



צדק ליהודים יוצאי מדינות ערב العدالة لليهود من الدول العربية Justice Pour Les Juifs Des Pays Arabes

Report on the Jews of Aden Historical and Economic Analysis



Cover Photo: Jewish Youth in Purim Costume at the Tikva Youth Movement. Source: Adeni Jewish Heritage

Disclaimer

This Executive Summary provides data on the history and economic losses when Jews were displaced from Aden. Although every attempt was made to collect testimonies and locate all relevant statistical data, this Report should not be considered as definitive. Research was adversely affected by the fact that this mass displacement of Jews from Aden occurred decades ago and there is no central repository where records of losses were maintained. It is hoped that additional research will be conducted in the future which would expand upon and refine the financial projections contained in this Report.



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PREFACE

Justice for Jews from Arab Countries (JJAC) has completed a multi-year project to document the historical ethnic cleansing of Jews from Aden, Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen.

The eleven Country Reports portray the narrative of ancient Jewish communities indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa for thousands of years; from their plight under the Muslim conquest, to Ottoman rule; then colonial occupation; their persecution under Arab nationalism and Islamism, then their flight from the region. Their story is one of an oppressed minority that was uprooted from their countries of birth and who suffered extensive losses of both personal (homes, businesses, property, etc.) and Jewish communal assets (Synagogues, schools, cemeteries, etc.)

This report is based on extensive personal testimonies and exhaustive statistical data. This process included a thorough and comprehensive review of available documentation, discussions with community leaders and subject-matter 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.

Extensive archival research was conducted in the following 22 archives in six countries:

Israel: Israel State Archives (ISA), Central Zionist Archives (CZA), Israeli Ministry of Justice archives, Israeli Ministry of Social Equality archives, Yad Ben Zvi Institute, Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfutot, World Jewish Congress, Israel Archives

Canada: Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa

France: Alliance Israelite Universelle, Paris, Archives Nationale – France, Paris Branch, Pierrefitte Branch, Centre des Archives diplomatiques de la Courneuve

Switzerland: National Archives, Bern, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva

UK: London Metropolitan Archives, National Archives of the U.K.

USA: American Jewish Committee, New York, Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) – New York, National Archives & Records, College Park, Maryland, World Jewish Archives, New York

Research was adversely affected by the fact that records in Arab countries were inaccessible. Moreover, this mass displacement of Jews occurred, in some cases, more than 75 years ago and there is no central repository where records of these losses were maintained. Consequently, this Report should not be considered as definitive.

It is hoped that additional research will be conducted in the future which will expand upon and refine the projections contained in these Reports.

Executive Summary

Context

The Jewish community of Aden was in a British protectorate and port city with a diverse population emanating from Yemen, Egypt, Turkey and India. It stands as another illustration of a broader historic pattern that unfolded across the Middle East and North Africa,

Jews are indigenous to the region, having lived there for thousands of years - roughly one thousand years before the birth of Islam in the seventh century C.E. For the next thousand years, Jews lived under Islamic rule as 'dhimmis', a subordinate class, marked by legal inferiority and social humiliation.

Under Ottoman rule, Jews enjoyed limited autonomy but were, at times, at the mercy of malign local governors. The dhimmi rules were abolished in 1856 and followed by limited reforms, but the Jews' status and security only improved dramatically in the colonial era. Many Jews gained access to education and the ability to contribute meaningfully to the cultural, economic, and professional life of their countries. But this chapter was short-lived.

The rise of Arab nationalism, at times fueled by identification of Jews with colonialism and growing opposition to Zionism unleashed a wave of discriminatory laws, violence, and state-backed repression. While Jews were often victims of violence and pogroms throughout their time in Muslim countries, the situation worsened immediately before and after the founding of the State of Israel in 1948.

What followed was not a mere exodus, but the erasure of ancient Jewish communities, through forced expulsion, flight under duress, or systemic marginalization. With respect to Aden:

Displacement of Jews from Aden: 1948-2025

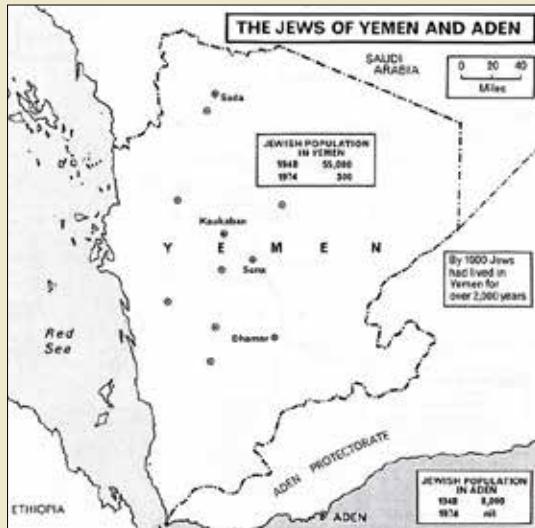
	1948	1958	1968	2025
ADEN	8,000	800	0	0

Today, some 99% of the descendants of the historic Jewish communities in 10 Arab countries plus Iran- in Aden's case its 100% - no longer reside in these vast regions.

Neither the mass violations of the human rights of Jews in Arab countries, nor their uprooting from their countries of birth, has ever been addressed by the international community. This publication is a earnest call to recognize the rights of Jewish refugees from Arab countries on both moral and legal grounds and to ensure their story is no longer forgotten.

In an era of historic reconciliation, inspired by the spirit of the Abraham Accords, time has come to face history with honesty and courage. Only through truth and justice can the peoples of the region move toward a future of dignity, healing, and lasting peace.

History of the Jewish Community of Aden



Though Jews had lived in Yemen for millennia, the Jewish presence in Aden during the British period (1839-1967) constituted one of the youngest and most unique Jewish communities in the Middle East. Following British occupation, Aden developed into a cosmopolitan commercial hub, attracting migrants, including Jews, from across the region. The Jews of Aden enjoyed civil equality under British protection, a dramatic shift from the dhimmi restrictions that characterized Jewish life in the Arabian Peninsula.

The Jewish community of Aden, though small, played a key role in the city's growth as a major international port from the 19th to mid-20th century. Jewish merchants were vital intermediaries in trade between India, Arabia, Africa, and Europe, exporting goods like coffee and importing textiles and manufactured items. They also contributed through professions such as jewelry-making, and shopkeeping, and helped integrate Aden into global markets. Multilingual and culturally diverse, Aden's Jews served as important bridges between the British authorities and the local population.

Despite legal protections, tensions with the Muslim majority persisted. The Jews' enhanced legal status and relative success in commerce generated deep resentment among local Muslims. An outbreak of violence occurred in December 1947 following the UN partition resolution on Palestine. Over three days, 887 Jews were murdered, scores injured, and amounts of Jewish property destroyed. The local Muslim police, in some cases, were complicit, while British forces were late and insufficiently assertive in restoring order.

The cumulative effect of economic ruin, fear, and disillusionment with British protection led to mass emigration. Between 1948 and 1950, most of the community, some 8,000 people, left for Israel. By 1950, only a few hundred Jews remained. Continued instability, rising Arab nationalism, and worsening hostility in the 1960s prompted the final evacuation of the remaining Jews following the Six-Day War in 1967.

The Aden experience illustrates how legal emancipation under colonial rule could not erase entrenched societal hostility and historical value systems. Despite enjoying

unprecedented legal equality under British administration, the Jews of Aden ultimately fell victim to a combination of ethnic tension, colonial retreat, and regional geopolitics, culminating in the complete disappearance of their community.

Economic Analysis of The Jews of Aden

Methodological Benchmarks & Economic Indicators

For the purposes of this report, a total Jewish population of Aden's 8,000 Jews was estimated. The Jewish population was determined to be 100% urban, with urban areas widely recognized as larger metropolitan centers and their immediate environs/hinterlands. It was further determined that the average size of a Jewish family in Aden in and around the 1948 period was 5 people. Therefore, based on a population of 8,000 a total of 1,600 Jewish households was calculated.

By the mid-twentieth century, most Jews in Aden earned their living from commerce, as craftsmen, including goldsmiths, bookbinders, etc., and in the cigarette industry. It should be noted that Jews were active in Aden's fez (tarbush) industry and ostrich-feather trade as well. Overall, the Jewish community of Aden was perceived as an integral part of the Adeni economy.

The following table indicates the estimated socioeconomic distribution of Jewish households for Aden's Jewish community in 1948:

Table X - Socioeconomic of Jewish Households in Aden, 1948

Socioeconomic Class	Percentage of Jewish Households	No. of Households (Urban) per Class
Wealthy	5%	80
Lower-Middle	15%	240
Poor	80%	1,280
Total	100%	1,600

Asset Categories & Types

This project considers losses suffered by Jews as individual members of Jewish households, as well as assets that belonged to each Jewish community, respectively. These losses include urban and rural land, urban and rural immovable property, personal property and moveable assets, financial assets, employment losses, business losses, and communal losses. This report does not account for non-pecuniary damages, such as pain and suffering, nor personal injury or death.

As noted earlier, Aden's Jewish community was entirely urban and lived in the Jewish quarter. This urbanization has been linked to the fact that Aden was a port city and that it was reliant on trade and local business opposed to an agricultural economic base. Nearly the entire Jewish community, aside from a handful of families that resided in Steamer Point, lived in the Jewish quarter where they owned their own home and businesses. Historical sources indicate there were 391 Jewish owned properties in the Jewish Quarter of Aden.

Summary of Findings

Reliable testimonial and historical data was not available for Aden to make any conclusions as to the value of losses across the different asset categories. Therefore, it was determined that the analysis for Egypt, Syria, and Iraq where extensive financial data was available, would be used for illustrative purposes.

Lost assets found in these three countries at 1948 values were used to determine the value of lost property per person. This yielded a range, with Iraq providing the lowest value of lost property per person among the three countries, and Egypt being the highest. The low and high values were then multiplied with the population of each remaining country, and a mid-point was calculated from this range. In the absence of "best evidence" to reach accurate and verifiable country-specific values, and to provide conservative as opposed to inflated estimates, a 'discount factor' of 50% was determined based on precedent discounts and applied across the mid-point value for Aden. Finally, a compound interest formula which makes use of the principal amount and an average yearly rate based on the ten-year yields on US treasury bonds over a total compound period from January 1, 1949, through December 31, 2024, was applied to the mid-point value for each of the countries on a yearly compounding basis. As there is no internationally recognized, risk-free rate, the 10-year US Treasury Yield rate was chosen, as it is an accepted benchmark for the time value of money over long horizons and aligns with established practices in historical asset valuation. The table below illustrates the calculated mid-point of lost assets for Aden:

Range of Lost Assets (\$)		
Aden	1948	Estimated Present Value (\$, 2024)
Population	8,000	
Estimated – Low Range	38,910,285	
Estimated – High Range	122,357,420	
Estimated – Mid-Point	80,633,852	
Discount	50%	
Estimated – Mid-Point (with Discount)	40,316,926	2,102,856,725

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries Legal and Political Context

When the term 'refugees' is mentioned in the context of the Middle East, the international community's singular focus has been on Palestinian refugees.

Yet, within the last 75 years, the world has ignored the mass displacement of some 1,000,000 Jews from the totalitarian regimes, dictatorships and monarchies of Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Yemen and Aden, as well as Iran.

Neither the mass violations of the human rights of Jews in Arab countries, nor their uprooting from their ancestral countries of birth, has ever been appropriately addressed by the international community.

In reality, as a result of the longstanding conflict in the Middle East, two populations of refugees emerged – Arabs as well as Jews from Arab countries. In fact, there were more Jews displaced from Arab countries (856,000 plus Iran)¹ than there were Palestinians who became refugees as a result of the 1948 Arab Israeli war (726,000)²

Asserting rights and redress for Jewish refugees is not intended to negate any suffering of Palestinian refugees. It is a legitimate call to recognize that Jews from Arab countries also became refugees as a result of that same Middle East conflict and still possess rights even today.

Jews as an Indigenous People of the Middle East

Jews are an indigenous people of the Middle East having lived in the region continuously from pre-historic times to the present. Jews and Jewish communities proliferated throughout parts of the Middle East, North Africa, and the Gulf region for thousands of years, fully one thousand years before the advent of Islam in the seventh century C.E. For the next thousand years, Jews lived under Islamic rule as 'dhimmis', a subordinate class, marked by legal inferiority and social humiliation.

Longstanding Jewish Presence in the Region

Throughout the millennia, the Jewish presence endured despite various empires ruling the region, including the Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Ottomans, and British. Notwithstanding some periods of exile, descendants of the Jewish people, maintained their unbroken lineage in the Middle East, stretching across millennia.

