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September 7, 2025

Governor Josh Shapiro
501 North 3rd Street
508 Main Capital Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Pennsylvania Bureau of Corporations and Charitable Organizations
401 North Street, Rm 207
Harrisburg, PA 17120
RA-Charity@pa.gov

**Re: Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention and Human Security
EIN: 87-1787869**

Dear Governor Shapiro and Sir/Madam:

Please be advised that we represent the European Jewish Association and are advisors to Joseph Lemkin, a relative of Raphael Lamkin. We write to address the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention and Human Security's ("Lemkin Institute") unlawful use of Mr. Lemkin's name and the damage that has resulted.

By way of background, Raphael Lemkin, of Jewish and Polish descent, was an internationally known and respected humanitarian. Following the holocaust in which members of his family were murdered, he moved to the United States where he practiced law as well as linguistics. Using these two disciplines, he coined the word "genocide" from the Greek word "*genos*," meaning "race" or "tribe," and the Latin word "*cide*," meaning "killing," and dedicated his life to the prevention and prosecution of this crime. Mr. Lemkin wrote:

By "genocide" we mean the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group. . . Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. Genocide is

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directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group.

Mr. Lemkin's creation of the word "genocide" was in response to the atrocities of Nazi Germany, which included the murder of close to 50 of his family members. He was also deeply influenced by the horrors of what he ultimately named the Armenian Genocide. Partly due to Mr. Lemkin's efforts, in December 1948, the United Nations approved the Genocide Convention treaty which defined genocide and committed Union Nations' members to prevent this crime and punish those who commit it.

Mr. Lemkin was honored by several different governments as well as the United Nations, and human rights related awards are given in his name to worthy recipients. He has been featured in mediums such as books, plays and movies. He was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize ten times.

Mr. Lemkin strongly believed in the creation and sustainment of the State of Israel. His focus on the effects of genocide, especially within the Holocaust, fueled his desire for the establishment and preservation of Israel. He was an editor and columnist of *Zionist World*, a publication in line with these objectives.

Raphael Lemkin died in 1959. Joseph Lemkin is one of Raphael's family few survivors. He is an accomplished attorney in his own right practicing in New Jersey. Like Raphael, he is involved in a number of pro-Israel organizations and causes and cherishes the association of his family name with combatting anti-Semitism.

The Lemkin Institute is a 501(c) (3) organization registered in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It claims that it works "with people around the world to promote genocide prevention..." was founded "to fill a gap in the global prevention protocols." The Lemkin Institute touts itself as being "an organization named after Raphael Lemkin," writing, "We decided to honor his work in our name and we continue to use his insights to reflect on the world around us." It has no personal or other connection to Raphael Lemkin or the Lemkin family.

The current mission of the Lemkin Institute is rooted in anti-Israel advocacy. On October 13, 2023, not even one week after the tragic events of October 7, 2023, the Lemkin Institute called Israel's response to the brutality inflicted upon it a "genocide." Five days later, the Lemkin Institute asked the International Criminal Court "to indict Israeli Pre Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the crime of #genocide in light of the siege and bombardment of #Gaza and the many expressions of genocidal intent." This post was viewed well over one million times. Shockingly, the Lemkin Institute has criticized Israel for the death of the terrorist and former Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, writing "The Lemkin Institute strongly condemns this attack..." The Lemkin Institute's opposition to the elimination of Ismail Haniyeh is distressing but

unsurprising, as it has defined Hamas, not as a terroristic organization, but as “part of a larger response in the Islamic world to European imperialism.”¹

The Lemkin Institute does not just defend Hamas. The Lemkin Institute has backed Hezbollah, another terrorist organization, by calling Israel’s acts against Hezbollah as terrorism. One of its posts relating to the situation in Lebanon was viewed more than 700,000 times.

The United States is also a target for the Lemkin Institute. By way of just one example, the Lemkin Institute wrote, “Let us be clear: Israel is committing genocide in Gaza. The US is complicit in genocide. These are not political statements. They are statements that are made from knowledge and experience.” It also tweeted “The Lemkin Institute has had it with the cynical lies and propaganda from Israel and the USA.”

The Lemkin Institute, through its very name, as well as its marketing² and other materials, represents itself as an embodiment of Mr. Lemkin’s ideology. In reality, the Lemkin Institute’s policies, positions, activities, and publications are anathema to Mr. Lemkin’s belief system.

The Lemkin Institute is not authorized by Raphael Lemkin’s family, his Estate, or any custodian of his legacy to rely upon his name for any purpose. The European Jewish Association and Mr. Lemkin’s family are outraged by the Lemkin Institute’s use of Mr. Lemkin’s name especially in the context of the Lemkin Institute’s anti-Israel agenda.

The issue is not whether the Lemkin Institute’s attacks on Israel and the United States are based on incorrect facts and wrong conclusions, though there is no doubt that the Lemkin Institute is guilty of this.³ Instead, the issue is whether the Lemkin Institute may make these arguments in Mr. Lemkin’s name. Under the law, it may not.

There are numerous causes of action to be raised against the Lemkin Institute. From the Commonwealth’s perspective, the Lemkin Institute is in violation of the Solicitation of Funds for Charitable Purposes Act. In addition, while not an exhaustive list, the Lemkin Institute is using Mr. Lemkin’s name and likeness in violation of both statutory and case law including unauthorized post-mortem right of publicity, identity theft, prohibition on unauthorized use of

¹ In its writings, the Lemkin Institute is fond of pointing to the “arrogance” of the “Western world” as a basis to justify the Lemkin Institute’s positions.

² The Lemkin Institute offers to sell to consumers various items with Mr. Lemkin’s name and a quote attributed to him with what it claims to be “the national flower of Palestine.” There are numerous examples of anti-Israel sentiment within the items the Lemkin Institute offers for sale.

³ By way of just one example, see the Lemkin Institute’s statement after the brutal murder of Sarah Milgrim and Yaron Lischinsky, the young people who worked at the Israeli Embassy in Washington D.C., by Elias Rodrigues who stated that he “did it for Gaza,” and “Free Palestine;” the statement included “The timing and the development of this tragedy leaves open the possibility that these horrific murders were a false-flag operation, sponsored by entities that were threatened by the sudden, coordinated demonstration of a moral conscience by Israel’s allies last week.” And then, after conceding that there was no evidence of a “false-flag operation,” the Lemkin Institute still wrote, “...we must remain cognizant of all possibilities.”

name or likeness, and violation of the “false endorsement” and Anti Cyber-Squatting Consumer Protection Act sections of the Lanham Act.

We ask that your office investigate whether the Lemkin Institute is improperly using Mr. Lemkin’s name and likeness under law, require it to cease using the “Lemkin” name, and take further appropriate action to protect the public from further confusion. We are available at your convenience to meet with you and share the back-up for the information referenced above

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

SHERMAN, SILVERSTEIN, KOHL, ROSE & PODOLSKY, P.A.
A Professional Corporation

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