



JUSTICE FOR JEWS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES

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Palestinians not the only Middle East Refugees

PRESIDENT BUSH RECOGNIZES JEWISH REFUGEES FROM ARAB COUNTRIES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 17, 2008 - (New York, NY) *Justice for Jews from Arab Countries* (JJAC) is pleased that President George Bush raised the issue of Jews from Arab countries while on his official visit to Israel in early January. In an article headlined, "Bush aware of Jewish Refugee' Plight," The Jerusalem Post said the U.S. President was "very conscious" that Jewish refugees fled to Israel from Arab lands after the 1947-49 war, and that one of the points that came up in Bush's discussion was the number of Jewish refugees that were created in the period after 1948.

This report of President Bush's interest in the plight of Jews from Arab countries, comes after the December visit to the White House by Maurice Shohet, a long time member of JJAC's International Steering Committee. Joining Mr. Shohet at the White House were Professor Judea Pearl and Ruth Pearl, parents of slain Wall Street Journal correspondent Daniel Pearl, all of whom spoke to President Bush on the plight of Jewish refugees from Arab countries. This followed the recent Annapolis Peace Conference, where JJAC issued a declaration which stated, inter alia: "The exclusion and denial of rights and redress to Jewish refugees from Arab and Muslim countries will prejudice authentic negotiations between the parties and undermine the justice and legitimacy of any agreement." In preparation for Annapolis, JJAC sent a letter to President Bush asking that the issue of Jews from Arab countries be discussed in the context of Middle East refugees.

Stanley A. Urman, Executive Director of Justice for Jews from Arab Countries welcomed the news of Bush's remarks, "We are grateful that the President is cognizant of this important narrative - the violations of rights, and the displacement, of up to one million Jews from Arab countries. President's Bush's words come at the opening of the 2008 Congressional session, at which consideration will be given to two bi-partisanship resolutions which call attention to the fact that Jews living in Arab countries suffered human rights violations, were uprooted from their homes, and were made refugees."

The Resolutions, *Senate Res. 85* and *House Res. 185*, would signify that "it would be inappropriate and unjust for the United States to recognize rights for Palestinian refugees without recognizing equal rights for former Jewish, Christian, and other refugees from Arab countries." Far-reaching and comprehensive, these Resolutions instruct the President to ensure that in all international forums, when the issue of 'Middle East refugees' is discussed, representatives of the United States must ensure that any explicit reference to Palestinian refugees is matched by a similar explicit reference to Jewish and other refugees, as a matter of law and equity.

Over the next several months, JJAC will be working with Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa (JIMENA) on promoting the Resolutions. JJAC is a coalition of Jewish communal organizations operating under the auspices of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and the American Sephardi Federation in partnership with the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, Anti-Defamation League, B'nai Brith International, the Jewish Public Council for Public Affairs and the World Sephardic Congress.

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