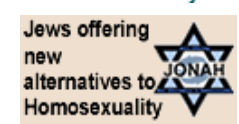




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US Congress Recognizes Jewish Refugees From Arab Lands

by Hillel Fendel

(IsraelINN.com) U.S. House Resolution 185, adopted on Tuesday, recognizes for the first time the rights of Jews who became refugees as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Resolution expresses "the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the creation of refugee populations."

The non-binding bill asks the President to ensure that in all international forums, when the issue of Middle East refugees is discussed, US representatives will make sure that any explicit reference to Palestinian Arab refugees is matched by a similar explicit reference to Palestinian Jewish and other refugees.

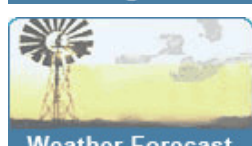
The bill's sponsors aimed to increase awareness of the fact that not only is there an Arab/Palestinian refugee issue as a result of the Middle East conflict, but that Jews, as well, lost their homes and livelihoods under similar circumstances. It is estimated that 850,000 Jews were displaced from their homes, often under threats and with violence, as a result of Israel's War of Independence and afterwards.

Many note that while many of the Arabs living in the Land of Israel left their homes voluntarily, goaded on by Arab promises that they would come back as victors and be able to displace the Jews, the Jews in Arab countries were generally expelled under duress and violence.

"We believe this Resolution will produce a more balanced and accurate historical account," stated JIMENA ([Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa](#)), "and ultimately, a more just resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict."

JIMENA, which lobbied heavily for the bill, is a human rights organization that educates and advocates for the plight of Jewish refugees from the Middle East. It was co-founded by Regina Bubil-Waldman, whose family was nearly murdered - twice - while

“.....
Many Jews lost their resources, their homes, and their heritage sites, fleeing in the face of persecution, pogroms, revolutions and brutal dictatorships.
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escaping from Libya in 1967.

JIMENA notes that before 1948, approximately 850,000 Jews lived in Muslim countries of the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf, while today, 99% percent of these ancient Jewish communities no longer exist due to Arab and Islamic government actions that led directly to their displacement.

The Jews in Arab/Moslem countries, according to JIMENA, were subjected to a wide-spread pattern of persecution, including official decrees and legislation denying human and civil rights to Jews and other minorities, expropriation of their property, nullification of their citizenship, and the stripping of other means of livelihood. Jews in Arab lands prior to and following the creation of the State of Israel were often victims of murder, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, and expulsions.

Since 1947, the United Nations General Assembly has adopted close to 700 resolutions on the Middle East conflict, including 101 resolutions on Palestinian refugees - yet there were "no UN resolutions, nor any recognition or assistance from the international community, for Jewish and other refugees from Arab countries," said Rep. Alcee Hastings (D-FL).

The passage of the resolution was the result of a bi-partisan House effort spearheaded by Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), along with Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Michael Ferguson (R-NJ), and Joseph Crowley (D-NY).

"Discussions of Middle Eastern refugees invariably focus exclusively, and shortsightedly, on the plight of those of Palestinian descent,"

said Rep. Ros-Lehtinen. "Far fewer people are aware of the injustice faced by Jewish refugees from Arab lands and Iran. Many Jews saw their communities, which had existed vibrantly for centuries, systematically dismantled. They lost their resources, their homes, and their heritage sites, fleeing in the face of persecution, pogroms, revolutions and brutal dictatorships."

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