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ARMENIAN GENOCIDE VICTIMS' DESCENDANTS MAY SUE, COURT RULES

On December 11, a three member panel of the 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals reversed an earlier ruling by the court and decided that German insurance companies can be sued for unpaid claims relating to the atrocities committed by the Ottoman Empire in the early part of the last century. It's the first time a U.S. court has described the atrocities as genocide.

Brian S. Kabateck, an attorney for the Armenian American heirs from Glendale and elsewhere, said the decision was "extraordinarily unusual" and could open the door to other unsettled issues from the massacre. The Armenian American plaintiffs had petitioned for rehearing and were notified that it was granted 14 months ago, Kabateck said. But they heard nothing from the appeals court to lead them to expect the stunning reversal, said the lawyer, whose grandparents were victims of the atrocities.