

The Jerusalem Post  
September 30, 2003  
Tom Tugend

## **Eagleburger resists pressure to resign**

LOS ANGELES - California Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi, a member of an international commission on Nazi- era insurance claims, has joined Holocaust survivors in demanding the resignation of the commission's chairman.

Garamendi spoke out immediately after three survivors filed a suit in Los Angeles County Superior Court against the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims and its chairman, former US Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger.

In their suit, survivors Dr. Jack Brauns, Manny Steinberg, and Si Frumkin, all Los Angeles area residents, charged that ICHEIC had improperly delayed or denied payments totaling more than \$1 billion in insurance payments on policies held by the survivors or heirs of those who perished under Nazi rule.

Garamendi, one of three American state insurance regulators on the commission, said he felt that under Eagleburger, ICHEIC "seems more interested in protecting (European Insurance) companies than in providing quick and appropriate payments to survivors."

Eagleburger "has no intention of resigning," his spokesman told the Los Angeles Times.

At a news conference at the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust, the three survivors and their attorney, William Shernoff, charged that the commission was biased in favor of insurance giant Assicurazoni Generali, headquartered in Trieste, which funds ICHEIC's operations.

During a congressional hearing on September 16, Eagleburger acknowledged that the commission, which was established five years ago with the avowed purpose of speeding up insurance payments, had so far settled only 5 percent of the 54,000 claims submitted.

In addition, ICHEIC has spent considerably more on its own operations and salaries than in payments to survivors, Eagleburger testified.

The lawsuit filed under California's Unfair Business Practices statute, asks that the commission be ordered to publish the names of "100,000 unpaid Holocaust era life insurance policies that Generali has admitted exist."

A Generali official in New York called the lawsuit baseless and misleading and said that thousands of claimants "have and will continue to be paid and offered generous amounts through ICHEIC, which is supported by leading Jewish Holocaust restitution organizations and the State of Israel."