1 Roumani, *The Case 2; WOJAC'S Voice Vol.1, No.1*

2 United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine p. 18; United Nations, *Annual Report of the Director General of UNRWA*, Doc 5224/5223, 25 Nov. 1952 First estimate as September 1949

Table 1 - Early Jewish Presence in the Middle East and North Africa

Country/Region	Date of Jewish Community	Sources*
Iraq	6 th century BCE	Meir, Esther. Iraq and the Jews of Iraq – a General Survey. In Haim Saadoun (Ed.), <i>Iraq</i> (Ben-Zvi Institute, 2002), pp. 11-12. [Hebrew]
Egypt	6 th century BCE	Ehrlich, Haggai. Egypt and its Jews. In Nahem Ilan (ed.), <i>Egypt</i> (Ben-Zvi Institute, 2008), pp. 9, 12-14. [Hebrew]
Iran	6 th century BCE	Sahim, Hadeh. Iran and Afghanistan. In Reeva Spector Simon, Michael Menachem Laskier, and Sara Reguer (eds.), <i>The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in modern times</i> (Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 368.
Libya	4 th century BCE	Goldberg, Harvey. Libya and the Jews of Libya. In Haim Saadoun (Ed.), <i>Libya</i> . Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2007, p. 11 [Hebrew]
Lebanon	2 nd century BCE	Schulze, Kresten E. <i>The Jews of Lebanon: Between coexistence and conflict</i> (Sussex Academic Press, 2001), pp. 12-13.
Yemen	1 st century CE	Araqi Klorman, Bar-Zion. Introduction. In Haim Saadoun (ed.), <i>Yemen</i> (Ben-Zvi Institute, 2002), p. 17. [Hebrew]
Morocco	1 st century CE	Bashan, Eleizer. <i>The Jews of Morocco, their past and culture</i> (Hakibutz Hameuchad, 2000), pp. 15-16. [Hebrew]
Algeria	1 st century CE	Cohen, David. Algeria. In Reeva Spector Simon, Michael Menachem Laskier & Sara Reguer (Eds.), <i>The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in modern times</i> (pp. 458-470). Columbia University Press, 2002.
Syria	1 st century CE	Harel, Yaron. Syria (Jerusalem, Ben-Zvi Institute, 2009), p. 11 [Hebrew]
Tunisia	2 nd century CE	Les Juifs de Tunisie: Quelques repères historiques. <i>Confluences Méditerranée</i> 10 (1994), pp. 149-154.

*These time periods are conservative projections, based on archeological and academic sources. Biblical and traditional sources claim earlier presence of Jews in these countries.

The ancient Israelites were among the first inhabitants of the region. Their illustrious history is detailed in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls. The uninterrupted historical presence of Jews in the Middle East can then be characterized into six periods:

Period One: Ancient Israelite History (See Appendix A)

Period Two: Destruction of the First Temple to The Rise of Islam (See Appendix B)

Period Three: Prophet Muhammed To Colonialism

Period Four: Colonial Period

Period Five: The Rise of Jewish and Arab Nationalism

Period Six: The Founding of The State of Israel

Period Three: Prophet Muhammed To Colonialism.

With the birth of Mohammed in 570, and the advent of Islam, the region was transformed.

Starting in the seventh century, pan-Arab imperialism foisted the Arabic language and culture on indigenous peoples like Assyrians, Berbers, Kurds, Zoroastrians, Maronites, Egyptian Copts and Jews.

Following the Muslim conquest of the region, from the 7th century onward, Jews were ruled by Muslims for years under the Pact of Umar, attributed to the Second Caliph, Umar ibn al-Khattab (634-644 CE). Enacted in 637 CE, the Pact of Umar was a bilateral agreement of limitations and privileges between conquering Muslims and conquered non-Muslims who were declared "dhimmi". The term *dhimmi*, 'protected,' was a diminished status assigned to Christians and Jews, among others, who were considered a 'People of the Book' (as opposed to atheists or polytheists) and therefore extended some degree of legal protection, while relegated to second-class status³

3 Cohen, Cresent p. 52-53

The most concrete law to which *dhimmis* were subjected was the need to pay a special tax known as 'jizya.' The origin of this tax is contained in the Qur'an which states: "Fight against those who have been given the scripture until they pay the due tax [jizya], willingly or unwillingly."⁴

By paying the *jizya*, Jews and Christians were allowed to practice their faith, maintain personal security and were permitted limited religious, educational, professional and business opportunities. They were also subject to discriminatory restraints.

Restrictions for the *dhimmi* under the Pact of Umar prohibited Jews and other religious minorities from holding public religious ceremonies; and the legal exclusion of Jews from holding public office. The *dhimmi* could not raise himself above the Muslim nor could his synagogue be higher than the mosques. Non-Muslims could not ride horses, only donkeys and were required to dismount if he passed a Muslim. The Jew was tolerated but barely so⁵

These practices were not uniform within the Arab world and there were even differences in individual countries.⁶

Throughout the countries colonized by the Muslim conquest, non-Arab and non-Muslim minorities, among the indigenous inhabitants in those regions, remained as minorities in their ancestral places of birth.

Period Four: Colonial Period

European colonialism in the Arab world was partially spurred by the British conquest of India, which led Napoleon to invade Egypt in 1798, in part to disrupt British trade routes. Although the French occupation of Egypt was short-lived, it was not long before the European presence in the Arab world grew. France's colonization of Algeria began in 1830, of Tunisia in 1881, and of Morocco in 1912. Meanwhile, Britain colonized Egypt in 1882 and also took control of Sudan in 1899. And in 1911, Italy colonized Libya.⁷

After World War I and with the fall of the Ottoman Empire, control over the Middle East fell into the hands of France and Great Britain.

Jews fared well under secular, colonial 'European' rule. This period witnessed a gradual erosion of the *dhimmi* system and a growing integration of Jewish and other communities into the broader societies in which they lived.

Many Jews experienced increased prosperity and opportunities during this era, contributing significantly to many fields such as education, finance, culture, politics, and administration.

Period Five: The Rise of Jewish and Arab Nationalism

Arab nationalism emerged in the early 20th century as an opposition movement in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, and European imperialism, later evolving into

4 Quaran, Sura 9:

5 Cohen, Cresent 65

6 Yeor, *Islam and Dhimmitude*; Yeor, *The Dhimmis*; Deshem and Zenner; Stillman, *Jews of Arab Land*

7 Arab Center, "The Colonial Legacy in the Arab World: Health, Education, and Politics", Washington DC., Accessed Nov. 10, 2024. <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-colonial-legacy-in-the-arab-world-health-education-and-politics/>

the overwhelmingly dominant ideological force in the Arab world.

It started out as a political ideology asserting that Arabs constitute a single nation. As a traditional nationalist ideology, it promotes Arab culture and civilization, celebrates Arab history, the Arabic language and Arabic literature. It often also calls for unification of Arab society.⁸

Zionism, or Jewish nationalism, is a modern political movement. Its core beliefs are that all Jews constitute one nation (not simply a religious or ethnic community) and that the only solution to anti-Semitism is the concentration of as many Jews as possible in the biblical land of Israel, and the establishment of a Jewish state in their ancestral homeland.

Most associate Theodor Herzl with the founding of the Zionist movement in 1897. While Herzl succeeded in bringing together virtually all Zionist groups under one organizational roof, there was significant Zionist activity even before Herzl came onto the scene.

The history of Zionism began earlier and is intertwined with Jewish history and Judaism.⁹ More than 20 new Jewish settlements were established in Palestine between 1870 and 1897 (the year of the first Zionist Congress).¹⁰

Arab nationalists predominantly perceived Zionism as a threat to their own aspirations.

Beginning with the Balfour Declaration in 1917 and intensifying in the 1930s during the Arab Revolt, tensions between Arab nationalism and Jewish nationalism escalated. From as early as 1922 and into the 1960s, all the North African states gained independence from their colonial European rulers.

In the aftermath of World War II, many regions transitioned from imperial rule to nation-states. Countries like Jordan and Iraq emerged in the wake of colonialism's decline. The Middle East became a focal point for political realignment, with borders redrawn and new Arab governments established. The evolution of Arab, Muslim states did not bode well for its Jewish inhabitants.

The Arab League and Jewish Refugees

To promote Arab unity, the Arab League was established by Pact on March 22, 1945, initially composed of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Transjordan, Saudi-Arabia, and Yemen, according to the Pact, the League has as its purpose to strengthen relations between the member-states, to coordinate their policies in order to achieve cooperation between them, and to safeguard their independence and sovereignty.¹¹

Over time, these Arab League member states colluded in, and coordinated, a shared pattern of conduct that appeared intended to coerce Jews to leave, or to use them as weapons in their struggle against first Zionism and then the State of Israel. This

8 Dawisha, Adeed, "Requiem for Arab Nationalism", *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2003. Accessed Nov. 10, 2024
<https://www.meforum.org/middle-east-quarterly/requiem-for-arab-nationalism>

9 University of Michigan College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, accessed Nov. 10, 2024
https://lsa.umich.edu/content/dam/cmenas-assets/cmenas-documents/unit-of-israel-Palestine/Section1_Zionism.pdf

10 Snitkoff, Rabbi Ed "Secular Zionism". *My Jewish Learning*. Accessed on Nov. 11, 2024
http://www.myjewishlearning.com/israel/Jewish Thought/Modern/Secular_Zionism.shtml

11 The Avalon Project "Pact of the League of Arab States, 22 March 1945". Yale Law School. 1998. Accessed on Nov. 10, 2024, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/arableag.asp

is evidenced even before 1948 from: (a) reports on multilateral meetings of the the Arab League; (b) statements and threats made by delegates of Arab countries at the U.N.; and c) and strikingly similar legislation and discriminatory decrees, enacted by numerous Arab governments, that violated the fundamental rights and freedoms of Jews resident in Arab countries.¹²

The danger to Jews was well known and even declared publicly in threats made against their Jewish populations by Arab regime officials at the United Nations.

- In a key address to the Political Committee of the U.N. General Assembly on the morning of November 24, 1947, just five days before that body voted on the partition plan for Palestine, Heykal Pasha, an Egyptian delegate, made the following statement:

*"The United Nations ... should not lose sight of the fact that the proposed solution might endanger a million Jews living in the Moslem countries. ... If the United Nations decided to partition Palestine, they might be responsible for very grave disorders and for the massacre of a large number of Jews."*¹³

- In an afternoon session of the Political Committee of the U.N. General Assembly on November 24, 1947, the Palestinian delegate to the UN, Jamal Husseini, representing the *Arab Higher Committee of Palestine* to the UN General Assembly, made the following threat:

*"It should be remembered that there were as many Jews in the Arab world as there are in Palestine whose positions might become very precarious."*¹⁴

- On November 28, 1947 Iraq's Foreign Minister Fadil Jamali, at the 126th Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly stated:

*"Not only the uprising of the Arabs in Palestine is to be expected but the masses in the Arab world cannot be restrained. The Arab-Jewish relationship in the Arab world will greatly deteriorate."*¹⁵

Words were followed by actions

In 1947, the Political Committee of the Arab League (League of Arab States) drafted a law that was to govern the legal status of Jewish residents in all Arab League countries. Entitled: Text of Law Drafted by the Political Committee of the Arab League, it provided that "...all Jews – with the exception of citizens of non-Arab countries – were to be considered members of the Jewish 'minority state of Palestine'; that their bank accounts would be frozen and used to finance resistance to 'Zionist ambitions in Palestine'; Jews believed to be active Zionists would be interned as political prisoners and their assets confiscated; only Jews who accept active service in Arab armies

12 The Text of Law Drafted by the Political Committee of the Arab League was reported on in a front page, May 16, 1948 New York Times article headlined: "Jews in Grave Danger in All Moslem Lands"

13 U.N. General Assembly, Second Session, Official Records, Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question, Summary Record of the Thirteenth Meeting, Lake Success, N.Y., November 24, 1947 (A/AC.14/SR.30). This comment was made at 10:30am.

14 U.N. General Assembly, Second Session, Official Records, Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question, Summary Record of the Thirty-First Meeting, Lake Success, N.Y., November 24, 2947 (A/AC.14/SR.31) This comment was made at 2:30pm.

15 U.N. General Assembly, Second Session, Official Records, Verbatim Record of the 126th Plenary Meeting, November 28, 1947, p. 1391.

or place themselves at the disposal of these armies would be considered 'Arabs'.¹⁶

The draft law was a prediction of what was to happen to Jews in the region. It became a blueprint, in country after country, for the laws which were eventually enacted against Jews - denationalizations; freezing of Jewish bank accounts; diverting funds of frozen Jewish bank accounts to pay for the Arab wars against Israel; confiscation of property of "active Zionists"; and Zionism became a criminal offence throughout the region, in some cases punishable by death. Property confiscation of Jews was widespread¹⁷. The Arab League had accomplished its goal.

Period Six: Jewish refugees and the founding of the State of Israel

There were many factors that finally influenced virtually all Jews resident in North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf Region to leave: the rise of Arab nationalism; after the European colonialists left, the establishment of sovereign Arab, Islamic states; discriminatory decrees adopted by Arab regimes; the UN moving towards partition; the outbreak of war in 1948; etc. These factors convinced Jews resident in Arab countries that their situation had become dangerously untenable and that it was time to leave.

Following the UN vote on the partition plan in November 1947, and the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948, the status of Jews in Arab countries changed dramatically as six Arab countries – Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Saudi Arabia – as well as the Palestinians, declared war, or backed the war against Israel. This rejection by the Arab world of a Jewish state in the Middle East triggered hostile reactions to Jews by Arab regimes and most of their peoples. Jewish populations in Muslim countries were suspected of dual loyalties and were under assault. For example: After the 1947 United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 (Partition Plan), rioters, joined by the local police force, engaged in a bloody pogrom in Aden that killed 82 Jews and destroyed hundreds of Jewish homes.¹⁸

- In Syria, during November 1947 there were pogroms in several cities; synagogues were burned and of Jews were arrested.¹⁹
- Between June and November 1948, bombs set off in the Jewish Quarter of Cairo killed more than 70 Jews and wounded nearly 200.²⁰

In the immediate aftermath of the 1948 War of Independence, hundreds of thousands of Jews were either uprooted from their countries of residence or became subjugated, political hostages of the Arab Israeli conflict.

