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# Slavery Lawsuits Overruled

Federal jurists say a state law allowing WWII victims of forced labor to sue is illegal.

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A federal appeals court Tuesday declared unconstitutional a 1999 California law giving World War II victims of forced labor the right to sue for compensation in state court.

The ruling had the effect of dismissing hundreds of cases filed by individuals who toiled as slave laborers in Nazi Germany and Japan. The plaintiffs included elderly Jews and American prisoners of war as well as Korean and Chinese civilians pressed into labor after being captured by the Japanese army.

The 3-0 decision by the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco, saying the federal government has exclusive province over foreign affairs, upheld rulings by federal trial judges in Los Angeles and San Francisco. The cases were consolidated for appeal.

Tuesday's decision was diametrically at odds with a ruling issued just six days earlier by a California appeals court in Los Angeles, which upheld the state law written by former state Sen. Tom Hayden (D-Los Angeles).

A lawyer for some of the vic-  
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