



Israel Honors Greek Mayor Who Saved Entire Jewish Community During Holocaust

In 1943, the Nazi occupying forces on the Greek island of Zakynthos called Mayor Carrer and demanded a list of all the Jews on the island. Distraught, Carrer consulted the local Bishop Chrysostomos and, together, the two made the courageous decision to deny the Nazis' request. Now, Carrer's daughter is visiting Israel where she is being honored for her father's bravery.

President Reuven Rivlin met on Tuesday in his Jerusalem residence with Lana Carrer, daughter of Lucas Carrer, who served as mayor of the Greek island of Zakynthos during the Nazi occupation. Carrer, together with the local bishop, [saved nearly 300 Jews](#) who lived on the island, by refusing an order by the Nazis to provide a list of members of the Jewish community.

Rivlin thanked Carrer for her family's actions and those by her community for the sake of the Jewish people. "We want to thank you for the actions of your family. Their bravery is an example of the very best of what humanity is capable of. Their actions go to the very heart of the history of the Jewish people," he said.

Carrer spoke of the respect and warm relationship between the people of the Greek island and spoke of her admiration for the president and his work to combat discrimination.

Bravery and Moral courage in the Face of Evil

On September 9, 1943, the commandant of the Nazi occupying forces on the Greek island of Zakynthos called Mayor Carrer and demanded a list of all the Jews on the island.

Distraught, Carrer consulted the local Bishop Chrysostomos and the two together made the courageous decision to deny the Nazis' request.

The next day, they were ordered to appear before the Nazi commandant, who repeated angrily his demand for a list of the island's Jewish community. The bishop explained that while they did not share the same religious faiths, the Jews and Christians had lived on the island in peace and harmony for hundreds of years, without disturbance by one or the other.

He said the Jews were equally Greek citizens as the non-Jews, and their leaving would be detrimental to all the residents.

Unmoved, the Nazi commander again insisted on the list of names. Left without any choice, the bishop stretched out his hand and gave the commandant a piece of paper bearing just two names; Mayor Carrer, and Bishop Chrysostomos. With it, the Bishop handed over a letter from Hitler's own bishop stating the Jews of Zakynthos were under his personal responsibility. Shocked, the commandant took the two documents and sent them to his superiors in Berlin.



Metropolitan Chrysostomos. (Yad Vashem)

In the meantime, the city's leaders went to the Jewish community and hurriedly instructed them to hide in Christian homes in the hills, away from the towns.

Surprisingly, the command to round up the Jews of the island was canceled, all thanks to the bravery and moral courage of the mayor, the Bishop and the island's leaders who risked their own lives to save their Jewish neighbors and friends.

In October 1944, the Germans retreated from the island, leaving behind the 275 Jews of Zakynthos. The entire community survived.

In 1947, many of the Jews of Zakynthos made Aliyah, and in 1948, as a sign of their deep gratitude for the heroic acts of those who saved them, the Jewish community donated stained glass windows to the island's Saint Dionyssios Church.

Unfortunately, in 1953, a massive earthquake struck the island leveling the Jewish Quarter entirely, after which many of the Jews moved to Athens.

In 1978, Yad Vashem recognized Mayor Carrer, and Bishop Chrysostomos as [Righteous Among the Nations](#).

The historic story of the Jews of Zakynthos has been recorded in a book by Dionyssios Stravolemos called 'An Act of Heroism – A Justification', and in a film by Tony Lykouressis called 'The Song of Life.'

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