Displacement of Jews from Arab Countries

In reality, the displacement of Jews began even before the founding of the State of Israel. It accelerated in the twentieth century when, under Muslim rule, Jews were subjected to a wide-spread pattern of persecution. Official decrees and legislation

16 The Text of Law Drafted by the Political Committee of the Arab League was reported on in a front page, May 16, 1948 New York Times article headlined: "Jews in Grave Danger in All Moslem Lands"

17 Ibid

18 Sachar, *A History of Israel*, p. 397-398.

19 Trigano, Samuel, "Elimination of Israelite Communities in Arab and Islamic Countries", Outline Presentation, p. 9

20 Sachar, p. 401

enacted by Arab regimes denied human and civil rights to Jews and other minorities; expropriated their property; stripped them of their citizenship; and other means of livelihood. Jews were often victims of murder; arbitrary arrest and detention; torture; and expulsions.

As a result of these twentieth century developments, post-World War II life for Jews in Arab countries became dangerous and untenable. Leaving was not always easy – the difficulty varied from country to country. In some countries, Jews were forbidden to leave (e.g., Syria); in others, Jews were displaced *en masse* (e.g., Iraq); in some places, Jews lived in relative peace under the protection of Muslim rulers (e.g., Tunisia, Morocco); while in other states, they were expelled (e.g., Egypt) or had their citizenship revoked (e.g. Libya).

However, the final result was the same - the mass displacement - the ethnic cleansing - of some 856,000 Jews from some ten Arab countries – in a region overwhelmingly hostile to Jews.

As noted in the Table below, the mass displacement of Jews from Arab countries coincided with major conflicts in the Middle East (e.g. 1948 War; 1956 War; 1967 War; etc.) Each conflict led to major displacements of Jews from Arab countries. The cumulative result was that, over a seventy-five-year period from 1948- until today approximately 99% of all Jews resident in Arab countries and Iran have been displaced.

Table 2 - Country of Origin and Jewish Population Compiled by Justice for Jews from Arab Countries

Displacement of Jews from Arab Countries and Iran:1948-2025

	1948	1958 ⁱ	1968 ⁱⁱ	1976 ⁱⁱⁱ	2001 ^{iv}	2024 (est.)
Aden	8,000	800	0	0	0	0
Algeria	140,000	130,000	3,000	1,000	0	0
Egypt	75,000	40,000	2,500	400	100	8
Iran	100,000 +					8,756^v
Iraq	135,000	6,000	2,500	350	100	5
Lebanon	5,000	6,000	3,000	400	100	50
Libya	38,000	3,750	500	40	0	0
Morocco	265,000	200,000	50,000	18,000	5,700	2,500
Syria	30,000	5,000	4,000	4,500	100	3
Tunisia	105,000	80,000	10,000	7,000	1,500	1,500
Yemen	55,000	3,500	500	500	200 ^{vi}	1
TOTAL	856,000^{vii}	475,050	76,000	32,190	7,800	4,067^{viii}

ⁱ American Jewish Yearbook (AJY) v.58 American Jewish Committee

ⁱⁱ AJY v.68; AJY v.71

ⁱⁱⁱ AJY v.78

^{iv} AJY v.101

^v Official Census in Iran; As of 2012

^{vi} AJY v.102

^{vii} Roumani, The Case 2; WOJAC'S Voice Vol.1, No.1

^{viii} Estimates derived in discussions with the recognized leadership of the World Organizations representing Sephardi/Mizrahi communities from these respective countries

What led to this mass exit and displacement was a wide-spread pattern Arab regimes instituted legal, economic, political and behavioral processes aimed at isolating and persecuting Jews in their countries. These measures can be categorized as follows:²¹

- A) Denial of Citizenship**
- B) Quarantine and Detention of People**
- C) Legal Restrictions**
- D) Economic Decrees/Sanctions**
- E) Socioeconomic Discrimination**
- F) Pogroms**

²¹ Trigano, p. 2

The examples listed below are a mere sampling of the actual and extensive discriminatory measures and decrees enacted by Arab regimes against their Jewish populations.

A) Denial of Citizenship

Egypt:

- According to the first Nationality Code promulgated by Egypt on May 26, 1926, a person born in Egypt of a 'foreign' father, (who himself was also born in Egypt), was entitled to Egyptian nationality only if the foreign father "*belonged racially to the majority of the population of a country whose language is Arabic or whose religion is Islam.*"²²
- A mass departure of Jews was sparked in 1956 when Egypt amended the original Egyptian Nationality Law of 1926. Article 1 of the Law of November 22, 1956, stipulated that "Zionists" were barred from being Egyptian nationals. Article 18 of the 1956 law asserted that "Egyptian nationality may be declared forfeited by order of the Ministry of Interior in the case of persons classified as Zionists." Moreover, the term "Zionist" was never defined, leaving Egyptian authorities free to interpret the law as broadly as they wished.²³

Iraq:

- Law No. 1 of 1950, entitled "Supplement to Ordinance Canceling Iraqi Nationality," in fact deprived Jews of their Iraqi nationality. Section 1 stipulated that "*the Council of Ministers may cancel the Iraqi nationality of the Iraqi Jew who willingly desires to leave Iraq for good*" (official Iraqi English translation).²⁴

Libya:

- The Citizenship Act of June 12, 1951, (Section 11/27) places restrictions on the status of non-Muslims (e.g. Jews were not allowed to vote or play any political role).²⁵
- On August 8, 1962, the Council of Ministers announced a Royal Decree amending Article 10 of the Citizenship Act, which provided, *inter alia*, that a Libyan national forfeited his nationality if he had had any contact with Zionism. The retroactive effect of this provision, commencing with Libyan independence on December 24, 1951, enabled the authorities to deprive Jews of Libyan nationality at will.²⁶

B) Quarantine and Detention of People

Yemen:

- In 1949, Jews were officially banned from leaving the country, an injunction which still exists today.²⁷

22 Article 10(4) of the Code. See : Maurice de Wee, *La Nationalite Egptienne*, Commentaire de la loi du mai 1926, p. 35.

23 Law No. 391 of 1956, Section 1(a), *Revue Egyptienne de Droit International*, vol. 12, 1956, p. 80.

24 Law No. 1 of 1950, entitled "Supplement to Ordinance Canceling Iraqi Nationality," *Official Iraqi Gazette*, March 9, 1950.

25 Trigano, p.3

26 UNHCR Archives, Confidential memorandum to Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, dated May 8, 1970.

27 Trigano, p. 3

Libya:

- Law No.62 of March 1957, Article 1 of which provided, *inter alia*, that physical persons or corporations were prohibited from entering directly or indirectly into contracts of any nature whatsoever with organizations or persons domiciled in Israel, with Israel citizens or with persons acting on behalf of Israel, or with their representatives.²⁸

Syria:

- In 1973, communication with the outside world was banned.²⁹

Many other measures were imposed in Iraq; Tunisia; Morocco; Iran and Egypt³⁰

C) Legal Restrictions

Egypt:

- Promulgation in 1957 of Army Order No. 4 relating to those who administer the property of the so-called people and associations ("Zionist" i.e. Jewish) are subject to imprisonment or supervision.³¹

Libya:

- Law of Dec 31,1958, a decree issued by the President of the Executive Council of Tripolitania, ordered the dissolution of the Jewish Community Council and the appointment of a Moslem commissioner nominated by the Government.³²

Many other legal restrictions against Jews were imposed in Iraq, Lebanon, Iran, Yemen; Syria; Morocco; and Tunisia;³³

D) Economic Sanctions

Syria:

- In April of 1950, a 'Jewish property foreclosure Law" allowed authorities to seize Jewish houses, land, and shops in the cities of Aleppo and Qamishli. Palestinian refugees were then allowed to settle in these formerly Jewish neighborhoods. A ransom had to be paid for every Jew leaving the country.³⁴

Egypt:

- Law No. 26 of 1952 obligated all corporations to employ certain prescribed percentages of "Egyptians." A great number of Jewish salaried employees lost their jobs, and could not obtain similar ones, because they did not belong to the category of Jews with Egyptian nationality.³⁵

28 Gruen, "Libya and the Arab League", p. 11

29 Trigano, p.3

30 Trigano, p. 3-4

31 *Egyptian Official Gazette*, No. 88, November 1, 1957

32 UNHCR Archives, Confidential memorandum to Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, dated May 8, 1970.

33 Trigano, p. 4

34 Ibid, p. 6

35 Laskier, "Egyptian Jewry"

Iraq:

- Law No. 5 of 1951, entitled "A law for the Supervision and Administration of the Property of Jews who have Forfeited Iraqi Nationality," also deprived them of their property. Section 2(a) "freezes" Jewish property.³⁶
- There were a series of laws that subsequently expanded on the confiscation of assets and property of Jews who "forfeited Iraqi nationality". These included Law No. 12 of 1951³⁷ as well as Law No. 64 of 1967 (relating to ownership of shares in commercial companies) and Law No. 10 of 1968 (relating to banking restrictions).

Other economic sanctions were imposed in Iran, Yemen; Libya; Morocco and Tunisia.³⁸

E) Socioeconomic Discrimination

Egypt:

- On July 29, 1947, an amendment was introduced to the Egyptian Companies Law which required at least 75% of the administrative employees of a company to be Egyptian nationals and 90% of employees in general. This resulted in the dismissal and loss of livelihood for many Jews since only 15% had been granted Egyptian citizenship.³⁹

Iraq:

- In Iraq, no Jew is permitted to leave the country unless he deposits £5,000 (\$20,000) with the Government to guarantee his return. No foreign Jew is allowed to enter Iraq, even in transit.⁴⁰

Libya:

- On May 24, 1961, a law was promulgated which provided that only Libyan citizens could own and transfer property. Conclusive proof of the possession of Libyan citizenship was required to be evidenced by a special permit that was reported to have been issued to only six Jews in all.⁴¹

Other such socioeconomic discriminatory measures were imposed on the Jews in Yemen; Syria; Libya; Morocco; Egypt and, Tunisia⁴²;

F) Pogroms

Morocco:

- In Morocco, On June 7 and 8, 1948, there were riots against Jews in Ojeda and Jareda.⁴³

Egypt:

- In 1954, upon the Proclamation of a State of Siege in Egypt, the Military Governor

36 Law No. 5 of 1951, entitled "A Law for the Supervision and Administration of the Property of Jews who have Forfeited Iraqi Nationality," *Official Iraqi Gazette*, March 10, 1951 (English version), p. 17.

37 Law No. 12 of 1951, supplementary to Law No. 5 (*Official Gazette*, English version, 27 January 1952, p.32)

38 Trigano, p. 5

39 Cohen, H.J., p. 88

40 *New York Times*, May 16, 1948, front page

41 UNHCR Archives, Confidential memorandum to Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, May 8, 1970.

42 Trigano, p. 6-7

43 Trigano, p. 9

of Egypt was authorized “to order the arrest and apprehension of suspects and those who prejudice public order and security.” At least 900 Jews, without charges being laid against them, were detained, imprisoned or otherwise deprived of their liberty.⁴⁴

Iraq:

