

Gideon Taylor

President, World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO)

President, Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference)

Mr. Taylor commenced his career in 1990 at the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the overseas humanitarian arm of the American Jewish community where, from 1994, he served as Assistant Executive Vice President. He directed rescue operations in Syria and Yemen and coordinated activities in Ethiopia. He was responsible for property restitution and other programs in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union. He also oversaw JDC's International Development Program which implemented major disaster relief and development programs in Africa, the Middle East and Europe. He subsequently was Chief Operating Officer, Program & Budget where he managed the global program and budget of the organization.

He served as Executive Vice President of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) from 2000 to 2009. The Claims Conference is responsible for recovering former Jewish Holocaust-era property and compensation and for distributing Holocaust restitution and compensation to Nazi victims as well as promoting Holocaust education. He managed an international staff of 250-400 operating from 15 offices. He oversaw a series of negotiations regarding Holocaust-era compensation and restitution with foreign governments such as Germany and Austria as well as the banking, insurance and manufacturing sectors. Negotiations in that period included those leading to the establishment of the German Foundation, "Remembrance, Responsibility, and the Future" which provided compensation for former slave and forced laborers. He also supervised a program for recovery of unclaimed Jewish property in former East Germany through claims for, and sales of, buildings and land. He expanded a worldwide allocations program for social assistance and Holocaust education programs to 700 agencies worldwide. In 2020 he became President of the Claims Conference.

He also serves as President of the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO), the representative of world Jewry in pursuing claims for the recovery of Jewish property seized during the Holocaust in Europe and elsewhere. During his tenure, WJRO has advanced restitution, compensation, and remembrance efforts across Europe and beyond. In recent years, WJRO secured important progress in compensation and restitution for Holocaust survivors and their families, including the adoption of compensation frameworks in Latvia and Lithuania and the conclusion of a historic agreement with the Government of Luxembourg.

WJRO also played a leading role, in partnership with the U.S. Department of State, in the development of the Best Practices for the Washington Conference Principles on Nazi-Confiscated Art. Building on the original 1998 Principles, the Best Practices have been endorsed by more than 30 countries, with additional endorsements continuing, helping to strengthen international standards for transparency, accountability, and the just and fair resolution of claims involving Nazi-confiscated art and cultural property.

He serves as Executive Vice President of Earle W. Kazis Associates, a family commercial real estate company.

He has also served previously, as CEO and Executive Vice President of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York and as Co-Chairman of the Board of the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland.

He is an adjunct professor at Fordham Law School, teaching a course “Human Rights: Coming to Terms with Historical Justice Through Reparations.” In addition, he has written for the media on a periodic basis including articles in Newsweek, The Hill and New York Jewish Week.

Originally from Dublin, Ireland, Mr. Taylor is a graduate of Trinity College in Dublin and received his master’s degree in law from Oxford University. He is admitted as an attorney in the State of New York, Ireland, and the United Kingdom.