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US Congress adopts first resolution recognizing Jewish refugees from Arab countries

by: EJP

Updated: 02/Apr/2008 13:28



Republican lawmaker from New Jersey Mike Ferguson: "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."

WASHINGTON (EJP)---In a dramatic shift in US policy, the House of Representatives on Tuesday approved an unprecedented bipartisan resolution granting recognition to Jewish refugees from Arab countries who were forced to flee their homes in the aftermath of the creation of the state of Israel.

As peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians gather steam, the House urged that the issue of Jewish refugees be part of any agreement.

Prior to the adoption of the resolution, all resolutions on Middle East refugees referred only to Palestinians.

The resolution urges the President to ensure 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 Jewish and other refugee populations.

Representative Jerrold Nadler, Democrat from New York, one of the four Congressmen who introduced the resolution said: "We believe that as a member of the Quartet, and in light of the US central and indispensable role in promoting

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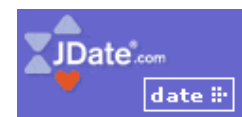
German Chancellor Angela Merkel in a message written in the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum's guestbook in Jerusalem.

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Middle East 'just peace', the US must reaffirm that it embraces a just and comprehensive approach to the issue of Middle East refugees."


Other Congressmen include Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (Republican, Florida), Joseph Crowley (Democrat, New York) and Mike Ferguson (Republican, New Jersey).


"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," Ferguson declared.


"Almost one million Jews have fled persecution in the Middle East," Crowley said.


Malcolm Hoenlein, Executive Vice-President of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations commented, "the failure during all these years to recognize other refugees, compounded the indignation and the suffering and the deprivation of Jews in Arab countries."

He said that the resolution is not an obstacle to peace. "It is a distortion to talk only of one refugee population, as that would undermine the ultimate outcome of any negotiations. The Congressional action will educate a generation that know too little about the other refugees."

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