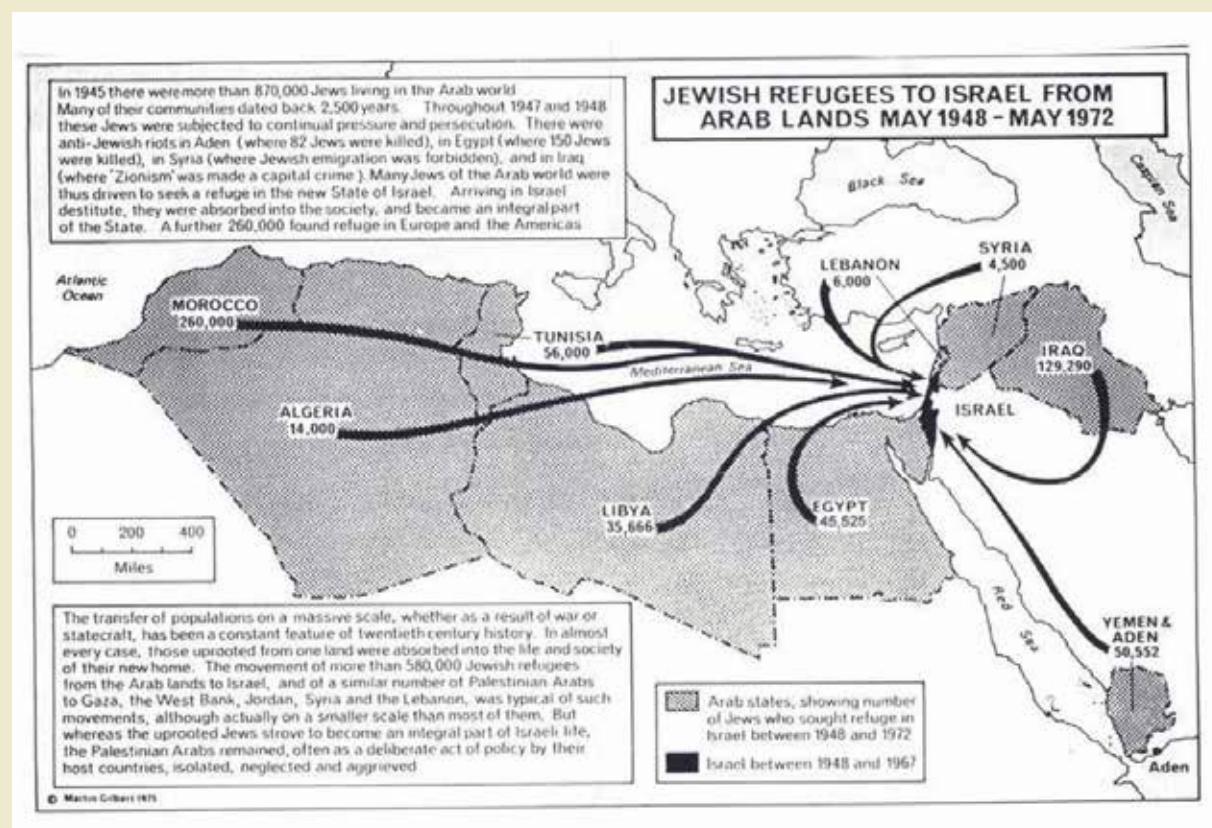
- At the end of 1968, scores were jailed upon the discovery of a local “spy ring” composed of Jewish businessmen. Fourteen men, eleven of them Jews, were sentenced to death in staged trials and hanged in the public squares of Baghdad; others died of torture.⁴⁵

Other pogroms and violence against Jews occurred in, Libya; Lebanon, Iran, Yemen; Syria; Tunisia; and Algeria;⁴⁶

Jews who left Arab countries were not voluntary migrants. They left their home countries neither for economic reasons nor solely for religious freedom. They suffered from harassment and discrimination. They were driven from their homes as a result of the persecution they suffered.

Over 2/3 of all Jews displaced from Arab countries – roughly 650,000 - emigrated to Israel:

Map 1 – Jewish Refugees to Israel from Arab lands May 1948 – May 1972



Source: Martin Gilbert, *Jews of Arab Lands*, p.16 (Egyptian Jewish community leaders claim the number fleeing from Egypt to Israel was significantly higher).

44 Article 3, Paragraph 7 of Emergency Law No. 5333 of 1954.

45 Judith Miller and Laurie Mylroie, *Saddam Hussein and the Crisis in the Gulf*, p. 34.

46 Trigano, p. 7-10

While Zionism motivated most to settle in Israel, an estimated 260,000 people ⁴⁷ – or about one third - of all Jewish refugees immigrated to other countries (e.g. Britain, France, USA, Canada, etc.). In virtually all cases, as Jews left their homes and their countries of birth, individual and communal properties were confiscated without compensation.

Were Jews Displaced from Arab Countries Legally Refugees

The internationally accepted definition for the term “refugee” derives from the Statute of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that was established by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 319 (IV) on December 3, 1949. The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees was adopted on July 28, 1951, by the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, which was convened under General Assembly Resolution 429 (V) of December 14, 1950, and entered into force on April 22, 1954. Article 1 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees states the following:

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term “refugee” shall apply to any person who: ... (2) As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it....

This internationally accepted definition of “refugees” applied to many Jews who fled Arab countries who clearly had, a “well-founded fear of being persecuted.”

The plight of Jewish refugees displaced from Jews in Arab countries was finally and formally recognized when, on two separate occasions, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) specifically declared that Jews fleeing from Arab countries were indeed refugees “who fall under the mandate” of the UNHCR. The first recognition pertained to Jews fleeing Egypt. In a 1957 statement to the UNREF Executive Committee, Mr. Auguste Lindt, UN High Commissioner for Refugees stated:

“Another emergency problem is now arising - that of refugees from Egypt. There is no doubt in my mind that those refugees from Egypt who are not able, or not willing to avail themselves of the protection of the Government of their nationality fall under the mandate of my office.” ⁴⁸

The second recognition by the UNHCR that Jews fleeing Arab countries were indeed refugees came in 11 years later in a letter released by the Office of the UN High Commissioner:

47 Gilbert, *Atlas of the Arab-Israeli conflict*. p. 48

48 Mr. Auguste Lindt, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Report of the UNREF Executive Committee, Fourth Session – Geneva 29 January to 4 February 1957.

*"I refer to our recent discussion concerning Jews from Middle Eastern and North African countries in consequence of recent events. I am now able to inform you that such persons may be considered *prima facie* within the mandate of this Office."*⁴⁹

The significance of this second ruling was twofold:

- 1) Unlike the first statement by the High Commissioner that merely referred to "refugees from Egypt" - the vast majority of whom were Jews - this letter referred specifically to "Jews"; and
- 2) Unlike the first determination that limited UNHCR involvement to "refugees from Egypt", this statement constituted a ruling that Jews who had left *any* of the "Middle Eastern and North African countries" - namely: Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia – all fell within the mandate of the Office of the UNHCR.

Do These Former Jewish Refugees Still Possess Rights Today?

The statute of limitations does not apply to the right of refugees to petition for rights and redress. This principle is enshrined in the *"Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law"*, adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly on December 16, 2005. It states, in part:

6)... statutes of limitations shall not apply to gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law which constitute crimes under international law.

The passage of time does not negate the right of refugees to petition for redress for the mass violations of their human rights as well as for the personal losses. If a refugee left behind assets, including bank accounts and pension plans, they do not lose their rights to these assets, notwithstanding how many years have passed. Therefore, former Jewish refugees have the legal right, under international law – even today - to petition for rights and redress.

United Nation and Middle East Refugees

So, in fact, both Palestinians and Jews from Arab countries were recognized as *bona fide* refugees by the relevant UN Agencies.

The declaration that Palestinians were refugees was made by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and accepted by the international community. The designation by the UNHCR that Jews fleeing Arab countries were indeed refugees was less known and not publicized.

From the mid 1940's onward, the United Nations was faced with two refugee populations; both emerging from the same conflict; in comparable numbers, both recognized by the UN as *bona fide* refugees; with both still possessing rights today. Nonetheless, there are startling differences in the treatment, by the United Nations, of Arab refugees compared to Jewish refugees. For example:

49 Dr. E. Jahn, Office of the UN High Commissioner, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Document No. 7/2/3/Libya, July 6, 1967.

With respect to Security Council resolutions, from 1946 – 2024 inclusive, there were a total of 338 Security Council resolutions on the Middle East in general, and 9 resolutions on Palestinian refugees in particular. During that same time period, there was not one Resolution dealing with Jewish refugees.⁵⁰

UN Security Council Resolutions on Middle East Refugees			
	Resolutions on the Middle East	Resolutions on Palestinian Refugees	Resolutions on Jewish Refugees
SECURITY COUNCIL	338	9	0

With respect to Resolutions of the UN General Assembly,⁵¹ from 1949 to 2024 inclusive, the General Assembly focused much greater attention on the issue of Palestinian refugees – over 21 % of its resolutions – more than on any other Middle East issue.

UN General Assembly Resolutions on Middle East Refugees			
	Resolutions on Middle East	Resolutions on Palestinian Refugees	Resolutions on Jewish Refugees
GENERAL ASSEMBLY	976	208	0

In contrast to Palestinian refugees, General Assembly resolutions never specifically addressed the issue of Jewish refugees, nor were there any resolutions on other topics that mentioned Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

However, there is one UN Resolution that does refer to Jewish refugees from Arab countries obliquely, while still not mentioning their plight directly.

UN Security Council Resolution 242

On November 22nd, 1967, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 242, which laid down the principles for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East.

Still considered the primary vehicle for resolving the Arab-Israel conflict, Resolution 242, stipulates that a comprehensive peace settlement should necessarily include “*a just settlement of the refugee problem*”. No distinction is made between Arab refugees and Jewish refugees. This was the intent of the Resolution’s drafters and sponsors.

On Thursday, November 16, 1967, the United Kingdom submitted their draft of Resolution 242 [S/8247] to the UN Security Council. The UK version of 242 was not exclusive and called for a just settlement of “the refugee problem.” Just four days after the United Kingdom submission, the Soviet Union’s U.N. delegation submitted their own draft Resolution 242 to the Security Council [S/8253] restricting the just settlement only to “Palestinian refugees” [Para. 3 (c)].

⁵⁰ Urman, Dr. Stanley A., *The United Nations and Middle East Refugees: The Differing Treatment of Palestinians and Jews*; Rutgers University, 2010. Page 134. Analysis derived from United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), Statistics updated to 20.24 from UNISPAL on Nov. 2. 2024. <https://www.un.org/unispal/data-collection/>

⁵¹ Ibid, Page 137. Statistics updated to 20.24 from UNISPAL on Nov. 2. 2024. <https://www.un.org/unispal/data-collection/>

On Wednesday, November 22, 1967, the Security Council gathered for its 1382nd meeting in New York at which time, the United Kingdom's draft of Resolution 242 was voted on and unanimously approved.⁵² Immediately after the UK's version of 242 was adopted, the Soviet delegation advised the Security Council, that "*it will not insist, at the present stage of our consideration of the situation in the Near East, on a vote on the draft Resolution submitted by the Soviet Union*" which would have limited 242 to Palestinian refugees only.⁵³ Even so, Ambassador Kuznetsov of the Soviet Union later stated: "The Soviet Government would have preferred the Security Council to adopt the Soviet draft Resolution..."⁵⁴

Thus, the attempt by the Soviets to restrict the "just settlement of the refugee problem" merely to "Palestinian refugees" was not successful. The international community adoption of the UK's inclusive version signaled a desire for 242 to seek a just solution for all – including Jewish refugees.

Moreover, Justice Arthur J. Goldberg, the US Ambassador to the United Nations who was seminally involved in drafting⁵⁵ the unanimously adopted Resolution, told The Chicago Tribune that the Soviet version of Resolution 242 was "not even-handed."⁵⁶

He went further - pointing out that:

*"A notable omission in 242 is any reference to Palestinians, a Palestinian state on the West Bank or the PLO. The resolution addresses the objective of 'achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem.' This language presumably refers both to Arab and Jewish refugees, for about an equal number of each abandoned their homes as a result of the several wars...."*⁵⁷

So, it is clear that the intent of UN Resolution 242 requires a "just settlement of the refugee problem" that includes Jewish refugees, as equally as Palestinian refugees.

Other international Agreements and entities have recognized the rights of Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

Multilateral Initiatives

- The Madrid Conference, which was first convened in October 1991, launched historic, direct negotiations between Israel and many of her Arab neighbors. In his opening remarks at a conference convened to launch the multilateral process held in Moscow in January 1992, then-U.S. Secretary of State James Baker made no distinction between Palestinian refugees and Jewish refugees in articulating the mandate of the Refugee Working Group as follows: "*The refugee group will consider practical ways of improving the lot of people throughout the region who have been displaced from their homes.*"⁵⁸

52 Security Council Official Records - November 22, 1967 - S/PV.1382 - Paragraph 67..

53 Security Council Official Records - November 22, 1967 - S/PV.1382 - Paragraph 117

54 Security Council Official Records - November 22, 1967 - S/PV.1382 - Paragraph 117

55 Transcript, Arthur J. Goldberg Oral History Interview I, 3/23/83, by Ted Gittinger; Lyndon B. Johnson Library. March 23, 1983; Pg I-10

56 "Russia stalls UN Action on Middle East." The Chicago Tribune. November 21, 1967 pg. B9

57 Goldberg, Arthur J., "Resolution 242: After 20 Years." The Middle East: Islamic Law and Peace (U.S. Resolution 242: Origin, Meaning and Significance.) National Committee on American Foreign Policy; April 2002. (Originally written by Arthur J. Goldberg for the American Foreign Policy Interests on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary in 1988.)

58 Remarks by Secretary of State James A. Baker, III before the Organizational Meeting for Multilateral Negotiations on the Middle East, House of Unions, Moscow, January 28, 1992.

No distinction is made between Arab and Jewish refugees.

- The Road Map to Middle East Peace, advanced in 2002 by the Quartet (the U.N., EU, U.S., and Russia) also refers in Phase III to an “agreed, just, fair and realistic solution to the refugee issue”, language applicable both to Palestinian and Jewish refugees.

Bilateral Arab - Israeli Agreements

Israeli agreements with her Arab neighbors allow for a case to be made that Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians have affirmed that a comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict will require a “just settlement” of the “refugee problem” that will include recognition of the rights and claims of all Middle East refugees:

Israel – Egypt Agreements 1978 and 1979

The *Camp David Framework for Peace in the Middle East* of 1978 (the “Camp David Accords”) includes, in paragraph A(1)(f), a commitment by Egypt and Israel to “work with each other and with other interested parties to establish agreed procedures for a prompt, just and permanent resolution of the implementation of the refugee problem.”

