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From The Jewish Chronicle

**Leon Symons**  
**June 6, 2008**

Jewish refugees who fled Arab countries in fear for their lives will be given a new voice at a forthcoming conference in London.

Justice for Jews from Arab Countries (JJAC) has until now been a loose part of the American-based Centre for Middle East Peace.

That will change at a three-day founding congress in London that will see JJAC create its own elected leadership and infrastructure.

The congress will be hosted by members of the House of Lords, when participants will hear a lecture on the subject by leading Jewish historian Sir Martin Gilbert. The conference is being held in London because of JJAC's close ties with the Board of Deputies, one of whom, Edwin Shuker, is a co-chair.

JJAC executive director Stanley Urman said: "Our objective is not to secure compensation. It is not about money. It is recognising the historical narrative. [President] Ahmedinejad [of Iran] and those like him have claimed Israel is an illegitimate state created by white Europeans which does not belong in the Middle East. The true history is that Jews have been living in the Middle East for 2,600 years, 1,000 years before Islam was founded. We are the indigenous people of the Middle East — without this truth there can be no justice."

JJAC is establishing itself as an independent organisation with representatives from 20 countries and their Jewish communities, as well as 77 coalition members to serve on its international council, said Mr Urman.

In April, the US Congress ruled that any future resolutions in Congress referring to Palestinian refugees would include a similar explicit reference to Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

In March, the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva was addressed for the first time by a Jewish refugee, a woman who fled Libya in 1967 in fear of her life.

JJAC's headquarters will remain in New York but it is hoped that offices will be opened in Europe and Israel.

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