

LOURDES A. LEON GUERRERO
MAGA'HÅGA • GOVERNOR



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Governor Leon Guerrero Seeks IGIA Assistance to Expedite War Claims Compensation

Hagåtña, Guam – As she promised in her State of the Island Address, Governor Lou Leon Guerrero has written a letter to U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) Acting Secretary David Bernardt and Director of Governmental Affairs Deputy Assistant to the President Doug Hoelscher seeking their leadership in expediting long-overdue War Claims Compensation to Guam's *manamko*, pointing out that our island is on the eve of its 75th anniversary of being liberated from Japanese forces during World War II.

“As you can imagine, over the past 75 years, time has been slowly taking away those who survived Guam’s occupation, and it’s estimated that fewer than five hundred living survivors remain today,” Governor Leon Guerrero wrote.

Earlier this year, the Department of the Treasury (DOT) determined that it is unable to issue final award payments for adjudicated claims in accordance with the Guam World War II Loyalty Recognition Act, based on its interpretation of the law, noting that it did not have the legislative authority to release disbursements. The Guam World War II Loyalty Recognition Act authorizes the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission to adjudicate claims filed by survivors of the Japanese occupation. The Act also authorizes adjudicated claims filed by the heirs of the victims.

DOI is expected to make available to Guam additional reconciled Section 30 funding that may not be subject to the current set aside sent by DOI to DOT to authorize adjudicated claims.

“Because the funds may not be subject to the set aside, their disposition is subject to local authority and I am willing to commit what is necessary to pay awards to living compensable victims who have an adjudicated claim from the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission,” the Governor said.

She added: **“I am asking for your leadership to direct the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission and the Department of the Interior to work with my office to determine what necessary agreements would need to be in place to ensure that the Government of Guam is aligned with decisions made by the Foreign Claims Settlement**

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Commission regarding living survivors of Guam's WWII occupation who have compensable claims adjudicated by the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission.

"As you may know, seeking resolution of the inequitable treatment of the people of Guam who lived through wartime occupation has been pursued by our leaders since 1945. I believe that collaborating to find a solution for living survivors puts us on the verge of achieving parity and recognizes their suffering and loyalty. Each passing day allows time to take another living survivor from us."

Bernhardt and Hoelscher co-chair the Interagency Group on Insular Areas, an organization made up of federal officials who advise the President annually on matters related to the Insular Areas.

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