Article 8 of the *Israel – Egypt Peace Treaty* of 1979 provides that the “Parties agree to establish a claims commission for the mutual settlement of all financial claims.” Those claims were to include those of former Jewish refugees displaced from Egypt.

Israel – Jordan Peace Treaty, 1994

Article 8 of the *Israel – Jordan Peace Treaty*, entitled “Refugees and Displaced Persons” recognizes, in paragraph 1, “the massive human problems caused to both Parties by the conflict in the Middle East”. Reference to massive human problems in a broad manner suggests that the plight of all refugees of “the conflict in the Middle East” includes Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

Israeli Palestinian Agreements, 1993

Almost every reference to the refugee issue in Israeli-Palestinian agreements, talks about “refugees”, without qualifying which refugee community is at issue, including the *Declaration of Principles of 13 September 1993* {Article V (3)}, and the *Interim Agreement of September 1995* {Articles XXXI (5)}, both of which refer to “refugees” as a subject for permanent status negotiations, without qualifications.

Recognition by Political Leaders of Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries

Recognition by political leaders has enhanced the credibility of Jewish refugees from Arab countries and strengthened the legitimacy of their claims for rights and redress.

- U.S. President Jimmy Carter, after successfully brokering the Camp David Accords and the Egyptian - Israeli Peace Treaty, stated in a press conference on Oct. 27, 1977:

“Palestinians have rights... obviously there are Jewish refugees...they have the same rights as others do.”

- Former U.S. President Bill Clinton made the following assertion after the rights of Jews displaced from Arab countries were discussed at ‘Camp David II’ in July, 2000.

- *There will have to be some sort of international fund set up for the refugees. There is, I think, some interest, interestingly enough, on both sides, in also having a fund which compensates the Israelis who were made refugees by the war, which occurred after the birth of the State of Israel. Israel is full of people, Jewish people, who lived in predominantly Arab countries who came to Israel because they were made refugees in their own land.*
- Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin recognized Jewish refugees in a June 3rd, 2005, interview with the Canadian Jewish News which he later reaffirmed in a July 14, 2005, letter:

A refugee is a refugee and that the situation of Jewish refugees from Arab lands must be recognized. All refugees deserve our consideration as they have lost both physical property and historical connections. I did not imply that the claims of Jewish refugees are less legitimate or merit less attention than those of Palestinian refugees.

- British Prime Minister Theresa May spoke at a dinner in London marking the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, on November 2nd, 2017:

We must recognize how difficult at times this journey has been – from the Jews forced out of their homes in Arab countries in 1948 to the suffering of Palestinians affected and dislodged by Israel's birth – both completely contrary to the intention of Balfour to safeguard all of these communities.

Legislation Recognizing Rights for Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries

Unanimously adopted by the **United States** Congress on April 1, 2008, House Resolution 185 affirms that all victims of the Arab - Israeli conflict must be recognized and urges the President and US officials participating in any Middle East negotiations to 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.”

On March 5, 2014, **Canada** formally recognized the plight of Jewish refugees from Arab lands. The Canadian Cabinet and Parliament accepted a committee recommendation that the federal government *officially recognize the experience of Jewish refugees who were displaced from states in the Middle East and North Africa after 1948.*”

The Knesset of **Israel** adopted two Bills, in 2008 and again in 2010, confirming rights - including compensation - for Jews displaced from Arab countries and that their rights must be addressed in any Middle East peace negotiations.

Jewish Refugees and Palestinian Refugees

Emanating as a result of the 1948 conflict in the Middle East, Palestinians are considered as the world's longest-standing refugee population who continue to require significant international protection as well as material and financial assistance.

Their continuing needs, however, do not supersede the fact that, Palestinians were not the only Middle East refugees. During the twentieth century, two refugee populations emerged as a result of the conflict in the Middle East – Arabs as well as Jews.

There is no parallel history, geography, nor demography that could allow for any just comparison between the fate of Palestinian refugees and the plight of Jewish refugees

from Arab countries. Moreover, there is a fundamental distinction in the way the two crises were dealt with:

The newly established state of Israel, under attack from six Arab armies, with scant and scarce resources, opened its doors to hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees displaced from Arab countries, granted them citizenship, and tried, under very difficult circumstances, to absorb them into Israeli society.

- By contrast, the Arab world, with the sole exception of Jordan, turned their backs on displaced Palestinian Arabs, sequestering them in refugee camps to be used as a political weapon against the state of Israel for the last seventy-five plus years.

So, while there is no symmetry between these two narratives, there is one important factor that applies to both: namely, the moral imperative to ensure that all *bona fide* refugees receive equal treatment under international law.

It would constitute an injustice, were the international community to recognize rights for one victim population – Arab Palestinians - without recognizing equal rights for other victims of the same Middle East conflict – Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

The legitimate call to secure rights and redress for Jewish refugees from Arab countries is just as in any Middle East peace proposals, the rights and claims of Palestinian refugees will certainly be addressed. What is important is to ensure that the rights and claims of hundreds of thousands of Jews displaced from Arab countries are similarly recognized and addressed.

As Jews were forced to leave their homes, communities and countries of birth, they left behind assets now estimated at over \$263 billion. But the true loss goes far beyond wealth. It was the erasure of a civilization, a rich tapestry of language, faith and identity that helped shape the very fabric of the region.

This publication is a sincere call to recognize the rights of Jewish refugees from Arab lands—on both moral and legal grounds—and to ensure their story is no longer forgotten. The Middle East conflict created two refugee populations –one Palestinian, one Jewish—and both deserve acknowledgment.

In an era of historic reconciliation, inspired by the spirit of the Abraham Accords, the time has come to face history with honesty and courage. Only through truth, justice, and mutual recognition can the peoples of the region move toward a future of dignity, healing, and lasting peace.

In the spirit of the Abraham Accords, at a time of historic breakthroughs in political and financial 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.

Chapter 2

Scope and Methodology

The purpose of this project is to provide a detailed and comprehensive appraisal and valuation of property left behind by Jews displaced from Arab countries in the years following the founding of the State of Israel as well as post-Revolution Iran. 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. Moreover, this massive civilizational presence was uprooted over only the course of just more than half a century and transformed into an enormous flow of refugees headed to Israel, Europe, North and South America, Australia and other locations. This report seeks to document this historical injustice to produce a valuation of assets left behind by Jewish refugees in Arab countries and Iran.

2.1. Project Scope

The scope of this project encompasses the Jewish communities of the following ten Arab countries.

- Aden
- Algeria
- Egypt
- Iraq
- Lebanon
- Libya
- Morocco
- Syria
- Tunisia
- Yemen

Also included is Iran.

"This project will bring to light the best evidence available on the scope of lost Jewish individual and communal assets, apply an orderly methodology on the data collected, and arrive at an aggregate valuation of the assets that belonged to Jewish refugees and their communities.

The research, which was conducted over a period of over five years, was orchestrated by Sylvain Abitbol, Co-President of Justice for Jews from Arab Countries, working with economists, accountants, historians, academicians, Jewish community organizations and Mizrahi Jewish community leaders, utilizing testimonies submitted by Jews displaced from Arab countries.

This process included a thorough, comprehensive review of available documentation, the collection of testimonial data, an analysis of each Jewish community's place within their respective country, and a consideration of previous valuation attempts where such attempts have been made. The final result will be an aggregate valuation of Jewish individual and community assets from Arab countries and Iran.

2.2. **Technical Premises**

For the purposes of this report's valuation exercise, the assumption was that all Jewish assets that belonged to Jews in most of the countries under consideration were lost over the course of each Jewish community's displacement, unless otherwise noted.

As this valuation report represents a comprehensive effort to collect information on all types of assets that belonged to Jews and Jewish communities in countries whose subsequent governments can be said to be generally hostile to this particular demographic group and the State of Israel, the amount and quality of information available for such an effort was limited.

2.3. **Loss Types Under Review**

This project considers losses suffered by Jews as individual members of Jewish households, as well as assets that belonged to each Jewish community, respectively. These losses include urban and rural land, urban and rural immoveable property, personal property and moveable assets, financial assets, employment losses, business losses, and communal losses.

Table 3 - Loss Categories and Types - Valuation Methodology

Loss Category	Loss Type
Individual	Urban and Rural Land
	Property – Immoveable assets: Urban and rural buildings, houses
	Property – moveable assets: Household and personal items, furniture etc.
	Financial assets: Bank accounts and other securities
	Total assets:
Business	Overall business value, including real estate, inventory, and commercial holdings
Communal	Communally-owned assets: All land and property communally owned by the Jewish community, including synagogues, cemeteries, mikvahs etc.

The report does not attempt to account for non-pecuniary damages, such as pain and suffering, nor personal injury or death. However, in rare cases some of the claim forms filed by displaced Jews and analyzed for the report did include monetary valuations for time spent incarcerated and other such losses associated with mistreatment and expulsion. In these instances, the valuations were included as part of individual losses calculated in the movable assets category.

2.4. Methodology: Principles and Rationale

The methodology implemented in this report consists of both preliminary research and a subsequent valuation. The research phase relies on general research and analysis approaches which have been further adjusted to fit the circumstances of each country under consideration, as well as the amount and quality of information available.

Furthermore, a significant aspect of the research and valuation methodology consists of information collected and analyzed from first-hand testimonials given by Jews displaced from all countries under consideration throughout the relevant time period. This aspect of the research and valuation methodology will also be described in greater detail below.

Research Methodology

The scope of this project requires an assessment of the present value of all individual and communal assets left behind by Jewish refugees from Arab countries and Iran. This task requires a particular methodology both for compiling all the relevant research materials available and for converting those materials into a professional, present-day valuation. Therefore, a research methodology was devised to collect all primary materials that are relevant and available to assessing the particular assets that belonged to Jews and their respective communities in the countries under consideration, as well as supplementary overarching country research, meant to fill the missing pieces in each country.

Considering that no full material accounting of all Jewish property was kept on record, a research methodology based solely on either one of the aforementioned approaches would be incomplete. There is neither a comprehensive, primary accounting of all Jewish property left behind by Jewish refugees from Arab countries and Iran, nor a reliable approach that is able to reflect the particular nuances of Jewish property-ownership in every country under consideration. In light of this complex scenario, it was decided the optimal research methodology would be to combine a number of approaches in order to paint the fullest picture of Jewish property left behind in each country.

Primary research included a preliminary audit of relevant archives and visits to those archives that were likely to contain relevant information. This research phase also included meetings with community leaders from all the relevant countries and

subject-matter experts in order to clarify any questions, to pursue further detail in regard to other primary documents uncovered, to ask for any primary materials these community leaders or experts might possess, and to ask for further guidance where necessary. Finally, use was made of a wide selection of secondary sources, including books, journal articles, reports, websites, heritage/cultural centers, etc. for any other relevant materials that helped produce as comprehensive and detailed an evidence-based assessment of Jewish property that belonged to Jews from the countries under consideration.

The next step of the research methodology seeks to supplement the assessment of Jewish property ownership, to the extent necessary, with a series of calculations any

other taking into consideration the size and relative position of the Jewish community in each country, as well as other factors as the situation demands. There are a number of reasons why the evidence-based picture emerging out of any country will be less than complete, including the fact that these events took place over 75 years ago, some of them in places where government administration was in flux and in places that are inaccessible today. Other rationales include differing colonial administrative practices, as explained below. From this research, reasonable conclusions are drawn from the available information.

Historical Note on Mandatory/Colonial Administrative Practices

This valuation report ultimately rests on the best information and evidence currently available based on multiple sources, including the primary administrative materials collected by the colonial/mandatory powers that directly or indirectly ruled many of the countries under consideration. As such, the administrative habits practiced by these powers (i.e. Great Britain, France, and Italy) ought to be considered for the purpose of illuminating any differences in administrative methods that may have had consequences for the amount and type of information and data available.

As far as the research phase of this project is concerned, the administrative habits exercised by Great Britain during its Mandate over Palestine from 1920 through 1948 ought to be juxtaposed with the administrative habits exercised by French authorities in its role as colonial/mandatory/protectorate authority in several of the countries under consideration (Italy ruled as a colonial administrator in Libya for a shorter amount of time that is relevant to this project). The British administrative record in Mandatory Palestine is interesting in particular, as these administrative habits produced the type of detailed information against which this valuation report must contend as an historical comparison. The historical record on this matter shows a starkly different approach to gathering and recording materials amongst the British and the French that are of major significance to this project.

The historical motives and interests that characterized the British presence in Palestine at the time were such that British authorities had reason to keep meticulous records of developments in Palestine. British authorities were well aware of their commitments to both Jewish and Arab nationalist aspirations in Mandatory Palestine and were sensitive to a future contest for land between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. This reality coincided with Britain's larger geo-political interests in maintaining a stable, long-term presence in part of Mandatory Palestine. The situation required a well-run administration capable of producing and maintaining detailed administrative records for the sake of controlling the eventual clash between Jewish and Arab communities, and for securing the long-term British presence in Palestine. This attitude was reflected in various British policies, including attempts at land reform, tax reform, registration of private and state land, aerial documentation of land throughout the territory etc. All of these efforts combined produced a detailed accounting of the kind of material that can serve as primary evidence for this sort of valuation project. And indeed, British land records, such as the '1945 Village Statistics' document, served as the basis for various Palestinian valuation reports.

