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Facts & Logic About the Middle East

November 24, 2020



When will Jewish refugees from Arab nations get the justice they deserve?

Dear Friend of FLAME:

When the mainstream media and United Nations refer to refugees in the context of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, they're usually referring only to the so-called Palestinian refugees.

While much can be said about the Palestinian refugees and their controversially unique and privileged status globally, the media and international organizations rarely address hundreds of thousands of Jews who were forcibly exiled from their homes and communities in the Middle East and North Africa during the mid-20th century.

While many, if not most, Palestinian refugees had only arrived in their new homes in the Holy Land during the previous century, Jews had been living in places like Iraq for over 2,500 years. In fact, the Jewish presence in the wider Middle East predates the rise of Islam—as well as the Arab conquest, occupation and colonization of the region—by over 1,000 years.

In the early part of the 20th century, some 850,000 Jews lived in what is today known as the “Arab World.” However, today there are no more than a few thousand Jews left in that region—meaning this was one of the most successful ethnic-cleansing events in modern history.

In 2014, the Israeli Knesset passed a law mandating that November 30th would be the Day to Commemorate the Expulsion of Jews from the Arab Countries and Iran. The Jewish refugees from Arab countries issue remains an unresolved issue, even though international law and United Nations resolutions mandate a redress.

On two separate occasions the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) ruled that Jews fleeing from Arab countries were indeed 'bona fide' refugees who fall under its mandate. Many of the most pertinent and relevant resolutions on the conflict that reference refugees—including UN General Assembly Resolution 194 and UN Security Council Resolution 242—do so

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YOU DESERVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH...

The Israel Apartheid Lie

Contrary to all facts, Israel's enemies maliciously accuse the Jewish state of South African-style discrimination against Arabs. Why do they tell this obvious lie?

Despite Israel's exemplary civil rights record and its long-standing policies of tolerance and respect, critics still demand Apartheid. How can we tell the difference between the two?

What are the facts?

Apartheid is a South African term used to describe the system of racial segregation and discrimination in South Africa from 1948 to 1994. It was a system of institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination that was based on the belief that different racial groups should live apart from each other.

Israel is not an apartheid state. It is a democracy that respects the rights of all its citizens, regardless of their ethnicity or religion. The Jewish state has a long history of tolerance and respect for its Arab citizens, and it has a strong record of civil liberties and human rights.

Why do they tell this obvious lie?

The lie is told to justify the continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and to undermine the peace process. It is a tool of propaganda used by Israel's enemies to gain support for their agenda.

How can we tell the difference?

The difference is in the facts. Israel is a democracy that respects the rights of all its citizens, while South Africa was a dictatorship that discriminated against its black citizens. Israel has a strong record of civil liberties and human rights, while South Africa had a long history of racial oppression.

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FLAME is the only organization that defends Israel with paid

without defining the type of refugee. This means that such resolutions—whether referencing compensation or assistance—can and should also apply to Jewish refugees.

Meanwhile, there have been 172 resolutions specifically on Palestinian refugees, 13 UN agencies and organizations mandated or newly created to provide protection and relief to Palestinian refugees, and tens of billions of dollars disbursed by the international community to provide services and assistance to Palestinian refugees.

During that same period, the U.N. offered no specific resolutions, no support by UN agencies, nor any financial assistance from the international community to reduce the suffering of Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

Unlike Palestinian refugees, the Jews from Arab countries were not involved as combatants, Jewish leaders had not called for the destruction of the countries they lived in nor the annihilation of its inhabitants, and were not even in a theater of war. They lived as law-abiding citizens, under repressive *dhimmi* subjugation—a special discriminatory legal system for Jews, who had to pay special anti-Semitic taxes and endure pogroms and massacres.

Overnight, in 1946—two years prior to Israel’s declaration of independence—thanks to a decision by the Arab League, all Jews in member states were considered enemies: Their citizenships were revoked, bank accounts frozen, tens of thousands thrown out of certain professions and many imprisoned, simply because of their identity.

While the number of 1948 Palestinian refugees is around two thirds of the number of Jewish refugees, the difference in personal and communal assets was stark. Though the average Palestinian refugee was rural and had few assets, the Jews of places like Baghdad and Cairo were urban, cosmopolitan and wealthy.

