

CHARLES E. SCHUMER  
NEW YORK

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United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

October 12, 2007

Ms. Violet Harfmann  
PO Box 15504  
Syracuse, New York 13215

Dear Ms. Harfmann:

Thank you for writing me to express your views concerning human rights for German victims of ethnic cleansing in the aftermath of World War II. I agree with you that the deportations in the eastern German provinces were brutal and are an example of the worst kind of human rights violation – ethnic cleansing.

In 1944 and into the start of 1945, many Germans across Europe fled their homes in advance of the approaching Soviet Army. While many Germans escaped, millions of others remained in East and West Prussia, Silesia, Pomerania, the Sudetenland, and in pockets throughout Central and Eastern Europe. When the Russians arrived, they expelled many of the Germans from Eastern Germany, driving them into the Western half of the divided country. According to experts, two and half million people, mostly women, children and the elderly, died in the expulsion. Many more, perhaps hundreds of thousands more, died as a result of the living conditions in the devastated Germany into which they were expelled.

The State Department is currently in the process of facilitating negotiations between European governments and survivors of the brutalities that took place during and after the Second World War. I support these negotiations, and it is my hope that the Europeans will work with us to establish fair and meaningful reparations to victims of ethnic cleansing.

Thank you for contacting me on this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me in the future if I may ever be of service.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator