



JUSTICE FOR JEWS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES

International Rights and Redress Campaign

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CANADIAN MP AND FORMER MINISTER OF JUSTICE OF CANADA IRWIN COTLER ADDRESSES JOINT HOUSE OF COMMONS - HOUSE OF LORDS MEETING

“RECTIFYING A HISTORICAL INJUSTICE: THE NEED FOR REMEMBRANCE, TRUTH, AND JUSTICE FOR JEWS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(LONDON) June 25, 2008 - In his appearance before an overflow gathering at the House of Lords, Canadian MP Irwin Cotler declared that “Had the UN Partition Resolution been accepted sixty years ago, there would have been no Arab-Israeli war - no refugees, Jewish or Arab. – and none of the pain and suffering of these last sixty years. Indeed, we would have been celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of both the State of Israel and the State of Palestine.”

Cotler continued: “*Yet the pain and plight of 850,000 Jews uprooted and displaced from Arab countries – not only a forgotten, but a forced exodus, – has been expunged and eclipsed from both the Middle East peace and justice narratives these past sixty years*”.

The meeting was organized by *Justice for Jews from Arab Countries (JJAC)*, an international coalition of 77 major Jewish communal organizations whose mandate is to ensure that justice for Jews from Arab countries assumes its rightful place on the international political agenda.

Cotler submitted evidence from a report entitled “*Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries: The Case for Rights And Redress,*” which documented for the first time a pattern of state-sanctioned repression and persecution in Arab countries - including Nuremberg-like laws - that targeted its Jewish populations, resulting in denationalization, forced expulsions, illegal sequestration of property, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and murder.

He concluded this part of his testimony that “This is a story that has not been heard. It is a story that has not yet even been told. It is a truth that must now be acknowledged.”

Professor Cotler then set forth a nine-point action plan for human rights and refugee rights – and a just and lasting peace in the middle-East – which included:

- The appreciation that while justice has long been delayed, it must no longer be denied. The time has come to rectify this historical injustice,
- Remedies for victim refugee groups – including rights of remembrance, truth, justice and redress - as mandated under human rights and humanitarian law - must now be invoked for Jews displaced from Arab countries;

- In the manner of duties and responsibilities, each of the Arab countries - and the League of Arab States - must acknowledge their role and responsibility in their double aggression of launching an aggressive war against Israel and the perpetration of human rights violations against their respective Jewish nationals.
- The Arab League Peace Plan of 2002 should incorporate the question of Jewish refugees from Arab countries as part of its narrative for an Israeli-Arab peace, just as the Israeli narrative now incorporates the issue of Palestinian refugees in its vision of an Israeli-Arab peace;
- On the international level, the U.N. General Assembly - in the interests of justice and equity - should include reference to Jewish refugees as well as Palestinian refugees in its annual resolutions; and
- Any bilateral Israeli-Palestinian negotiations – which one hopes will presage a just and lasting peace – should include Jewish refugees as well as Palestinian refugees in an inclusive joiner of discussion.

Cotler called on the UK Government to use its voice, vote, and participation in matters relating to issues of mid-East refugees to ensure that any reference to Palestinian refugees is accompanied by a similarly explicit reference to Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

“Simply put,” Cotler concluded, “the exclusion and denial of rights and redress to Jewish refugees from Arab and countries will prejudice authentic negotiations between the parties and undermine the justice and legitimacy of any agreement. Let there be no mistake about it. Where there is no remembrance, there is no truth; where there is no truth, there will be no justice; where there is no justice, there will be no reconciliation; and where there is no reconciliation, there will be no peace –which we all seek.

For full Prof. Cotler’s full testimony and photos visit:
www.justiceforjews.com/houseoflords.html