

Religion

Children of Holocaust survivors more anxious about Iran nuclear threat

By Michele Chabin | Religion News Service April 14 at 3:22 PM

JERUSALEM — As Israelis mark Holocaust Memorial Day on Wednesday (April 15), a study by researchers at Bar-Ilan University has found that the adult children of Holocaust survivors are more fearful than their mainstream peers about the threat of Iran developing a nuclear weapon.

Given that many studies over the decades have found that children of Holocaust survivors are deeply affected by their parents' traumatic experiences, Amit Shrira, the study's author, set out to discover whether these second-generation survivors were more anxious over a potential Iranian bomb than others of their generation. His study was published in *Psychological Trauma*, a journal of the American Psychological Association.

Shrira compared the feelings of 63 children of Holocaust survivors whose parents lived under a Nazi or pro-Nazi regime to those of 43 children whose parents either fled to unoccupied countries or immigrated to Israel.

The study found that second-generation survivors “exhibit greater preoccupation with the Iranian nuclear threat” than the comparison group. In addition, second-generation survivors are “more sensitive to nuclear threat” and have a “more ominous outlook on the world in general — a world of threat and significant danger that can fall upon them.”

“The link between the Iranian threat and the Holocaust is frequently made by Israeli politicians, the Israeli media and the Iranian regime,” Shrira said. “Offspring of survivors are sensitive to these statements.”

A follow-up study of 450 subjects — 300 second-generation survivors and 150 of their contemporaries — found identical results.

“In second generation survivors we most often see that they are a group with resilience and mental resources, and they generally exhibit good functioning on a daily basis. But they do have vulnerabilities which can be manifested during times of stress,” Shrira said in a statement.

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