

<http://www.sun-sentinel.com/florida-jewish-journal/news/palm/#>

Florida Jewish Journal Palm Beach Jewish News

Allianz protest increases momentum for justice



About 150 protesters stood outside the Broken Sound Country Club in Boca Raton to protest Allianz, A.G. — the German insurance company sponsoring the golf tournament — for failing to pay 97% of the \$2.5 billion it owes Holocaust survivors and heirs of victims. Maria Lorenzino/Staff photographer

(Maria Lorenzino / Sun Sentinel)



Randall P. Lieberman

Contact Reporter

South Florida Sun-Sentinel

Feb. 21, 2017

Protest of Allianz golf tourney in Boca Raton increases momentum for Holocaust survivors and heirs of victims

Following World War II, Jewish Holocaust survivors and the heirs of victims filed many claims on paid-up policies with their insurance companies.

In many cases, the insurance companies rejected these claims due to the absence of death certificates and policy documents — which were often confiscated by Nazi authorities — leaving the insurance companies themselves with the only proof of the existence of insurance policies.

According to data from Congressional hearings, Allianz, A.G. — the German insurance giant — has paid only about three percent of the \$2.5 billion it owes survivors.

This \$2.5 billion figure is well documented by financial experts, including a Congressional testimony by Sidney Zab Ludoff, the retired Treasury Department and CIA economist who was the economic expert for the International Commission for Holocaust Era Insurance Claims.

This is the reason why a record group of about 150 protesters protested outside the Broken Sound Country Club's Old Course in [Boca Raton](#) on Sunday, Feb. 12 — which was the site of the annual Allianz PGA Golf Championship.

These protesters wanted to send a message to Allianz that the company should do the right thing and pay the amount it owes the survivors.

"Allianz seems to be waiting for the issue to go away as the survivors die off," said protester Fran Goldman of [Delray Beach](#). "That's an outrage."

This was the seventh year of the protest. While the initial Allianz protests drew crowds of about 100 — and international media coverage — attendance dwindled to a handful last year as many South Florida survivors had become too weak and disheartened to participate.

Many survivors were discouraged by Allianz's refusal to acknowledge its remaining obligations — or even to sit down to speak with the survivors face-to-face.

But, this year, an informal group of residents from Boca Raton, Delray Beach and Boynton Beach — led by Bill and Janet Myles Schwartz of Boca Raton — formed to help re-energize the protest.

"I was amazed at the turnout we got today — twice what we were expecting," said Janet Myles Schwartz. "But this is about injustice and it struck a chord with people."

"It was especially important to have a strong turnout this year — with new legislation introduced in Congress concerning this issue, and the Allianz contract with the golf tournament currently under renewal negotiation."

To boost attendance, the local group actively recruited Jewish students and youth group members; millennials; area newcomers; and members of local synagogues and Jewish organizations.

This group worked closely with longtime protest sponsors, including [the Holocaust](#) Survivors Foundation USA, Shalom International, Generations of the Shoah International and NEXT GENERATIONS.

Most of the new protesters this year were not related to survivors and had not known about the protest in the past. Many had never been in a protest of any kind before.

"This was my first protest at the age of 72 years old," said Judy Cooper of Palm Beach. "I felt that this is an important cause that Allianz pay out what it owes."

A number of the protesters wanted to follow the example and honor the memory of Auschwitz survivor Jack Rubin, who passed away last summer.

Rubin was an outspoken protest leader who testified several times before Congress — calling on Germany, Allianz, Generali and other Holocaust profiteers to pay all documented claims and then disburse the remainder to provide for survivors' care.

Rubin's granddaughter Cara Rubin — a freshman at Florida Atlantic University — was one of numerous young people at the rally.

"My grandfather was an amazing man who left us a legacy of standing up for what's right," said Cara Rubin. "Joining this protest was a way for me to keep his fighting spirit alive."

David Rubin of Parkland, Jack Rubin's son, was thrilled to see the Allianz protest revitalized.

"This is what my father lived for," David Rubin said. "He must be smiling down on us right now."

Miami attorney Sam Dubbin — counsel to the Holocaust Survivors Foundation USA — said his organization's members have been re-energized by the turnout at this year's protest as well as the filing of recent bi-partisan legislation in the U.S. Congress.

U.S. Representatives [Ileana Ros-Lehtinen](#) (R-FL), [John Garamendi](#) (D-CA) and [Brad Sherman](#) (D-CA) — and Senators [Bill Nelson](#) (D-FL) and [Marco Rubio](#) (R-FL) — have sponsored legislation to guarantee survivors' and families' rights to go to court to recover these unpaid policies.

"We cannot sit idly by and allow these survivors to continue to be victimized and denied their day in court," Ros-Lehtinen said. "This bill will finally allow survivors the ability to bring their cases before the U.S. court system and seek redress from the insurance companies that continue to shirk their moral and legal responsibilities."

Rubio also expressed strong feelings on this issue.

"One of the gross injustices that occurred in the Holocaust's aftermath was insurance companies systematically failing to honor the claims of survivors and their families — an offense that continues to this day," Rubio said. "It's shameful that Holocaust survivors still have not been compensated."

"Insurance companies should honor their contracts and pay the debt they owe to Holocaust survivors."

According to Janet Myles Schwartz, there is now a "fresh enthusiasm to contact elected officials, start petitions and finally get this whole disgraceful situation resolved."

Emily Slosberg — a Democratic Florida State Representative from a district including Boca Raton — intends to raise this issue with Boca Raton city leaders and other elected officials as to whether Allianz' contract for this golf tournament should be renewed.

"It's overwhelming to see so many members of the community being a voice for the Holocaust survivors demanding that Allianz honor the life insurance policies sold to Jewish families," Slosberg said. "Allianz should be ashamed to be using the money of Holocaust victims' families to hold a 'so-called' charity golf tournament in Boca Raton."

If you agree with Slosberg about this, Dubbin encourages you to contact your local officials.