From further research, it is apparent that French administrative habits were different to those of the British, for various reasons. To begin with, French authorities had a different 'ideological' outlook to the British, and this difference animated their administrative habits. French authorities were more determined to disregard the sociological divisions present in the populations they ruled, in an attempt to have their vision of an egalitarian society benevolently ruled by Frenchmen reflected in their administrative records. To this end, French administrative records show less distinctions among the populations over which they ruled, a practice which, for example, makes distinguishing Jewish and Muslim land records, much more difficult.

More importantly, however, is the fact that the French had no overriding interest in maintaining detailed records of the Jewish communities that were part of the territories they controlled. Unlike the British, who were in part dedicated to promoting the collective interest of the Jewish community in Mandatory Palestine and of safeguarding the rights of Mandatory Palestine's Arab residents as well, a situation which forced British authorities to act as a neutral referee of sorts, French records were mainly concerned with recording narrower French interests, to cement their control of lands and economic interests in the territories they ruled. These differences between British and French interests and mindsets were reflected in their different administrative practices. These, in turn, produced different levels of detail and scope regarding the type of documentation necessary for a valuation project of this sort.

Testimonials by Jews Displaced from Arab Countries and Iran

In addition to research materials collected and reasonable assessments deduced, per the research methodology described above, information collected from first-hand testimonials by Jews displaced from Arab countries and Iran was utilized and analyzed. Details of the testimonial collection campaign and analysis can be found in Section 2.6.

The Israeli Government, under the auspices of the registrar of foreign claims department in the Ministry of Finance, began collecting claims of property losses by Jews from Arab countries as early as 1949. By 1950, the registrar had collected claims totaling \$54,032,576, as detailed below:

Table 4 - Value of Jewish Property Losses in Arab Countries (including debts owed by Palestinian refugees), Recorded by Israel Registrar of Foreign Claims, 1949-1950

Country	No. of Claimants	No. of Claims	Amount (currency)	Total Amount (\$ -1950)
Libya	203	203	£Lib. 629,636,340 £Egypt 19,135 FF 1,248,620	1,065,927
Egypt	153	153	£Egypt 619,473 £Pal. 17,901 £UK 45,287 Rupees 74,357 \$US 3,025 FF 107,500	1,977,856
Iraq	1,619	50	Iraqi dinars 709,955 £UK 3,525	1,997,184
Yemen	15	15	£Pal. 15,000 Riyals 167,024 Rupees 116,217	85,512
Syria	121	121	£Syr. 2,453,090 £Pal. 100,902 Gold pounds 4,608 Ottoman pounds 34	1,410,467
Lebanon	74	74	£Leb. 289,946 £Pal. 90,417 £Syr. 2,459 £UK 1,667 \$US 253	390,981
Jordan	38	38	£Pal. 3,509,180 £Syr. 1,950	9,826,590
West Bank	1,414	1,284	£Pal. 3,094,294	36,664,023
Palestinian refugees*	111	111	£Pal. 219,015 £UK 998	616,036
Total	3,748	2,049	-	54,032,576

* Debts owed to Jews by Palestinian refugees

Source: ISA (130) 1848/hts/9, "Overall Summary of the Work of the Foreign Claims Registration Office as of December 31, 1950."

Subsequently, efforts to document property losses suffered by Jews displaced from Arab countries resumed in the aftermath of new waves of mass displacement. Notably, an effort to document property losses suffered by Egyptian Jews was initiated by the Organization of Victims of anti-Jewish Persecution in Egypt (Association des ex-Victimes des Persécutions Anti-Juives en Egypte) in the wake of the expulsion of Egyptian Jews after the Suez Crisis in 1956. Similarly, following a renewed wave of mass displacement of Jews from Arab countries after the 1967 war, the Israeli Government signed Government Decision number 34 on September 28, 1969, directing the renewed efforts by the Department for the Rights of Jews from Arab Countries, under the auspices of the Head of Legal Assistance at the Ministry of Justice, to register the claims of lost property by Jews displaced from Arab countries (this particular effort concentrated on Jewish property losses in four Arab countries: Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Yemen).

This responsibility was renewed and expanded both in March 2002, in Government Decision number 1544 relating to the "Registration of claims of Jews from Arab Countries" (expanding the registration efforts to include all Jews displaced from all relevant Arab countries and Iran), as well as on December 28, 2003 in Government Decision 1250 pertaining to the "Rights of Jews from Arab Lands". Following this renewed emphasis on the matter, testimonial forms were made available for Jews displaced from Arab countries and Iran to document their stories and register any lost property. Later on, in 2009, the responsibility for these efforts was transferred from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Senior Citizens, which was subsequently renamed the Ministry for Social Equality.⁵⁹

Methodological Principles Guiding the Report Preparation

As mentioned above, this valuation report is based on information that is decades old. In addition, the historical circumstances are such that the existing evidence often provides only an incomplete assessment of the property that used to belong to Jews and the Jewish communities in the countries under consideration. That said, the methodological principles that guide the analysis are as follows:

- 1. Transparency:** The facts, that the events in question took place so long ago, the difficulty with accessing potentially-useful sources of information, the lack of data and/or the existence of contradictory information in some cases – tend to lend themselves to the necessity to delineate what is known and what cannot be known; what sources were available and which were not, and for the report to be transparent in all of its limitations, assumptions and consequent calculations.
- 2. Professionalism and practicality:** In undertaking the project, we were guided by high professional standards at every step, including the research and valuation efforts.
- 3. Simplicity and consistency:** This project comprises eleven separate country reports. The sources of information, the cooperation of community leaders, the administrative legacies in each country – all of these presented a complex informational web that had to be standardized for the purposes of this project.
- 4. Throughout, we strove for consistency in style, structure, scope, and methodology.**

5. **Multidisciplinary:** The particular circumstances of this project demand a multidisciplinary approach that combines historical research, knowledge of the Jewish community in several countries over a lengthy timespan, familiarity with political, social, and economic trends at the time, as well as professional financial valuation expertise and strategic consulting insights that contributed to the problem-solving and analysis aspects of this project. We were guided by the need to fuse these disciplines in a coherent and direct manner.
6. **Trustworthiness:** We have referenced and documented all relevant sources of information and can fully stand behind the assumptions, methodological judgments, and final products in this project.

2.5. *Level of Evidence*

As mentioned above, this project entails an inquiry into the value of assets owned by Jews and the Jewish communities in eleven different countries, over half a century ago. As such, a comprehensive and detailed accounting of all manner of assets is virtually impossible. The testimonials cannot purport to serve as a representative sample of Jews leaving all Arab countries; they do, nonetheless, provide informative and useful data in portraying an uprooted Jewish community and its lost wealth.

In addition to the testimonials, data was derived from a variety of sources including archives, books and interviews. Research was based on the best documentation available, and this evidence was supplemented with the most appropriate and reasonable analysis that could be made on the basis of the available evidence.

Archives in numerous countries were visited and research was conducted seeking relevant files and data:

Israel: Israel State Archives (ISA), Central Zionist Archives (CZA), Israeli Ministry of Justice archives, Israeli Ministry of Social Equality archives, Yad Ben Zvi Institute, Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfutsot, World Jewish Congress, Israel Archives

Canada: Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa

France: Alliance Israelite Universelle, Paris, Archives Nationale – France, Paris Branch, Pierrefitte Branch, Centre des Archives diplomatiques de la Courneuve

Switzerland: National Archives, Bern, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva

UK: London Metropolitan Archives, National Archives of the U.K.

USA: American Jewish Committee, New York, Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) – New York, National Archives & Records, College Park, Maryland, World Jewish Archives, New York

In addition, Jewish community leaders and academic experts from numerous countries were consulted.

2.6. Methodology for the gathering, processing, and analysis of testimonials

In order to organize and standardize the information derived from over 12,000 testimonials processed, a number of procedures were followed.

The testimonial methodology entailed filling out the following information: relevant country, year of displacement, family size, city of origin, year in which the testimonial was given, information relating to lost assets and their value (organized according to asset category: real estate, land, moveable assets, and business losses) and any other relevant information gleaned from narrative accounts written in individual testimonials.

An array of factors influenced the precision of these types of testimonials, and a measure of bias is usually an inseparable aspect of such methodologies. These factors include the following:

1. In many cases, 50 years or more had passed between the events and sums in questions and the recording of testimony/lost property.
2. A lack of representation of the impact of inflationary effects and other macro-economic conditions that might have influenced the real value of property under consideration
3. The age of respondents at the time the testimony was collected (many were children at the time of displacement and only documented their testimony at a much older age).
4. A lack of proper supervision during the documentation of testimony – in some cases, dependents filled out the forms for the relevant respondents.

The following details the testimonial methodology for use in the project, starting with the gathering of testimonials through to their analysis and the adjusted calculation of their values by class group.

The testimonial claims forms for this project were received from three sources:

- Scanned copies of testimonials collected by the Israeli government and various NGOs.
- Handwritten testimonials from the Israeli Ministry of Social Equality's "And you said to your son" project.
- Handwritten testimonials from the Israeli Ministry of Justice and Israel State Archives.

The process of analyzing the testimonials comprised three stages:

- Reception and cataloguing of testimonials.
- Manual entry of all testimonials deemed relevant, i.e. containing financial information, into a country-specific Excel spreadsheet for the purpose of data calculation.
- Testimonials underwent full processing, from reception to final analysis as laid out below.



Standard Testimonial Methodology

1. The testimonial documents came in different versions and included close to 10 different form types.
2. All versions of the testimonials were useful for the purposes of this project, with two exceptions:
 - a. Some claimants were not instructed to detail their assets in a number of the categories crucial to this project, resulting in a failure to report full holdings.
 - b. Some claimants were asked to report the value of their assets in a convoluted manner, which made it impossible to extract reliable data.
3. The following chart indicates the testimonials processed and entered:

Country	Testimonials Processed from All Sources	Testimonials Entered for Calculation
Aden	2	0
Algeria	57	22
Egypt	5,563	676
Iran	223	92
Iraq	5,503	1903
Lebanon	96	0
Libya	233	129
Morocco	328	112
Syria	229	102
Yemen	85	20
Tunisia	175	76
TOTALS	12,494	3,132

Stage 1 - Reception and Cataloguing of Testimonials

All testimonials were classified as “Processed” or “Unprocessed” and catalogued into the categories detailed below.

Processed

All processed testimonials were classified and filed as follows:

Entered: Testimonials which were entered into the spreadsheet for the relevant country. These testimonials were analyzed in order to calculate the average holdings of each class group.

Not Entered: Testimonials which were not entered into the spreadsheet for the relevant country for the following reasons:

- a. Testimonials included information on movable assets alone
- b. Duplicate versions of testimonial forms already processed
- c. Testimonials included communal property alone and as a result, were irrelevant to the calculation of individual holdings but were used elsewhere to calculate communal losses
- d. Testimonials that were not relevant to this project were categorized as “NR”. Testimonials were entered into this category if they met one or more of the following criteria:
 - The form was empty or illegible
 - The form did not include information regarding assets in the Movables, Business or Real Estate categories
 - There was no currency type was listed (for example: “Home worth 1,500”)
 - The information contained in the form did not include monetary values (e.g., “We were quite wealthy”)
 - The phrasing of the form itself did not allow for the extraction of reliable data (e.g., “Were it in Israel today, what would be the value in shekels of the property left behind?”)

Stage 2 – Entering Testimonial Data

Testimonials were entered into a country-specific Excel spreadsheet created in tandem with the structure of the testimonial forms and the needs of the project, according to the following parameters:

- a. Personal Information
- a. Real Estate
- b. Business
- c. Movables
- d. Rural Lan

Claimants were instructed to list the value of their assets in the year in which the assets were abandoned. Therefore, as a rule, values were entered into the spreadsheet according to the currency used in the testimonial and the value of that currency in the year in which the claimant left their country of origin.

Exceptional to this are any testimonials for which the analyst was able to conclude that the values were not listed in regard to the year in which the claimant left their country of origin. This was the case in the following circumstances:

- a. The form itself instructed claimants to report values for a particular year, regardless of when they left their country of origin (for example: one version of the forms instructed all claimants to list the value of their assets as of 1949).
- b. The claimant listed values in a currency which was not in circulation at the time in which they left their country of origin (for example: a testimonial which reports values in NIS or EUR, despite the fact that the claimant left their country of origin in 1952).
- c. The claimant explicitly wrote that the values were reported in regard to a different year.
- d. In the analyst's judgement, it is not reasonable for the values listed to reflect the year in which the claimant was displaced.
- e. Any other circumstance in which the analyst concluded that a year other than the year of displacement should be used.

Stage 3 – Analysis of Testimonial Data

To effectively and efficiently analyze the testimonial data, the following procedures were followed:

Historical exchange rates for the testimonial currencies were identified in the following sources:

- a. IMF Tables: "Exchange Rates Selected Indicators." IMF data. Accessed August 28, 2024. <https://data.imf.org/regular.aspx?key=61545850>
- b. IFS – IMF 1950: International Financial Statistics: International Financial Statistics, December 1950. Washington, D.C: International Monetary Fund, 1950, p. 34 & 54
- c. Pacific Exchange Rates: Antweiler, Werner. "Foreign Currency Units per 1 U.S Dollar, 1948-2015." PACIFIC Exchange Rate Service, 2016. <https://web.archive.org/web/20150512095429/http://fx.sauder.ubc.ca/etc/USDpages.pdf>.

