

For Immediate Release
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International Holocaust Era Insurance Commission Launches Worldwide Outreach to Unpaid Policy Claimants

Eagleburger Unveils Claims Procedure for Holders of Unpaid Holocaust Era Policies

Washington, D.C. — Former U.S. Secretary of State, Lawrence S. Eagleburger, today announced that the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC) has initiated the process to resolve the unpaid insurance claims of Holocaust victims, survivors, their heirs and beneficiaries for life, education and dowry policies issued between 1920 and 1945. Eagleburger also explained the details of a comprehensive worldwide effort to inform potential claimants of the claims procedures.

“Our direct responsibility is to pay insurance claims belonging to Holocaust era victims throughout the world,” said Eagleburger. “Cooperation among insurance companies, Jewish groups, insurance regulators and government entities has resulted in an unprecedented process to swiftly investigate and pay legitimate claims.”

In order to address the complexity of the claims, the participating insurance companies have agreed, among other things, to relaxed standards of proof. An independent auditing process has been established to review relevant records and archives.

The insurance companies that have joined the ICHEIC include Allianz AG, AXA, Generali, Winterthur Leben, Zurich Financial Services, and their subsidiaries. Claims relating to policies issued by insurance companies that are not part of the ICHEIC will be forwarded to those companies for review with the request that they honor those claims in accordance with the ICHEIC standards. A separate Humanitarian Fund, established by the ICHEIC, will address claims for policies issued by companies no longer in existence.

In addition to providing a streamlined claims process, the ICHEIC is launching an aggressive, global effort to inform and assist potential claimants.

“Last week I launched our effort with a letter to more than 10,000 Jewish and survivor organizations worldwide,” Eagleburger stated, “alerting them to the claims process and asking

them to help us locate and assist any of their constituents who may have unpaid insurance claims.”

The initial outreach program will, over the next four months, involve 70 countries, utilizing paid advertising in mainstream and Jewish publications, press conferences and other media activities, as well as work through Jewish religious, social, and cultural organizations. Advertisements will direct potential claimants to seek complete information on the claims process by calling toll-free help lines, writing to special mail centers, or accessing a multi-lingual site on the World Wide Web. Trained live operators will be available at the toll-free numbers to answer questions or assist in completing the necessary paperwork. In addition, the ICHEIC has begun to train in-country outreach coordinators in the United States and Israel. Over the next six weeks that program will be expanded to Eastern and Western Europe, areas of the Former Soviet Union, and Latin America.

Individuals who believe they may have unpaid insurance claims should write the International Commission, PO Box 1163, Wall Street Station, New York, NY10268 USA, or visit the ICHEIC web site at www.icheic.org to receive complete information on the claims process and a claim form. In the United States, individuals may also call toll free 1-800-957-3203. In Canada, the English toll free telephone line is 1-800-496-1974. The Canadian French toll free telephone line is 1-800-498-2091.

Founded in 1998, the ICHEIC is an international body established to investigate and resolve Holocaust-era insurance claims. The ICHEIC is comprised of U.S. insurance commissioners, representatives of the State of Israel, international Jewish and Holocaust survivor organizations, and representatives of major European insurance companies. Observers include the U.S. Department of State, some other affected world governments, and European and Israeli insurance regulators. Eagleburger serves as the ICHEIC’s chairman.

NOTE: Additional information for reporters is available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.icheic.org>. The audio portion of the English-language news conference from Washington, DC will be webcast live from that website on February 15, 2000 at 12:00 PM (U.S. Eastern Standard Time). The webcast will remain archived thereafter for future reference.

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Claims Conference's Statement on Efforts of the International Commission on Holocaust-Era Insurance Claims:

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, a founding member of the International Commission, welcomes the initiative taken to achieve a measure of justice for Holocaust victims around the world. After 50 years, survivors and heirs will finally receive what has been so long overdue.

“We have made a major effort to get assurances that the insurance companies recognize, even at this late date, the significance of resolving the claims of Holocaust survivors and heirs,” said Rabbi Israel Miller, president of the Claims Conference.

Statement by Bobby Brown, representative of the State of Israel:

Although we had to overcome many difficulties and spend over a year in negotiations, we consider it a great moral victory that Holocaust victims and their families will, after more than half a century, have their claims honored.

This historic moment is not only a moral and material victory; it is also a correction of history denied.

Chairman Eagleburger had the patience of Job and the wisdom of Solomon to be able to oversee such difficult negotiations and for this he and his staff deserve our people's gratitude.

**STATEMENT OF INSURANCE COMPANY MEMBERS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON HOLOCAUST ERA INSURANCE
CLAIMS**

We, as founding members of the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC), endorse the Outreach Program which Chairman Lawrence S. Eagleburger announced today. We see this as an important step towards resolving the issue of life, dowry and education insurance policies that were purchased by victims of the Holocaust prior to World War Two and may have remained unsettled or unclaimed.

Even before ICHEIC was set up, companies had started their own initiatives and actively solicited inquiries for policies of Holocaust victims.

Now, through the combined efforts of the members of the Commission, there is one address where interested parties can obtain information about unpaid policies written by member companies in the pre-War years. The toll free numbers that we set up in the past remain active, supplementing the one that ICHEIC announced today.

We, the five major European insurance companies who are members of ICHEIC, are committed to a fair and just resolution of the claims process. We have also agreed to establish a humanitarian fund.

Allianz AG, AXA, Generali, Winterthur Leben, Zurich Financial Services, and their subsidiaries.