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Press Releases

AJC Hails House Resolution on Jewish Refugees from Arab Lands

April 2, 2008 - Washington -The American Jewish Committee welcomed the passage of House Resolution 185, recognizing the 850,000 Jewish refugees who were forced to flee their homes in Arab lands after the State of Israel declared its independence in 1948. AJC, together with Justice for Jews from Arab Countries, actively supported the measure.

“This resolution contributes to recognition of the suffering of Jews who were forced to flee their homes in communities that were hundreds, and in some cases thousands, of years old,” said AJC Executive Director David A. Harris.

Significantly, the House resolution seeks to guarantee that any solution to the refugee issue takes into account Jewish refugees—whose numbers were very similar to Palestinian refugees—as well as other minority refugees from Arab lands.

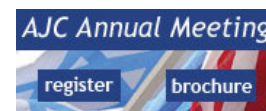
“This House action helps correct a distortion in the narrative of the Arab-Israeli conflict. By focusing extensively on the problem of Palestinian refugees, the forced exodus of Jews from Arab lands has been shamefully ignored,” said Harris.

The resolution calls on the President to exert diplomatic influence to assure that resolutions in the United Nations and other international bodies referring to Palestinian refugees will also include explicit references to Jewish and other refugee groups.

AJC applauded Representative Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), the measure’s sponsor, and original cosponsors Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Joseph Crowley (D-NY) and Mike Ferguson (R-NJ) for bringing this important issue to the foreground.

AJC urged the Senate to adopt a companion resolution, S. Res. 85, sponsored by Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), and cosponsored by Norm Coleman (R-MN), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Trent Lott (R-MS), Joseph Lieberman (ID-CT) and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

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