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The Right of Return and the Forgotten Refugees

By [Peggy Shapiro](#)

Enter "Right of Return" on any search engine and you will get some variation of the Palestinian claim that Palestinian Arabs who left Israel in 1948 and all of their descendants have the an "inalienable right" to return to Israel. The estimate of the number of Arab refugees (when five Arab nations attacked the new government of Israel in May, 1948) varies, but according to the U.N.'s report in 1949, there were approximately 700,000 refugees. [United Nations Conciliation Commission, October 23, 1950](#) Today, Palestinians assert the "Right of Return" for around 4.5 million people, most of whom have never set foot in Israel. [UNRWA rolls](#) An influx of over four million Muslims into Israel would, of course, destroy Israel as Jewish state.

On March 19, 2008, a group of Jewish representatives addressed the United Nations Human Rights Council to present *The Case for Rights and Redress* on behalf of refugees caused by the Arab-Israeli conflicts. These are *not* the ones who hold the title of "refugees for the longest period of time in recorded history" and who have been supported by UNRWA welfare in "refugee camps" for the past sixty years. No, the U.N. address was for *Justice for Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries*, the 850,000 Jews who were expelled from their homes in Arab lands. The report refers to documents recently uncovered in UN archives that "reveal a pattern of state-sanctioned oppression that precipitated the mass exodus of Jews from 10 Arab countries."

According to official Arab [statistics](#), 856,000 Jews leaving their homes in Arab countries from 1948 until the early 1970s. The property they were forced to leave behind is worth more than [\\$300 billion](#) today. The expelled Jews [held deeds](#) to 100,000 square kilometers (more than four times the size of the State of Israel). Before the United Nations became an agent of animus towards Israel, it recognized the plight of all refugees. [UN General Assembly Resolution 194](#), which was passed on [December 11](#), 1950, recommended that both Palestinian and Jewish refugees should be permitted to return if they are willing to live in peace with their neighbors. The text of its Article 11:

"[r]esolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property..."

Mr. Auguste Lindt, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, recognized the refugee status of Jews from Arab and Muslim countries in the report of the UNREF Executive Committee, Fourth Session -- Geneva 29 January to 4 February, 1957. Dr. E. Jahn, Office of the UN High Commissioner, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Document No. 7/2/3/Libya, July 6, 1967, recognized the refugee status of these Jews.

The U.S. Congress recognized that the Palestinian refugee issue is matched by similar issues of Jewish refugees from Arab countries, and in House Resolution 185 and Senate Resolution 85 directed the US president to instruct all official representatives of the United States that "explicit reference to Palestinian refugees be matched by a similar explicit reference to Jewish and other refugees, as a matter of law and equity."

For the first time ever, a Jewish refugee from an Arab country, Regina Bublil-Waldman appeared at the United Nations Human Rights Council to claim the rights of Jewish refugees and to enter these historical truths into the minutes of the United Nations:

Jews have been an indigenous people of the Middle East for over 2,500 years.

On the basis of race and religion, Arab regimes subjected Jews to arbitrary arrest, confiscation of property and expulsions.

The UNHCR has ruled that Jews fleeing from Arab countries were "bona fide" refugees, victims of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Jewish Community Relations Council, as part of the initiative to secure redress for Jewish refugees from Arab countries and educate the public about the mass violation of human rights of Jews in Arab countries, is [collecting documents](#) to catalogue the loss of extensive communal and individual assets.

If there is an "inalienable right of return," then the price tag for the Arabs states will be hefty. I think Israel could be convinced to settle for a five-fold increase in land and \$300 billion restitution.

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