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ADDRESS OF BALTIC POLITICIANS REGARDING COMMERCIAL USE OF TOTALITARIAN REGIME SYMBOLS

We, Members of Parliaments and politicians from the three Baltic States — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — want to express our deepest concern regarding inappropriate promotion and sales of items featuring symbols of the Soviet totalitarian regime on the amazon.com website¹. The items of concern depict, in various combinations, the hammer and sickle, five-pointed star and letters *СССР* (Russian abbreviation for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, i.e. soviet totalitarian empire).

It is utterly disappointing that the number one digital company in the world and the biggest online retailer brand in the USA — Amazon — provides a platform for those who do not recognize and do not show respect for the millions of different nationalities having fallen victim to the soviet totalitarian regime: deportees, including the elderly, infants and minors, political prisoners, dissidents, resistance movement members, and all those who lost their life, health or their family members to Gulag or to other forms of repression of the soviet totalitarianism. This also may be hurtful to many members of the vast diaspora living in the USA and descendants of refugees who fled the occupation and repression in their nation states. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and many other countries were occupied by the Soviet Union for half a century, and today the soviet symbols are banned in these countries, the same way as those of Nazism, another totalitarian regime.

Just a few days ago, during the National Day for the Victims of Communism, the victims of soviet totalitarianism were honored in the USA. On this occasion, the White House issued a Presidential Message, thus, leading at the highest state level the commemoration of more than 100 million people who lost their lives under oppressive communist regimes.²

Selling items with the letters *СССР/USSR* and emblems of the Soviet Union at the Amazon.com, Inc. online store and making a profit of it is morally and ethically unjustifiable, at the very least. Moreover, by providing its selling platform for such a production,

¹https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss_2?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=cccp+clothes&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Acccp+clothes

²<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/presidential-message-national-day-victims-communism/>

Amazon.com, Inc. takes part in whitewashing and idolizing, among its customers worldwide, of totalitarianism, human rights abuses and suppression of freedom and democracy, the values that allowed such corporations as Amazon to grow and prosper.

As you may know, items in a clothing line, featuring the letters *USSR* and emblems of the Soviet Union, were put on sale by sports good giant Adidas ahead of the football World Cup in Russia, but were recalled after a public outcry. Similarly, one of the biggest USA retailers – Walmart Inc. — has also recently removed clothing with soviet symbols from sales on its online store, considering a vocal international protest.

Herewith, we call on Amazon.com, Inc. to demonstrate their corporate responsibility, their respect for the victims who suffered at the hands of the soviet totalitarian regime and immediately discontinue selling of the abovementioned items on their online store.

Sincerely yours,

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