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Jews were refugees too

The brief truce agreement in the Gaza Strip coincides with the congress of Justice for Jews from Arab Countries (JJAC). This has been running in London since 23 June and was to include a parliamentary briefing in the House of Lords.

Within the context of the Middle East there are endless references to "Palestinian refugees" but virtually no awareness of the fact that some 850,000 Jews living in Arab countries in the Middle East and north Africa were forced out of their homes, often in brutal circumstances, between 1948 and the 1960s, and particularly in the few years surrounding the creation of the state of Israel.

Indeed, it is believed that the governments of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen stole billions of dollars from abandoned or expropriated Jewish properties and assets.

Jewish communities in the Arab Middle East were destroyed and there are fewer than 8,000 Jews living there today, compared to 886,000 in 1948.

So, when thinking about a just settlement for Palestinians, the "ethnic cleansing" of Jews from Arab lands ought to be remembered.

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