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## Call for Europe to recognize the plight of Jewish refugees from Arab countries

by: EJP

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Iraqi-born Edwin Shuker, co-chairman of 'Justice for Jews from Arab countries' and a member of the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

**BRUSSELS (EJP)---**After the launch of a campaign in Britain, an organization calling for international recognition of the rights of Jews displaced from Arab countries made this week an appeal in the European Parliament in Brussels.

"From one million Jews in North-Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf region before 1948, today they are less than 5,000 who live in Arab countries," said Iraqi-born Edwin Shuker, co-chairman of 'Justice for Jews from Arab countries' (JJAC) and member of the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

Half of the displaced Jews live today in Israel.

The New York-based JJAC is an international coalition of major Jewish communal organizations operating to ensure that justice for Jews from Arab countries assumes its rightful place on the international political agenda and that their rights be secured as a matter of law and equity.

"We want that equal recognition is given internationally to the exodus of Jews from Arab lands as to the plight of the Palestinian refugees resulting from Israel's creation 60 years ago," Shuker, who left Iraq with his family for the UK in 1971, told EJP.

### Day in history

7 July 1320

In Pastoureaux (Southern France), a crusade against the Jews is started by a shepherd, and it spread throughout most of southern France and northern Spain. One hundred and twenty communities are destroyed. At Verdun, 500 Jews defended themselves from within a stone tower. When they are about to be overrun they killed themselves.

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"We are not here to diminish the rights of the Palestinians or to belittle them but we want justice, reconciliation and above all truth for the Jews displaced from ten Arab countries," he added.

"We want Europe to recognize that by suppressing half of the equation we will not be able to resolve the problem."

As a result of the Arab-Israeli wars, Jews living in Arab countries have been victims of discriminatory legislation, losing their citizenship, their jobs and suffering restrictions on religion and freedom of movement.

In April, the US Congress passed a resolution urging the President that when the issue of Middle East refugees is discussed in international forums, any reference to Palestinian refugees be matched by a similarly explicit reference to the uprooting of Jewish communities in Arab countries.

"We have no hatred, no bitterness, we want only justice," Moise Rahmani, who was born in Egypt and is now living in Belgium, told a conference in Brussels jointly organized by B'nai B'rith and European Friends of Israel (EFI).


"Our history was concealed during 60 years," said Rahmani, who is the author of a book in French on this issue sub-titled "The forgotten exodus."


During the conference, Paul Casaca, a Portuguese Socialist MEP, promised to raise awareness for the issue within the European Parliament.


"Unfortunately, I am not in the foreign affairs committee but I will make my best for this to be part of a resolution," he told EJP.

"We have to put the issue on the forefront and asks for justice."

Last month, the first ever hearing on the issue of Jewish refugees from Arab countries took place in the British parliament.

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