

OPEN LETTER FROM HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS TO GERMAN CHANCELLOR ANGELA MERKEL

Dear Chancellor Merkel,

As elected leaders of Holocaust survivor groups in the United States, as well as second and third generation groups, we watched with great interest during your visits to concentration camps and during the 70th anniversary commemorations of the liberations. We appreciated your heartfelt statements and the obvious sincerity of your expression of sorrow. As you know, we are running out of time to be activists for our cause, given survivors' advanced age and difficult physical and mental health challenges resulting directly from the harsh treatment, torture, malnutrition, experimentations, and so much more, in the camps.

Despite funding increases in recent years by the German government, the medically mandated treatments for therapy, mental health care, medications, eye care, hearing aids, and other assistance, are simply not being provided. Instead, tens of thousands of survivors worldwide continue to suffer and tragically live in poverty. To add to the problem, the current distribution system is highly flawed, with impossible bureaucratic barriers, and diversion of funds for non-survivor purposes.

We need your strong leadership now to lead your government to take full financial responsibility for the horrific medical bills and home health care costs for all our brothers and sisters who are in need. It is one minute to midnight in their lives. Yet there is still time to change the current system that is not adequate for survivors' medical care and other needs, and ensure sufficient resources to allow survivors to live their final years in dignity. We strongly urge that these funds be channeled through the U.S. government directly to survivors or service providers. We believe you can make this happen through your sincere expressions in public and private. We strongly believe that the German people are fair and just and would approve, thus allowing peace to come to the survivors of the Holocaust who continue to suffer.

Notwithstanding the statement issued in Prague last week that would impose the costs of care on "home countries," these proposals are not new, and have not addressed the structural poverty that continues to afflict hundreds of thousands of survivors. Only a comprehensive effort by Germany can resolve this continuing tragedy.

We call on the membership of the American Jewish Committee, and other leaders of the Jewish community, to support your efforts to make proper levels of funding available for survivors immediately. We trust you will succeed and will forever be remembered with favor and gratitude in the history of our people.

**Holocaust Survivors' Foundation USA
National Association of Jewish Holocaust Survivors (NAHOS)
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HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS' FOUNDATION - USA
"Justice and Dignity for Survivors"

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