

Chief Rabbi M. Piron

The Board of Directors  
Claims Conference  
New York

Dear Sirs,

Re: Distribution of Funds, May 2003

Permit me to introduce myself briefly. My name is Mordechai Piron. I was born in Vienna, Austria, at the end of 1921, and I personally experienced the terrible events—the persecution, humiliation, plunder and the eventual murder of Jews in Vienna—from March 1938. At the end of October of that year my late parents were successful in getting me out, through Youth Aliyah, to the then British Mandatory Palestine. My parents, alas, and all the members of their families, on both sides, were murdered during the Holocaust.

Alone, poor and without family, I joined the I.D.F. in 1948, and, after 32 years of service, resigned in 1980 with the rank of General, having served as Chief Rabbi of the I.D.F. I was also a founding member of Israel's National Defense College, the I.D.F.'s highest educational framework.

From 1980 to 1992 I held the position of Chief Rabbi of Zurich (I.C.Z.), the largest Jewish community in Switzerland. At present I am chairman of the Sapir Educational Center in Jerusalem.

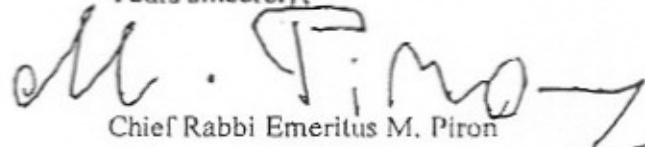
Given my background and experience, I feel compelled to warn against any intention or attempt to reduce in any way the financial allocation earmarked for educational and cultural purposes related to the Holocaust. Those Holocaust survivors who are still alive are not getting any younger. They are the "witnesses of time" ("Zeitzeugen," in German). In a relatively short time, when they have passed away, we shall have to fight more bitterly against those among our enemies who deny the Holocaust.

The purpose of my letter, therefore, is to advise against reducing funds for educational and research purposes. On the contrary, at this point funds and allocations for these purposes should be increased, as this is the last real opportunity for thorough scientific research. Let me put it more strongly: Do not miss what is, from a historical point of view, the "last chance."

Should it be necessary, I would be pleased to provide further information.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely,

  
Chief Rabbi Emeritus M. Piron