When the Second World War ended, millions of Europe’s Jews, no matter what their age, gender or social status, had been gassed, shot, beaten to death or starved, all at the hands of the Nazis and their local collaborators.

Some survived; some staggered out of concentration camps. Others crawled down from attics or up from holes in the ground—saved by Europeans who risked their own lives to save theirs. A great many of these traumatized victims fled postwar Europe. But some Jews remained.

Over the past seven decades, Europe’s Holocaust victims struggled to rebuild their lives. They raised families; they rebuilt their remnant communities as best they could. Now in their eighties and nineties, physical ailments fill their days; nightmares haunt their nights. And unlike their non-Jewish neighbors, most of them have no extended family to reach out to, or to comfort them. We all know why.

In tens of thousands of cases, only one organization stands between these victims and total abandonment — The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference). Right now, as you read this, we provide homecare, medicine, psychological counseling and social workers, soup kitchens and meal deliveries, and social settings to ease their isolation.

Even though there are fewer Holocaust victims each year, costs for our programs continue to rise. They need more help, more doctors, more care at home. And we at the Claims Conference stretch every penny as far as we can to help them.

But it isn’t enough. We are asking the governments in every European country where Holocaust survivors still live to join with us, stand with us, and help provide a modicum of dignity to the last witnesses of a world destroyed. They are the last of their kind.

THE LAST OF THEIR WORLD

Photographer: Christopher Mavric