

WORLD ORGANIZATION OF JEWS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES JUSTICE FOR JEWS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES

Contact: Stan Urman (973) 669-9788

Release: Immediately

HISTORIC MOBILIZATION IN DEFENSE OF JEWISH RIGHTS

(Paris, June 6, 2005) In an unusual manifestation of communal unity and mobilization Jewish leadership from 9 countries participated in planning an International Advocacy Campaign to assert the rights of former Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

Delegates from the United States, Canada, Britain, France, Belgium, Italy and Israel came to Paris for the June 6, 2005 meeting, with those from Mexico and Australia participating via teleconference.

At the meeting, which was convened by the *World Association of Jews from Arab Countries (WOJAC)* in association with *Justice for Jews from Arab Countries (JJAC)*, consensus was reached on important elements of the proposed campaign including; the dual goals of public education and collection of testimonies, and the coordination of programs that would target governments, the media, Jewish organizations, synagogues and Jewish day schools in fourteen different countries. The campaign will be launched in March 2006.

"Time is running out" said Staley A. Urman, Executive Director of *Justice for Jews from Arab Countries*. "This may be our last, best chance to collect this information. Without the facts, no one will be able, in the future, to credibly, and effectively assert the legitimate rights of former Jewish refugees from Arab countries."

The International Advocacy Campaign will record and publicize the mass violations of human rights suffered by Jews under Arab regimes (e.g. murder; arbitrary arrest and detention; torture; stripping of citizenship; seizure of property; etc.); and document the loss of extensive communal and individual assets. Once collected, the documentation will be catalogued and preserved by a special unit in Israel's Ministry of Justice, established to compile the legal and factual basis necessary to assert the rights of Jews displaced from Arab countries.

Malcolm Hoenlein, Executive Vice Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said "this is a milestone in the effort to address the historic injustice to the Jewish communities in Arab countries. We hope that this renewed unified campaign will not only succeed in creating a comprehensive data bank, but will also put this issue on the agenda of the international community, which has neglected it for so long."

WOJAC and *JJAC* will be assisted in the International Advocacy Campaign by a coalition of Jewish organizations in North and South America, Europe, Israel and South East Asia including, among others, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, American Sephardi Federation, Anti-Defamation League, B'nai Brith International, Board of Deputies of British Jews, Canadian Jewish Congress, Comite Central de la Comunidad Judia de Mexico, Conseil representatif des institutions juives de France (CRIF), Executive Council of Australian Jewry, HARIF, Jewish Council for Public Affairs, JIMENA, Unione delle Comunita Ebraiche Italiana and the World Sephardic Congress.