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## **Holocaust survivors sue Italian insurer for victims' claims**

LOS ANGELES - Seven Holocaust survivors and four relatives of victims of the World War II genocide filed suit against an Italian insurance company they claim has not paid full benefits.

The lawsuits filed Monday in Superior Court say Assicurazioni Generali of Trieste, Italy, failed to pay life insurance claims taken out on people who were killed in the genocide.

Other European insurers have been sued for refusing to honor many pre-World War II life insurance policies because there was no documentation of the policyholders' deaths.

Few claimants have accepted settlements brokered by the international commission that is supposed to help Nazi victims collect on insurance policies. The International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims has itself been sued by Holocaust survivors who say it worked to deny claims.

The 11 plaintiffs in Monday's suit are represented by William Shernoff, a Claremont attorney who is also handling claims by 18 other people against Assicurazioni Generali.

Shernoff said his clients filed suit rather than accepting the "token" payments offered by the international commission.

"That commission is basically funded by Generali and other insurance companies, and they don't pay out full benefits, in our opinion," he said. "They only pay out a fraction of what's due."

He said it is hard to determine how much his clients are owed, because their policies were issued more than 60 years ago and in foreign currencies.

Shernoff said the cases likely will be transferred to a federal court in New York that is hearing more than a dozen other pending Holocaust reparation suits.

Peter Simshauser, an attorney for the company, has said previously that similar claims should be handled through the international commission, and that Assicurazioni Generali has paid out more than \$100 million to settle Holocaust-era insurance claims. A call seeking comment from Simshauser on Tuesday was not immediately returned.