It should be noted that the world exchange rate mechanism from 1944 until 1973 was operated under the auspices of the Bretton Woods agreement. Under this agreement, exchange rates were determined by pegging the countries' rates to the gold standard and movements between major currencies were comparatively rare. Changes had to be formally implemented only after an application to the IMF/World Bank. There were no constant hourly or daily changes as there are today – indeed rates could remain unchanged for years on end.

Because different testimonials were submitted at different times, individuals left their country of origin at different times, and values were listed using different currencies, a “base year” was identified and defined as the year in which the testimonial loss values are stated. A “valuation start year” was also identified, based on the circumstances governing each country. In each asset category, the relevant valuation start year is used as a benchmark. Testimonial data for each country was then converted to the valuation start year in two steps.

- a. Base year values for each loss category in the testimonial files were converted from the testimonial currency to USD in the base year using the exchange rate data (for example, real estate in Syria with a base year value of 20,000 SL in 1953 was converted to a value of 9,132 USD in 1953).
- b. The base year value in USD was then converted to the country’s “valuation start year” in USD using the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Inflation Calculator (Inflation Calculator | Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis (minneapolisfed.org)) (for example, real estate in Syria with a converted value of 9,132 USD in 1953 was converted to a value of 7,617 USD in 1947, as this was the base year for valuation for Syria).

It should be noted that testimonials given in NIS were not used due to the assumed difficulty in recalling and converting values in these cases which would call into question their reliability.

Relevant population data and socioeconomic breakdowns of classes for each country were determined through primary and secondary research materials. Testimonial data was then divided into social classes based on the percent of population per socioeconomic breakdown, using the available data from relevant research materials. Social classes were consolidated into three groups:

- d. Wealthy and Upper Middle
- e. Middle
- f. Lower Middle and Poor

The summary of each country-specific testimonial data yielded a series of values per socioeconomic class. The median of the data in each social class was then calculated and multiplied by the number of households per class to determine the total asset value per class.

Due to the small number of testimonials in several of the categories, the following adjustments were made:

- a. The median calculation for each group includes the highest value of the class immediately below. For example: the range for the wealthy and upper middle class begins at the highest value of the middle class and extends to the highest value in the wealthy and upper-middle class group, thus creating a continuous range for calculations
- b. In cases where there were less than 10 testimonials in total in a given loss category, the median of all of the data in the category was used rather than dividing the data into the three classes above. The median was multiplied by the total number of households to arrive at a total loss value for the category.

2.7. Methodology for present day valuation

The above steps are meant to document Jewish refugees' losses, which include the assets' market value at the relevant benchmark year (or a substitute value based on the best evidence available), plus interest. The final figures should reflect the actualized, present-day valuation of all assets under consideration, reflected in 2024 US dollars (USDs).

Due to the high number of countries under consideration, a preference emerged for a single standard with which to measure all principal amounts. In addition, the fact that the testimonial data had been converted into USDs for base year values and valuation start year values supports the decision to rely on a rate of interest measured in USDs. The choices available are therefore between relying on either nominal or real inflation rates, the US consumer price index inflation rate, or some other relatively risk-free rate, in order to actualize the valuation principles in the most substantive and appropriate manner possible. Judgement was that the latter inflation rates are too reliant on particular economic trends in the United States and are not the best determinants of an interest rate that fully actualizes the value of the assets under consideration. And while there is no internationally recognized, absolutely risk-free rate, it was decided to use the 10-year US Treasury Yield Rate.

Furthermore, it was resolved that a compound interest formula is the most appropriate formula for calculating actualized value plus interest, instead of simple interest, in order to show the present market value of the assets under consideration in addition to compounded interest rates on those assets. $FV = PV (1+i/n)^n t$. This formula takes into account both inflationary and interest on value effects and thus reflects the most substantial actualized value of the original assets. The compound interest formula was applied on a yearly compounding basis, ending on December 31, 2024.

2.8. Methodology for the remaining 7 country reports

Four reports have been published under this project scope, finding **\$166,239,520,930** of lost assets across Egypt, Syria, Iran and Iraq. This project also encompasses seven additional countries:

- Aden
- Algeria
- Lebanon
- Libya
- Morocco
- Tunisia
- Yemen

However, the documentation available for review of these seven countries was not on par with the data collected for the first four. Despite a thorough review of historical sources, discussions with subject-matter experts, and community leaders, as described above, the collection of available testimonial data was insufficient to be relied upon to conclude on the financial value of the Jews' lost assets. Therefore, to estimate financial losses, an updated valuation methodology was used. We note that the resulting conclusions are provided for illustrative purposes only and should not be considered as exact figures.

Due to the lack of reliable testimonial and historical data for the seven remaining reports, it was determined that the analysis for Egypt, Syria, and Iraq would be used for illustrative purposes. Iran was left out of this analysis due to its valuation start year being significantly different than the other three countries (1979). Iran also had very different circumstances in comparison to the other countries reviewed at the time. It was reasoned that the Jewish population's circumstances across the ten countries were similar in many ways, and therefore the lost assets found, at 1948 values, in the first three countries was used to determine the value of lost property per person, as shown in the table below.

Table 5 - Range of Lost Assets for Egypt, Iraq, & Syria (\$, 1948)

Range of Lost Assets for Egypt, Iraq, & Syria (\$, 1948)			
	Egypt	Iraq	Syria ⁶⁰
Total Value (\$, 1948)	1,147,100,811	656,611,052	215,562,196
Population ⁶¹	75,000	135,000	30,000
(\$) Value per person	15,295	4,864	7,185

This determined the range of lost assets across Arab countries: Jews lost an estimated **\$4,864** to **\$15,295** per person. This range was then applied to the population of each remaining country and a mid-point was calculated, per the table below.

⁶⁰ Syria's valuation start year is 1947, therefore it was decided to convert Syria's total assets as of 1947 to 1948 values to properly calculate a range across the three countries (Egypt, Iraq, and Syria). The reported total assets for Syria as of 1947 (\$ 200,167,458) were converted to the 1948 USD value (\$ 215,562,196) using the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis' Inflation Calculator (<https://www.minneapolisfed.org/about-us/monetary-policy/inflation-calculator>).

⁶¹ All population figures are based on Roumani population chart, for the year 1948.

Table 6 - Range of Lost Assets for Remaining Seven Countries (\$, 1948)

Range of Lost Assets for Seven Countries (\$, 1948)							
	Aden	Algeria	Lebanon ⁶²	Libya	Tunisia	Yemen	Morocco ⁶³
Jewish Population	8,000	140,000	6,000	38,000	105,000	55,000	265,000
Estimated - Low Range	38,910,285	680,929,980	29,182,713	184,823,852	510,697,485	267,508,206	30,467,470
Estimated - High Range	122,357,420	2,141,254,847	91,768,065	581,197,744	1,605,941,135	841,207,261	336,863,513
Estimated - Mid Point	80,633,852	1,411,092,414	60,475,389	383,010,798	1,058,319,310	554,357,734	183,665,491

We note that though this methodology is intended for informative and illustrative purposes only, it is still lacking in that it is based on values found in other countries and is not adjusted to reflect the exact situation of each jurisdiction. Similar to other attempts to value lost assets following wars and other tragedies,⁶⁴ this project was predicated on the availability of contemporaneous evidence, historical sources, and testimonial data. The inability to rely on the latter opens the door for inaccuracy, overstatement, and falls below the standard set for this project. Additionally, this method does not consider country-specific considerations such as GDP, the Jews' socio-economic status and their relative wealth as compared to non-Jews, and their ability to take their assets with them when leaving the countries. It also does not reflect macro-economic conditions that might have impacted the value of the property in question.

In the absence of the "best evidence" to reach accurate and verifiable country-specific values, other valuation exercises have applied various levels of discount factors to manage the risk of overstatement created by the methodologies' shortcomings. For example, the United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC) notes:

"For instance, in the case of estimated cost of repair work not yet completed, in the absence of documents such as a quotation or description of damage, a 50 per cent discount factor was applied to the amount claimed. On the other hand, when claimants filed optional documents that had not been required upfront but which could serve to substantiate the claim, this would result in an add back to the adjusted value. The total of all deductions and add backs would result in an assessment score expressed as a percentage and applied to the adjusted value. The assessment score could not be higher than 100 per cent or lower than 0 per cent."⁶⁵

⁶² All population figures are based on Roumani population chart, for the year 1948. However, we note Lebanon's population is based on estimates for 1958, as the base year valuation date for the country is 1967, and 1958 is the last population estimate available through Roumani that predates 1967.

⁶³ As Morocco had no state-directed confiscation of Jewish-owned assets, and many Jews were able to divest themselves of their assets and/or bring them out of the country, it was deemed inappropriate to try and project wholesale losses of assets. Therefore, a range based on communal assets of the first three reports was used for Morocco instead.

⁶⁴ As outlined in IOM's "Property Restitution and Compensation: Practices and Experiences of Claims Programmes" (2008) publication.

⁶⁵ 2008. "Property Restitution and Compensation: Practices and Experiences of Claims Programmes." International Organization for Migration.

To accommodate the issues listed above, it was determined that a discount factor should be applied to the range of values for each of the seven countries. A discount factor of 50% was determined based on precedent discounts and the following:

- To migrate for the risk of overstatement if any evidence fell sort of standards
- To migrate risks due to limited testimonial data
- To account for some countries, such as Morocco, where the Jewish population was able to divest their assets and/or bring them out of the country, limiting total property losses
- To account for other countries, such as Yemen, where the population was mostly rural and poor, and there was a lack of public synagogues
- To account for other countries, such as Lebanon, where some of the Jewish population was able to leave and liquidate their assets in a relatively orderly fashion prior to the outbreak of the civil war in 1975
- To account for other countries, such as Algeria, where some of the Jewish population received compensation from the French government

The discount factor of 50% was applied across the range of values for each of the seven countries, as shown in the table below. This led to a mid-point of **\$1,865,777,494** across all seven countries.

Table 7 - Range of Lost Assets for Remaining Seven Countries after discount (\$, 1948)

	Aden	Algeria	Lebanon	Libya	Tunisia	Yemen	Morocco ⁶⁶
Discount	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Estimated – Mid-Point (with Discount)	40,316,926	705,546,207	30,237,695	191,505,399	529,159,655	277,178,867	91,832,746

Finally, using the previously discussed present valuation methodology, each of the seven countries estimated mid-point with discount were brought forward to a present-day value as of December 31, 2024. This led to a total present value of **\$96,556,730,734** across all seven countries. See the tables below:

⁶⁶ It is noted that Morocco's range is based on communal assets only, as many Moroccan Jews were able to divest themselves of their assets and/or bring them out of the country, therefore communal assets were most likely the largest loss category.

Table 8 – Range of lost assets & estimated present values for remaining Seven Countries (\$, 1948)

	Estimated Mid-Point with 50% Discount (\$, 1948)	Estimated Present Value (\$, 2024) ⁶⁷
Aden	40,316,926	2,102,856,725
Algeria	705,546,207	36,799,992,688
Lebanon ⁶⁸	30,237,695	818,350,236
Libya	191,505,399	9,988,569,444
Morocco ⁶⁹	91,832,746	4,789,827,140
Tunisia	529,159,655	27,599,994,516
Yemen	277,178,867	14,457,139,985
Total of Remaining Country Reports	1,865,777,495	96,556,730,734

Range of Lost Assets for Seven Countries (\$, 1948)						
	Aden	Algeria	Lebanon ⁷⁰	Libya	Tunisia	Yemen
Population	8,000	140,000	6,000	38,000	105,000	55,000
Estimated - Low Range	38,910,285	680,929,980	29,182,713	184,823,852	510,697,485	267,508,206
Estimated - High Range	122,357,420	2,141,254,847	91,768,065	581,197,744	1,605,941,135	841,207,261
Estimated - Mid-Point	80,633,852	1,411,092,414	60,475,389	383,010,798	1,058,319,310	554,357,734
Discount	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Estimated - Mid-Point (with Discount)	40,316,926	705,546,207	30,237,695	191,505,399	529,159,655	277,178,867
Estimated Present Value (\$, 2024) ⁷²	2,102,856,725	36,799,992,688	818,350,236	9,988,569,444	27,599,994,516	14,457,139,985
						4,789,827,140

67 Rates from 2024 to 1954 are from "Interest Rates: Long-Term Government Bond Yields: 10-Year." Federal Reserve Economic Data. 2024 rate represents average interest rate through December 31, 2024 based on available data. Retrieved from <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/graph/?id=IRLT01USQ156N>; Rates from 1954 to 1948 are from "An Update of Data shown in Chapter 26 of Market Volatility." R. Shiller, Princeton 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.econ.yale.edu/~shiller/data.htm>. R. Shiller notes that pre-1953 rates are government bond yields from Sidney Homer A History of Interest Rates

68 All population figures are based on Roumani population chart, for the year 1948. However, we note Lebanon's population is based on estimates for 1958, as the base year valuation date for the country is 1967, and 1958 is the last population estimate available through Roumani that predates 1967. We also note that the estimated present value is based on the start year of 1967 for Lebanon, while all other countries are based on 1948

69 It is noted that Morocco's range is based on communal assets only, as many Moroccan Jews were able to divest themselves of their assets and/or bring them out of the country, therefore communal assets were most likely the largest loss category.

