



COMUNIDADE ISRAELITA DO PORTO  
COMUNIDADE JUDAICA DO PORTO

March 15, 2023

H.E. Marcelo Rebelo Sousa  
President of the Republic of Portugal  
Palacio de Belem  
Calçada da Ajuda  
1349-022, Lisboa

Dear Mr. President:

An apology on behalf of the State.

On 11 March 2022, Oporto Synagogue, the Jewish Museum and the houses of community leaders were unlawfully invaded by a large number of police officers, based on anonymous denunciations by convicted persons.

The heads of the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Judiciary Police, shamefully instrumentalized for political purposes, told the world they were investigating possible crimes of active corruption, influence-trafficking, tax fraud, money laundering, forgery of documents and others.

The accusations against the Community, which are mentioned below, were technically impossible, and the authorities knew they had no evidence of such charges:

1. The applicants' certificates of Sephardic origin were issued – how crazy is that?! – by the construction company of the Vice-President's husband.
2. The Chief Rabbi (recognised by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and a graduate in Jewish studies and history) had no technical know-how - how crazy is that?! – to know what is a Sephardi originating in Sepharad.
3. The Chief Rabbi had forged the Sephardic origin of a French Israeli who had in fact been certified, and rightly so, by the Lisbon Community.
4. The Chief Rabbi had forged the Sephardic origin of a Russian Israeli who had in fact been certified, and rightly so, by his community of origin.
5. The Chief Rabbi had bribed officials of the Registry Offices which he had in fact never visited, nor did he know anyone there.
6. The religious and lay leaders of the Jewish Community of Oporto were suspected of stealing the money of the fees charged to Jews of Sephardic origin.
7. That money was embezzled and laundered. In fact, suitcases of cash were supposed to be kept at the house of the Community's Vice-President, granddaughter of the founder, the "Portuguese Dreyfus".

The above-mentioned charges or, rather, peculiarities, will forever mark the "Day of Shame", 11 March, as a Soviet-style show put on and carried out "BASED ON NOTHING", in the words of the Court of Appeal on 27 September last.

The Jewish Community of Oporto was politically attacked because it is by far the strongest in Portugal in religious and cultural terms and because it is connected with (unwanted) rich Jews from all continents. The Portuguese press broadcast to the world that a Russian citizen had corrupted the Community, something not even the authorities ever claimed.

The Lisbon Community was used as a tool to legitimise what was happening. It was quite obviously spared this vile attack, just as the Soviet Union once spared the central synagogues of Moscow, Odessa and Leningrad, to avoid accusations of antisemitism.

The Sephardic certificates that were issued and rightly so, by the Lisbon community, to Russian Jews, including oligarchs, were kept quiet by the press and overlooked by the authorities who had orders to attack only the Oporto Community. The connections between Parliament, certifications and the practice of law which existed (only) in that Lisbon community, and were not illegal, were likewise forgotten.

The international principle of due process was completely crushed. No attempt was even made to keep up appearances. All was put into the same basket of the Oporto Community, the one which had synagogues, restaurants, museums, films, and many works. The Lisbon Community, which in 2020 had said that the debate on the Sephardic law was "pure antisemitism", had no reason to complain of the authorities in 2022. It was presented as a good example.

In the midst of this artificially created sea of rubbish, on 18 March the government destroyed the Sephardic law, without opposition. In one fell swoop all significant Jewish realities in Portugal were eliminated.

Accordingly:

On behalf of the Portuguese State, His Excellency the President of the Republic should issue a public apology to the Jewish Community of Oporto for all the wrongs and damages it has suffered, which are irreparable and can never be compensated.

Please accept, Mr. President, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Kol tuv.



Porto, March 15, 2023

Gabriel Senderowicz

President of the Jewish Community of Oporto