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COURT ORDERS DEPORTATION OF FLORIDA MAN FOR ROLE IN NAZI CRIMES AGAINST JEWS IN WARTIME LITHUANIA

WASHINGTON D.C.- The Department of Justice announced that a federal immigration court in Tampa has ordered a Gulfport, Florida, man deported to Lithuania for participating in the persecution of Jews in Nazi-occupied Vilnius, Lithuania, during World War II.

In a 33-page opinion issued yesterday, U.S. Immigration Judge Mahlon F. Hanson found that in the fall of 1941, Algimantas Dailide, 81, then a member of the Nazi-sponsored Lithuanian Security Police (the Saugumas), took part in the wartime arrest of Jewish men, women and children who were attempting to escape from forced confinement in the Vilnius Jewish ghetto. A federal court in Ohio revoked Dailide's U.S. citizenship in 1997, after confirming his role in the arrests.

The Lithuanian Police systematically investigated, arrested, and turned over for punishment and execution Jews who attempted to escape from the barbed-wire enclosed Vilnius ghetto, as well as any person who tried to help Jews. Dailide joined the Saugumas in 1941, and served until 1944, when the Nazis fled Vilnius. He entered the U.S. in 1950, after falsely telling U.S. immigration officials that he had been a "forester" during the war.

The court's decision noted that the Jews arrested by Dailide were either shot at execution pits at Paneriai, a wooded area outside Vilnius, where some 50,000 Jews were murdered during the war, or were returned to the Vilnius ghetto for further confinement under "inhumane and grotesque conditions." Ultimately, nearly all of the Jews in the ghetto were executed.

Judge Hanson wrote: "Although sixty years have passed, it is important that [Dailide] be held accountable for his actions. His participation in these crimes against humanity and the suffering of his innocent victims will not be ignored or forgotten."

Michael Chertoff, Assistant Attorney General of the Criminal Division stated, "This ruling sends an important message to those who took part in atrocities, and to those who might seek to repeat such crimes, that they will be pursued and brought to justice."

OSI Director Eli M. Rosenbaum added, "In just a few months in the fall of 1941, the Nazis, with the willing assistance of local collaborators like Dailide, murdered most of the Jewish population of Lithuania. He is not entitled to the privilege of continued U.S. residence."

OSI previously obtained the denaturalization of three of Dailide's Saugumas colleagues. In 1996, a federal court in Boston denaturalized Vilnius Saugumas Chief Aleksandras Lileikis, who then fled to Lithuania and died there awaiting trial for war crimes. In 1996, a federal court in Washington, DC, revoked the citizenship of Kazys Gimzauskas, Lileikis' deputy and a former resident of St. Petersburg, Florida, who had moved back to Lithuania while under investigation by OSI. In February 2001, Gimzauskas was convicted by a Lithuanian court of participating in genocide. In 1998, a federal court in Tampa denaturalized Adolph Milius of St. Petersburg, who participated with Dailide in the arrests of Jewish civilians. Milius also fled to Lithuania, where he died in 1999.

The Dailide deportation case, which was handled by OSI last July, is a result of the unit's ongoing efforts to identify and take legal action against former participants in Nazi persecution residing in this country. To date, 67 Nazi persecutors have been stripped of U.S. citizenship and 55 have been removed from the United States since OSI began operations in 1979. More than 170 persons are currently under investigation by the unit.