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Germany will not pay for war crimes in Italy

The verdict by the Italian Supreme Court of Cassation ordering Germany to pay damages for war crimes committed in Italy during World War II is contrary to international law. This was announced on 20 July by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague. Thus Germany need not fear further claims from other countries' citizens regarding war crimes committed at the time of World War II.

In the ICJ's opinion, suing the German state for damages is illegal because this violates its immunity. Furthermore, in this particular case, the verdict violates the German-Italian post-war treaties exempting Germany from financial liability for the crimes committed during World War II. The Italian Supreme Court of Cassation, which under its unprecedented verdict of 2008 sentenced the German state and awarded damages to nine relatives of victims murdered in 1944 in Tuscany's Civitella, Cornia and San Pancrazio, argued that the immunity did not apply in the case of war crimes. Rome has the right to appeal against the UN court's decision.until January 2011.

The ICJ's decision is a major success for Germany as it staves off the threat of similar claims being brought by victims' relatives from other countries where Germans committed war crimes. Berlin was afraid that as a consequence of the verdict passed two years ago, millions of claims would be lodged to Italian courts by Poles and Russians and other nations. <ciechan>