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# jewish world

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Outcry



Protesting for relief (Archives) Photo: Gil Yohanan

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## Holocaust survivors demand relief funds be distributed immediately

### Two Holocaust survivors petition High Court against association for location, restoration of survivors' property; claim it is withholding funds from survivors. 'The clock is ticking,' they say

Michal Goldberg

Two Holocaust survivors petitioned the High Court Monday, demanding they – and other Holocaust survivors in dire financial need – be given immediate relief from the State.

Jenny Rosenstein (73) and Ze'ev Factor (82) petitioned the High Court claiming that the State is withholding dozens of millions of dollars owed to Holocaust survivors, despite the Justice Ministry's orders.

According to the Ministry of Social Affairs' Bureau of Rehabilitation, some 250,000 Holocaust survivors are living in Israel and 143,000 of them do not receive any government aid.

This situation, said the petition, results in "some 35 deaths every day."

The blame, adds the petition, lays mostly with the Association for the Location and Restoration of the Holocaust Survivors' Property, which is a government controlled organization, aimed at providing medical, social and financial aid to Holocaust survivors.

The association, said the petition, is in control of dozens of millions of dollars of the survivors' funds, but has failed to funnel them to their welfare.

### 'The clock is ticking'

"Every day that goes by without using the available funds for their intended purpose, makes the situation much worse for survivors in need," Rosenstein and Factor's attorney, Daphna Holtz-Lechner, told Yedioth Ahronoth.

"The clock is ticking and the damage caused may be irreversible," she added.

The Association for the Location and Restoration of the Holocaust Survivors' Property, said the petition, has further failed to meet the deadline specified by government upon its establishment and has yet to publish its relief qualification guideline.

When established, in August 2006, the Justice Ministry – to which the association answers – gave it six months to make its relief qualification guideline known to the public.

"The Justice Ministry has repeatedly stressed before the association the importance of the aid it is obligated to provide and the need for rapid, immediate, action," said a statement by the Justice Ministry.

Rosenstein and Factor, however, are through waiting. Their petition demands the High Court orders the association to start distributing funds immediately, regardless of its future guidelines.

The two have also petitioned the court to order the association to make its records

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public.

"The association was very surprised by the petition," said a statement by The Association for the Location and Restoration of the Holocaust Survivors' Property.

"When established, the Justice Ministry made our goal very clear – to locate and return the Holocaust survivors' property back to its rightful owners... the law requires the association finish locating both the property and its owner before it can distribute any funds.

"Regardless of the petition and with accordance to the association's guidelines, it will begin distributing funds this coming April."

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