

# Government supports Holocaust-era property restitution in Poland

BY NATALIE ASH

The British Government supports Holocaust-era property restitution in Poland and other countries.

The confirmatory stance came when Baroness Ruth Deech asked a question in the House of Lords.

Speaking on behalf of the Government, Lord Ahmad said, "We are in regular conversation with the Polish Government on the restitution of property seized during the Nazi occupation. The UK post-Holocaust issues envoy, my noble friend Lord Pickles, is working with the US and other parties to call on Poland to pass legislation to provide restitution of, or compensation for, private property."

Poland is the sole European Union country not to have passed legislation for restitution or compensation for private property taken during the Holocaust by the Nazis and subsequently nationalised by the Communists.

Lord Ahmad confirmed he would raise property restitution with Polish Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz. But he may have to change contacts as Czaputowicz is reportedly stepping down this summer following a government reshuffle.

Nine other members across parties spoke on the issue.

Lord Pickles asked for a pledge to work alongside the U.S. and Poland to see that justice is brought to families of Holocaust victims.

Lord Ahmad affirmed the British government would work with the U.S. after the release of the JUST Act report. "We continue to ensure that Poland stands up as a signatory of the Terezin Declaration," he said. "We will work with the U.S. Noble Lords have mentioned the JUST Act. We will look at its outcomes and work closely with our partners."

"We applaud the British Government for its leadership on the issue of Holocaust-era property restitution and its commitment to continue to raise the issue with the Polish government," said Gideon Taylor, World



Baroness Ruth Deech

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Jewish Restitution Organisation (WJRO).

"We thank Baroness Deech and Lord Pickles for their leadership on this issue and all the other British members of both Houses of Parliament, across party, for their unwavering support.

"Seventy-five years after the Holocaust, time is of the essence for survivors and their families living in the UK and elsewhere, to receive a small measure of justice."

"This is a powerful statement of Britain's commitment to supporting Holocaust survivors and their families in their quest for justice," added Marie van der Zyl, President, Board of Deputies.

"The United Kingdom has long played a leadership role working with international partners to encourage the full implementation of the Terezin Declaration. By asking the question about Holocaust-era property restitution in the House of Lords, Baroness Deech has helped raise awareness on this issue."

The UK and 46 other countries back restitution of Holocaust-era property.

WJRO represents world Jewry claims for the recovery of Jewish properties in Europe (outside Germany and Austria).