



Embassy
of the Federal Republic of Germany
Washington

The Honorable
Elaine Luria
U.S. House of Representatives
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Emily Haber

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Washington, October 26, 2020

Dear Congresswoman,

We thank you for your letter dated October 16 in which you raise concerns with regard to Germany's legal argumentation in the case "The Federal Republic of Germany v. Alan Philipp, et al." We regret that the submission of Germany as the petitioner in a case presented to the US Supreme Court left questions as to the general position of the German Government on the Holocaust and our approach to dealing with the past.

Germany stands by its moral, political and historical responsibility for the Holocaust and Holocaust victims. As Chancellor Angela Merkel clearly and unequivocally stated in her speech at the memorial site in Auschwitz-Birkenau on December 6, 2019: "Remembering the crimes, naming the perpetrators and commemorating the victims in dignity is an unending responsibility. It is non-negotiable, and it belongs inseparably to our country. Being aware of this responsibility is an integral part of our national identity and defines who we are as an enlightened and liberal society, a democracy and a state based on the rule of law."

The Federal Government has made the process of providing moral and material compensation for the crimes committed by the National Socialist regime a key priority and continues to attach great importance to this task. More than 78 billion euros in total have been spent since 1952 to support Holocaust victims worldwide, almost 1 billion euros alone in 2020. The Federal Government intends to continue to provide support for the survivors of the persecution and horrors of the concentration camps and ghettos and to enable them to live in dignity.

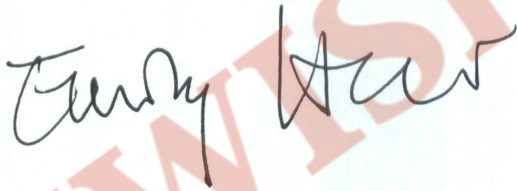
The German Government is fully aware that the Nazi regime both looted art and forced art sales at below-market rates. Each case in which a forced sale is claimed by a former owner or heir is and will be carefully examined by the competent German institutions as had been done in this case.

Germany has adopted the Washington Principles on Nazi-Confiscated Art from 1998 and enacted the Common Declaration in 1999 to implement those Principles. The Declaration underscores that the identification and return of Nazi-looted art is one of the core tasks of our public cultural institutions. Since adopting those principles, Germany has continually improved the framework for the research and return of Nazi-looted art.

The German Government is committed to safeguarding the historical record of the Holocaust and certainly does not contest any historical facts in relation to the timeline of the Holocaust. It relies on historical research, for example as presented by the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Yad Vashem and other internationally recognized institutions in the field.

I hope I was able to address your concerns regarding Germany's policy of coming to terms with the past. Please be assured that I am always at your disposal to discuss any further questions, which might arise on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eberhard Wehler". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a large, diagonal watermark that reads "JEWISH SHILDER".