



complexities and sensitivities surrounding this subject. However, the passage of time does not make this issue less complicated or less difficult. On the contrary, Polish Government delay has added a layer of unfairness, especially for elderly survivors and their family members.

For most victims of wrongful property confiscation, the seizure of their homes or other real property was inextricably part of the religious or political persecution they suffered. We are heartened by your recent statements indicating your commitment to getting legislation adopted in 2007. Your personal leadership will be critical in moving this legislation forward, bringing some measure of justice to the victims of past abuse, and helping Poland bring closure to this painful chapter in history.

With a view to ongoing drafting efforts, we urge to you take into consideration the following recommendations:

- Actual restitution of property should remain the goal, especially for properties that are currently held by the national or local governments.
  
- The adoption of a law in 2005 compensating individuals who suffered confiscations east of the Bug River (that is, formerly Polish land that became part of the Soviet Union after World War II) at 20 percent of the value of the property is a notable step and should pave the way for redressing other private property confiscations in Poland. At the same time press reports that compensation for other claimants might be set at less than 20 percent are deeply troubling.
  
- The purpose of passing a property claims law is to give the victims of past abuse some measure of justice. Accordingly, every effort should be made to ensure that the burden of filing a claim - including the production of documents, confirmation of the death of former owners (especially those who died during the Holocaust), and determination of one's status as an heir - should be minimized as much as possible.
  
- Although implementation of the law may take place at the local level, it is critically important that the national government retain a central role in ensuring that the law is properly and equitably implemented and devotes the necessary resources to that end.
  
- Finally, consistent with international principles, looted artwork should be returned to original owners and not re-classified as "national patrimony."

Mr. Prime minister, once again, we appreciate your stewardship in helping to resolve this challenging and complex matter.

Sincerely,

- Alcee L. Hastings, M.C., Chairman
- Benjamin L. Cardin, U.S.S., Co-Chairman
- Mike McIntyre, M.C., Commissioner
- Christopher J. Dodd, U.S.S., Commissioner
- Hilda L. Solis, M.C., Commissioner
- Hillary Rodham Clinton, U.S.S., Commissioner
- Joseph R. Pitts, M.C., Commissioner
- John F. Kerry, U.S.S., Commissioner
- Gordon H. Smith, U.S.S., Commissioner
- Russell D. Feingold, U.S.S., Commissioner