

Jews are an indigenous people of the Middle East having lived in the region continuously for millennia, fully one thousand five hundred years before the advent of Islam.

In the 20th century, the breadth and scale of the near-total displacement of Jews from eleven Muslim countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Gulf region ranks among the more significant cases of mass displacement in modern history.

For over 75 years, the world has ignored the uprooting of Jews from the Arab totalitarian regimes, dictatorships and monarchies. Under Muslim rule, Jews were subjected to a widespread pattern of persecution. Official decrees enacted by Arab regimes denied human and civil rights to Jews and other minorities; expropriated their property; stripped them of their citizenship; and means of livelihood. Jews were often victims of murder; arbitrary arrest and detention; torture; and expulsions.

From the 1,000,000 Jews in 1948 based in 10 Arab countries plus Iran, to-day, less than 1% remain. Most fled to Israel, the ancestral homeland of the Jewish people for millennia.

The story of the displacement of Jews from Iran, which began in 1979 is not synonymous with Jewish refugees from Arab countries, whose plight and flight began before 1948. For peace in the Middle East, truth and justice must prevail for all Jews displaced from Muslim countries.

To that end, eleven Country Reports have been prepared to document the history and heritage, as well as the individual and communal assets lost by Jews uprooted from 10 Arab countries and Iran. This fourth Report is on the Jews of Iran.

In the spirit of the Abraham Accords, at a time of historic breakthroughs in political and economic ties between Muslim countries and Israel/Jews, the time has come for nations to unite in promoting peace and reconciliation among all peoples in the Region.

History of the Jewish Community of Iran

The Jewish presence in Iran dates back over 2,700 years, originating with the Assyrian exile (721 BC) and later the Babylonian destruction of the First Temple (586 BC). Jews flourished under Cyrus the Great, who allowed the return to Jerusalem, and maintained vibrant communities through the Parthian and Sasanian periods.

Under Islamic governance, Jews were designated as *dhimmis*, facing restrictions but also granted limited autonomy. Despite periodic persecution, Jewish scholarship and cultural output—including Judeo-Persian literature—flourished in the medieval era. The Mongol period saw both devastation and renewal, including the rise of Jewish poets like Shahin and Imrani.

A significant deterioration began with the Safavid Empire's imposition of Shi'a Islam in the 16th century. Jews were labeled *najes* (impure), subjected to humiliation, violence, and legal discrimination. Pogroms, forced conversions, and economic marginalization were widespread. The most extreme example was in 1839 in Mashhad, where the entire Jewish community was forced to convert and live as crypto-Jews for over a century.

The early 20th century brought modest legal reforms with the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. The Pahlavi dynasty's secular nationalism improved conditions for Jews, enabling social and economic advancement, especially during the Shah's White Revolution (1963). Jews

became disproportionately successful in commerce, medicine, and academia, forming the largest Jewish community in Asia and Africa (outside South Africa) by the 1970s.

However, the 1979 Islamic Revolution reversed these gains. The regime conflated Jews with Zionism and the Shah's regime, leading to arrests, executions, confiscation of property, and widespread intimidation. While Ayatollah Khomeini publicly distinguished between Jews and Zionists, Jews were specifically targeted, and antisemitic rhetoric escalated. Mass emigration followed, reducing the Jewish population from 80,000 in 1978 to fewer than 9,000 today.

Currently, the remaining Jews live mostly in Tehran. Their continued presence reflects a mix of cultural attachment, barriers to emigration, and efforts to live peacefully through caution and quiet.

Economic Analysis of The Jews of Iran

One purpose of this project is to provide a detailed and comprehensive appraisal and valuation of individual and communal property left behind by Jews displaced from Arab countries.

JJAC compiled the best evidence available on the scope of lost Jewish assets. This process included a thorough and comprehensive review of available documentation, discussions with community leaders and experts, the collection of testimonial data, an analysis of each Jewish community's place within their respective country, and a consideration of previous valuation attempts.

This project's goal was to consider the totality of Iranian Jews' financial losses, including their rural assets, urban assets, employment losses, moveable assets and private property, business losses and communal losses. The final result below is an aggregate valuation of Jewish individual and community losses from the Jewish community of Iran:

Total Value per Asset Type According to Valuation Base Year (\$,1979)

Asset Type	Total Value
Rural Assets	-
Urban Assets	1,916,800,830
Employment Losses	384,000,000
Moveable Assets & Private Property	560,262,566
Business Losses	2,989,825,726
Communal Losses	28,237,625
Total	5,879,126,747

Using a detailed, multi-step methodology involving, among other factors, inflation, interest rates, currency exchange, etc., the Jewish losses were actualized to show a present day value of all assets under consideration, reflected in 2024 US dollars (USDs).

On the basis of the combined total value of each asset category under consideration and the application of the methodology, the total value for all assets as of December 31, 2024 USD equals **\$61,491,251,179**.