international dissemination of fake news.


In captivity since 1956 A. Ramanauskas-Vanagas suffered degrading abuse and after an extended time of inhuman torture was executed by his torturers. This happened at the time, when human rights, also in case of conflict or war, were protected and torture was already prohibited by the international law. It was important for the Soviet regime not only to destroy a person, but also to wipe-out the memory about him. Therefore, the remains of A. Ramanauskas-Vanagas were buried in a secret location in a nameless grave, not known until very recently. Not only violence, but also falsifying, discrediting, simply, lying, was a common tool for the KGB. Hence, one of his torturers left his "memoirs" on the

case, containing falsified and misleading claims, which to this date, unfortunately, provide fuel for disinformation.

False claims like these are a common narrative of today's Kremlin propaganda. The aim is to discredit the whole resistance of occupied nations against the Soviet regime, whitewash Soviet crimes and encourage glorification of the Soviet Union. The unfounded allegations being disseminated with the help of respected international media hurts the feelings of the Lithuanian citizens, but most importantly, the remaining living victims of the Soviet regime and their relatives.

Unfortunately, the truth of the Soviet crimes during the occupation of independent states, the deportations and repressions remain the darkest and the best-kept secret of the Soviet Union. Therefore, I strongly encourage the journalists who are professionally interested in Brig.-Gen. A. Ramanauskas-Vanagas biography or in the WWII and the post-war history of Lithuania to visit, among others, the KGB Museum in Vilnius and to discuss all topics of interest with experts from the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania and with the remaining participants of the Struggle for Lithuanian Freedom.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė', written in a cursive style.

Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė
Member of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania