

Jerusalem Declaration on Justice for Jews from Arab Countries

We, the participants of the conference "Justice for Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries", hereby declare that we fully support the rights of Jews displaced, expelled or who fled Arab countries, to justice, rights and redress. Jews lived in these lands for more than two millennia, a thousand years before the rise of Islam. However, they were subjugated to an inferior status, undergoing sporadic violence and constant repression.

On the eve of the establishment of the State of Israel, the Arab world severely reacted to the development of the Jewish national liberation movement – Zionism. This hostility was reflected in a harsh and brutal assault on the Jewish communities coupled with an intensification of pogroms and other forms of violence. Official decrees and legislation enacted by Arab regimes denied human and civil rights to Jews, expropriated their property, stripped them of their citizenship, and other means of livelihood. Jews were often victims of murder, arbitrary arrest, detention, torture, and expulsions. Between the years of 1947 and 1972, around 900,000 Jews from Arab countries left to Israel and other countries.

As the organizing body in the Arab world and the organization which drafted legislation against the Jewish communities in 1947, we hold the Arab League responsible for the exodus of Jews from Arab countries. The plight of the Arab refugees was recognized by officials from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, in United Nations resolutions and by leaders and parliaments around the world. Neither the mass violations of human rights, nor the displacement of Jews from Arab countries, have ever been adequately addressed by the international community.

We welcome the actions by the Israeli government to push for justice, rights and redress for the Jewish refugees from Arab countries in all forums and in all peace negotiations with its neighbors.

Furthermore, we support the efforts of the Israeli Government to document the assets lost or appropriated when the Jews were forced to leave their countries of origin. According to a Knesset law passed in 2010, the Israeli government must include the issue of providing compensation for loss of property to Jewish refugees from Arab countries and Iran, including communal property in these countries, in any negotiations to achieve peace in the Middle East.

We call on the Jewish refugees from Arab countries, to document their personal stories and provide testimony regarding stolen property in the framework of the project of documentation

under the aegis of the Ministry for Senior Citizens, which is based on a government decision. These testimonies will constitute the basis for raising this issue in international forums.

We welcome the intention of the Government of Israel to institute a day on the national calendar to remember the Jewish communities in the Arab world and their subsequent uprooting from their countries of birth.

In addition, we encourage the Government of Israel to continue investing in the recognition of the heritage of Jews from Arab countries and inclusion of this heritage in educational and cultural institutions in Israel. This includes the establishment of a national center of commemoration and making this issue a core part of the educational curriculum.

We call on world Jewry and friends of Israel to keep this issue on the international agenda as an issue of human rights and justice.

We call on the United Nations Secretary General to place the issue of Jewish refugees from Arab countries on the agenda of the United Nations and its affiliated forums.

Finally, we call on state parliaments around the world to pass legislation recognizing the historic injustice and suffering of the Jews who were expelled, forced out or who fled Arab countries.