According to the research undertaken by an international accountancy firm, the total assets of these dispossessed Jews in today’s currency would be worth around \$250 billion. The calculations took into account land, real estate in cities and villages, business value, loss of income and income potential, movable property and Jewish public and community property.

In 2009, the U.S. Congress passed a bill recognizing the plight of the Jewish refugees, noting that for any "comprehensive Middle East peace agreement to be credible and enduring, that agreement must address and resolve all outstanding issues relating to the legitimate rights of refugees, including Jews, Christians and other populations displaced from countries in the Middle East."

The U.S. resolution encourages the President and their administrations to mention Jewish and other refugees when mentioning Palestinian refugees at international forums. This was followed by a law in the Knesset that also mandated the Israeli government to bring up the issue of the Jewish refugees whenever the issue of refugees is raised.

Most Jews in Israel are *Mizrahim* (literally meaning “Eastern”)—from the Middle East and North Africa. They or their descendants, were kicked out of their homes with next to nothing, and many were murdered or died during their flight.

editorial hasbarah messages placed in media nationwide every month: The dire threats from Iran, Hamas and Hizbollah, the injustice of BDS, Palestinian anti-Semitism and more. If you support a bold voice that tells the truth about Israel in American media, please donate now.

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**FLAME'S WEEKLY
HOTLINE E-
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FLAME's Hotline e-newsletter keeps you up to date on the most important pro-Israel advocacy issues and features our choice of the week's most informative and thought-provoking article on Israel and the Middle East. If you only subscribe to one pro-Israel news service, make it the FLAME Hotline.

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Israel, as the national homeland of the Jewish people, took them in as they did all Jews fleeing persecution and helped them integrate and be absorbed to their new-old home, where they created new lives for themselves. This does not, however, mean their pain and suffering should be forgotten, or that redress should not be demanded.

The crux of this conflict—and the reluctance of media and international bodies to address it—has always been about recognizing the Jews as a nation who reconstituted national sovereignty in their indigenous and ancestral homeland. The attacks and ethnic cleansing of Jews in Arab countries was one of the most egregious examples of the violent rejectionism of Jewish human rights by Arab leaders.

While some measures—like the Clinton Parameters, guidelines for an end to the conflict presented by then-President Bill Clinton in 2000—did refer to an international fund for both Arab and Jewish refugees displaced by the conflict, the issue remains on the sidelines.

Ideas such as an international compensation fund, or one funded by Arab countries that expelled the Jews, or the proposal for one refugee crisis to annul the other, have all been raised at one point or another.

I hope that in conversations with friends, family, colleagues and elected officials—as well as in letters to the editor—you'll emphasize that in order for the Israel-Arab conflict—including the Israel-Palestinian conflict—to be solved, the crime of ethnic cleansing of Jews has to be acknowledged. Then generous redress must be demanded and granted.

I hope you'll also take a minute, while you have this material front and center, to forward this message to friends, visit FLAME's lively [Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below. It describes FLAME's new hasbarah campaign—which exposes the outrageous, false accusation that Israel is an “apartheid state.”

Best regards,

Jim Sinkinson

President, Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)

P.S. Every year, dozens of major American colleges and universities host Israel Apartheid Week, sponsored by radical pro-Palestinian groups like Students for Justice in Palestine. In addition, critics of Israel also assert that Israel is or will soon become an apartheid state. As you know, nothing is further from the truth. Israel guarantees equal rights to all its citizens and its laws bear zero resemblance to any of the hateful rules of apartheid South Africa, where the term was invented. To clarify this point, FLAME has created a new *hasbarah* message called “[The Israel Apartheid Lie](#).” I hope you'll review this convincing, fact-based paid editorial, which will run in *USA Today*, the *Washington Post*, and other media nationwide. It spells out specific tenets of apartheid and refutes the apartheid calumny against Israel point by point. This piece will also be sent to all members of Congress, Vice President Pence and President Trump. If you agree that this kind of public relations effort on Israel's behalf is critical, I urge you to support us. Remember: FLAME's

powerful ability to influence public opinion—and U.S. support of Israel—comes from individuals like you, one by one. I hope you'll consider [giving a donation now](#), as you're able—with \$500, \$250, \$100, or even \$18. (Remember, your donation to FLAME is tax deductible.) To donate online, just go to [donate](#) now. Now, more than ever, we need your support to ensure that the American people, the U.S. Congress and President Trump stay committed to realistic policies in relation to Israel, Iran and the entire Middle East.

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