

With Annapolis Approaching, Jewish Refugees Speak Up

(Israel Press) Two organizations representing Jews originally from Arab countries demand to be heard at Annapolis particularly in light of documents from the UN archives revealing official Arab collusion and laws against Jews back in 1947. Violence, arrests and confiscation of property were part of official policy towards Jews in several Arab countries, the papers show.

In addition, it is estimated that the 850,000 Jews who fled Arab countries after Israel's founding in 1948 left behind assets currently worth more than \$300 billion.

Heskel M. Haddad, president of the World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries, said last week that when the Palestinian Authority negotiators at Annapolis raise the issue of Arab refugees, the Israelis must remind them of the hundreds of thousands of Jews who left their homes and property in Arab countries.

In addition, Stanley Urman, executive director of Justice for Jews from Arab Countries (JJAC), says that justice cannot be served unless the forced exodus of Jewish refugees, and the conditions under which they left, are included on the agenda at the upcoming conference.

The JJAC recently released a report entitled, "Justice for Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries: The Case for Rights and Redress." Without explaining how it found them, it quotes recently discovered documents of the United Nations archives revealing Arab League laws designed specifically to harass and mistreat the Jews of its member states.

The report quotes an Arab League draft law saying that Jews living in Arab countries would be considered citizens or members of Israel, referred to as the 'minority state of Palestine.' As such, the Jews' bank accounts would be frozen and used against 'Zionist ambitions in Palestine.' In addition, active Zionist Jews would be jailed as political prisoners, while only Jews who join Arab armies would receive full Arab rights.

Arab League Sanctioned Oppression of Jews

The UN documents reveal "a pattern of state-sanctioned oppression of Jewish refugees from Arab countries - including Nuremberg-like laws," Irwin Cotler told CNS' Julie Stahl. Kotler is an international human rights lawyer, Canadian parliamentarian and former Canadian justice minister.

Rabbi Avraham Hamra, a former spiritual leader of the Jewish community in Syria who now lives in Israel said, "There were always restrictive laws against the Jews of Syria. In addition, all the Jews who left between 1947 and 1991 have never received any compensation for their homes. The same is true for all the Jews of Arab countries who were forced to run away. Israel received Jews from the Arab countries, and the Arab countries received Palestinians."

The latter, however, consciously refused to accept them. Haddad told the Jerusalem Post that the entire Arab refugee problem rests on a resolution by the Arab League in the 1950s, which states that no Arab government would grant citizenship to the refugees. Many of the festering Palestinian refugee camps in Gaza, Lebanon, and elsewhere have turned into breeding grounds for terrorists.

The information on the Arab League's official persecution of Jews [has been long-known](#), even if not well-publicized. On May 16, 1948, the New York Times reported, "Already in some Moslem states such as Syria and Lebanon there is a tendency to regard all Jews as Zionist agents and 'fifth columnists.' There have been violent incidents with feeling running high. There are indications that the stage is being set for a tragedy of incalculable proportions. In Syria a policy of economic discrimination is in effect against Jews. 'Virtually all' Jewish civil servants in the employ of the Syrian Government have been discharged. Freedom of movement has been 'practically abolished.' Special frontier posts have been established to control movements of Jews. In Iraq no Jew is permitted to leave the country unless he deposits £5,000 (\$20,000) with the Government to guarantee his return. No foreign Jew is allowed to enter Iraq even in transit. In Lebanon Jews have been forced to contribute financially to the fight against the United Nations partition resolution on Palestine. Acts of violence against Jews are openly admitted by the press, which accuses Jews of 'poisoning wells,' etc. Conditions... are worst in Yemen and Afghanistan, whence many Jews have fled in terror to India. Conditions in most of the countries have deteriorated in recent months, this being particularly true of Lebanon, Iran and Egypt."

100,000 Square Kilometers of Jewish-Owned Property

Haddad said his organization has property deeds of Jews from Arab countries from decades ago, proving Jewish ownership of a total area of 100,000 square kilometers - 3.5 times larger than the State of Israel, including the Golan,

Judea, Samaria and Gaza. Most of the properties are located in Iraq, Egypt and Morocco.

The 850,000 Jews who left, or were forced out of, Arab countries following the creation of the State of Israel are even more numerous than Arabs who left Israel at that time. No precise number of the latter is known, but it is most widely estimated to be somewhat more than a half-million. However, the Arabs now demand the "right of return" for them and their descendants, now numbering in the millions.

Israel Must Counter Refugee Demands

Both Haddad and Urman agree that Israel must be sure to raise the various issues associated with the Jewish refugees from Arab lands at Annapolis - particularly in light of the PA's deal-breaking demand that Israel agree to allow hundreds of thousands, and possibly millions, of Arab refugees to "return" to Israel.

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