70 We note Lebanon's population is based on estimates for 1958, as the base year valuation date for the country is 1967, and 1958 is the last population estimate available through Roumani that predates 1967. We also note that the estimated present value is based on the start year of 1967 for Lebanon, while all other countries are based on 1948.

71 As Morocco had no state-directed confiscation of Jewish-owned assets, and many Jews were able to divest themselves of their assets and/or bring them out of the country, it was deemed inappropriate to try and project wholesale losses of assets. Therefore, a range based on communal assets of the first four reports was used for Morocco instead.

72 Rates from 2024 to 1954 are from "Interest Rates: Long-Term Government Bond Yields: 10-Year." Federal Reserve Economic Data. 2024 rate represents average interest rate through December 31, 2024 based on available data. Retrieved from <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/graph/?id=IRLT01USQ156N>; Rates from 1954 to 1948 are from "An Update of Data shown in Chapter 26 of Market Volatility." R. Shiller, Princeton 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.econ.yale.edu/~shiller/data.htm>. R. Shiller notes that pre-1953 rates are government bond yields from Sidney Homer A History of Interest Rates.

Additional historical context was provided across all loss types under review for each of the seven countries, however additional valuation details were not provided in these sections.

Grand Summary Chart

Lost Assets Across All Countries (\$)		
Country	Base Year Value (\$, 1948) ¹	Estimated Present Value (\$, 2024)
Egypt	1,147,100,811	59,816,315,234
Iran ²	5,879,126,747	61,491,251,179
Iraq	656,611,052	34,239,408,861
Syria ³	200,167,458	10,692,545,656
Subtotal of Comprehensive Reports	7,883,006,068	166,239,520,930
Aden	40,316,926	2,102,856,725
Algeria	705,546,207	36,799,992,688
Lebanon ⁴	30,237,695	818,350,236
Libya	191,505,399	9,988,569,444
Morocco	91,832,746	4,789,827,140
Tunisia	529,159,655	27,599,994,516
Yemen	277,178,867	14,457,139,985
Subtotal of Remaining Country Reports	1,865,777,495	96,556,730,734
GRAND TOTAL	9,748,783,563	262,796,251,664

¹ All country base years are for 1948, except for Iran (1979), Syria (1947), and Lebanon (1967). Note for the remaining seven countries (Aden, Algeria, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, and Yemen) the value is based on an estimated mid-point with discount, based on updated methodology discussed in detail within chapter 2.

² Note Iran's Base Year is 1979.

³ Note Syria's Base Year is 1947.

⁴ Note Lebanon's Base Year is 1967.

Chapter 3

Aden Historical Section

Origins of the community

While Jewish communities in Yemen boast a history spanning over two thousand years, the Jewish community in the British Crown Colony of Aden represents a relatively recent development, possibly the youngest Jewish community in the world. A vibrant Jewish presence existed in Aden already during the *Genizah* period (11th-13th centuries). However, as Aden's prominence as a commercial hub waned, particularly from the 16th century onward, its Jewish community diminished both in size and importance. By 1839, when the British conquered Aden, they described the area as a "little village," with a dwindled population of some 600 inhabitants: 300 Arabs, 250 Jews, and 50 Hindu merchants⁷³.

Most of the inhabitants of the British Crown Colony of Aden, including the Jewish population, were relatively new arrivals, as the majority did not reside there before the British occupation. The colony became a haven for refugees and immigrants who flocked to Aden from various parts of the world. They arrived in continuous streams, drawn by the commercial and economic opportunities that British rule had created. Aden's strategic location along the sea routes connecting Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia transformed it into a bustling city. Jewish immigrants from Yemen and elsewhere significantly expanded the small native Jewish community⁷⁴.

Immediately after their occupation of Aden, the British authorities granted extensive civil rights to all inhabitants, including Jews, Muslims, and other religious communities, ensuring equal legal standing for all. This allowed the Jewish community to engage in any legal profession and to travel freely as British subjects with British passports. This marked a significant historical shift in the social and civil status of the Jews. For the first time since the rise of Muhammad, a Jewish community in the Arabian Peninsula could live without the stigma of *dhimmi* status and its associated social limitations, which had long burdened the Jewish communities in Yemen⁷⁵.

73 Ahroni, Reuben. *The Jews of the British Crown Colony of Aden: History, culture, and ethnic relations* (Brill, 1994), p. 1; Kour, Z. H. *The history of Aden 1839-72*. Frank Cass, 2005; Goldsmith, Dani. *Portrait of the Jewish community of Aden, 1839-1967*. Tel Aviv, 1995.

74 Ahroni, 1994, p. 1; Bujra, A. S. Urban elites and colonialism: The nationalist elites of Aden and South Arabia. *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1970, pp. 189-211.

75 Ahroni, 1994, p. 2.

+British rule

Figure 1 - Portrait of a Jewish man in Aden. Photographer unknown, mid 1870s



Source: The Qatar Digital Library

The rapid economic transformation in Aden did not immediately bring relief to the Jewish community. The influx of immigrants from various parts of the British Empire, particularly from India, introduced the new British colony to skilled artisans—smiths, masons, carpenters, and craftsmen—who were far more advanced than the local Jews and better equipped to meet the demands of the rapidly modernizing settlement. Most Jews in Aden were still in a transitional phase, often arriving as poverty-stricken refugees from Yemen. It was only with the emergence of small businesses at the beginning of the 20th century that the Jews were able to gradually integrate into the new economic environment and significantly improve their circumstances⁷⁶.

Most of the Arabs in the British colony of Aden originated from Yemen, area where Jews had lived under strict dhimmi regulations. The Muslims in Aden viewed the civil rights granted to Jews as a disruption to the social order that had remained largely unchanged since the advent of Islam. As a result, despite their formal recognition of equality before the law, the Jews of Aden suffered from the deep-seated biases held

⁷⁶ Ahroni, 1994, pp. 45-46; Waldman, Menahem. The Jews of Aden at the beginning of the century according to documents from the archives of Dr. Jacques Faitlovitch. *Pe'amim: Studies in Oriental Jewry* 64 (1995), pp. 120-125.

by the Muslim population, particularly among Arabs and Somalis⁷⁷.

A senior British official in Aden observed that "[t]he Arabs consider that the Jews are their social inferiors and provided they keep their place—or what the Arabs consider to be their place—there is no trouble. However, as soon as the Jews tended to forget that they were Jews and began to assert themselves as men, then there was always a likelihood of serious trouble."⁷⁸

Despite placing their hopes in the protection offered by the British flag, the Jews of Aden were acutely aware of their vulnerable position as a small minority within a Muslim majority. That same British official noted that underlying tensions were ever-present among the various ethnic groups in Aden—Arabs, Somalis, Hindus, and Jews—and that "it only required a minor incident at the wrong time to cause really serious trouble, not within a matter of days, but almost within minutes."⁷⁹

Although Jews in Aden occasionally faced hostility from Muslims, such incidents rarely escalated beyond verbal insults or stone-throwing by Muslim children. The Jewish community accepted these degrading behaviors with a certain degree of tranquility, viewing them as inevitable aspects of life in exile⁸⁰.

The first recorded instance of large-scale Muslim violence against the Jews of Aden occurred on August 24, 1872. The riots were sparked by allegations that a Jew had blasphemed Muhammad, leading to an attack on the Jewish community by a mob of several thousand Arabs and Somalis. For three days, according to reports, "no Jew dared move out of his house." Although the police eventually dispersed the mob, the court, in an effort to appease the Muslim population, convicted the accused Jew of wounding religious sentiments. He was sentenced to a year in prison and fined fifty pounds⁸¹.

Additional anti-Jewish riots were sparked in 1931 by a quarrel over a Jewish girl's determination to marry a Muslim. During these riots, several Jews were killed, and part of the Jewish quarter was razed. The British authorities maintained only a small force of British soldiers in Aden, relying heavily on local Muslim forces to establish law and order. This reliance allowed deep-seated interracial hostility to escalate minor incidents into major disturbances⁸².

By far the worst anti-Jewish riots in this period happened in May 1932 and were sparked by Muslim claims that Jews had defiled a mosque. The custodians of a mosque adjacent to a Jewish house claimed to have found human excrement wrapped in newspaper within the mosque. They accused the residents of the neighboring Jewish house, alleging that the bundle of excrement had been deliberately thrown into the mosque from the roof of that house⁸³.

77 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 88-89; Klein-Franke, Aviva. The Jewish community in Aden in the 19th Century. *Pe'amim: Studies in Oriental Jewry* 10 (1981), pp. 36-60.

78 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 88-89.

79 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 88-89.

80 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 89-90.

81 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 89-90.

82 Ahroni, 1994, p. 90.

83 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 93-97.

The news of the mosque's defilement spread rapidly throughout the city and its environs, and by evening, a Muslim mob had descended upon the Jewish quarter. Although the police were alerted, they arrived too late, only after property had been looted and several Jews had been wounded. The police eventually dispersed the mob and restored peace for the night⁸⁴.

However, violence flared up again the following day, triggered by another Muslim claim that a bottle of beer had been found in the same mosque—an offense they also attributed to the Jews. This led to another mob attack on the Jewish quarter, with Jewish property and passersby targeted once more⁸⁵.

An interesting feature of these riots was the vigorous defense mounted by the Jews, who defended themselves and their homes by showering stones and empty bottles on the rioters attempting to invade the Jewish quarter. The Jewish self-defense undoubtedly surprised many in the Arab world. The Arab newspaper from Haifa, *al-Nafir*, noted that "[t]he Jews of Yemen used to be humble and weak, but the cunning Zionist propaganda turned them into devils. They rose up against their lords the Arabs in Aden, for which they have received an adequate lesson."⁸⁶

The police force, composed almost entirely of Muslims, was harshly criticized for its reluctance to take firm action against fellow Muslims. In an article published in the British newspaper *Jewish Chronicle*, a member of the local Jewish community expressed the community's frustration with the police's conduct, stating: "The aggressors are Muslims, and the police are the same, while the victims are the Jews."⁸⁷

As a result of the authorities' failure to effectively address the riots, the Muslim community grew increasingly emboldened, and instances of violence became a daily occurrence. The Jews of Aden were deeply concerned that hostilities might recur and no longer enjoyed the freedom of movement they had previously taken for granted. In a letter to the Chief Commissioner of Aden from October 1932, the Jewish community complained that during the height of Yom Kippur services, the Farhi synagogue was bombarded with stones thrown by Muslim children who had "become alarmingly defiant and indifferent to public peace."⁸⁸

The 1947 Aden riots

At its peak in 1947, the Jewish community of Aden numbered approximately 8,550 out of a total civil population of 78,400. It was not until the late 1930s that the Arabs of Aden began to exhibit significant nationalistic and pan-Islamic sentiments. As the 1940s dawned, visits by Palestinian Arabs and expressions of anti-Jewish sentiment became increasingly common. Egyptian newspapers and magazines circulated more widely, and radios became more prevalent, especially in cafés, where loudspeakers often broadcast Cairo's inflammatory transmissions. This influx of media helped set

84 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 93-97.

85 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 93-97.

86 Ahroni, 1994, p. 96.

87 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 93-97.

88 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 97-98.

the stage for the anti-Jewish massacre of December 1947⁸⁹.

The United Nations' resolution on November 29, 1947, to establish a Jewish state in Palestine was a source of profound anger for the Arabs. On December 2, 1947, the Arabs in Aden, like their brethren elsewhere, declared a three-day solidarity strike to protest the UN resolution. This strike quickly escalated into violence⁹⁰.

Map 2 - Former Jewish Communities in Aden and Yemen before 1948



Source: Gilbert, Maps

According to official government reports, 82 Jews were killed in these riots (including six unidentified individuals presumed to be Jewish), and 76 were wounded. The destruction of property was extensive: 106 of the 170 Jewish-owned shops were completely looted, and 8 were partially looted. Both Jewish schools, 2 synagogues and 30 houses were burned, and almost all private cars owned by Jews were destroyed by fire. In nearby Shaykh Uthman, 12 Jewish houses were burned and looted, 61 houses were damaged and looted, 5 shops were burned and looted, and a Jewish-owned distillery in the desert was looted and burned⁹¹.

⁸⁹ Ahroni, 1994, pp. 209-212; Damati, Nissim, and Gamlieli, Nissim Binyamin. The diary of the pogroms in Aden (1947). *Pe'amim: Studies in Oriental Jewry* 122-123 (2010), pp. 155-176; Goldsmith, Dani. *The riots against Aden Jewry*. Aden Jewish Association, 2000.

⁹⁰ Ahroni, 1994, pp. 209-212.

⁹¹ Ahroni, 1994, pp. 209-212; Saadoun, Haim. The 'Palestinian component' in violent outbreaks between Jews and Muslims in Islamic countries. *Pe'amim: Studies in Oriental Jewry* 63 (1995), pp. 86-131.

Figure 2 - Depiction of the Aden Riots and the Destruction of Jewish Property (Aden, 1947)



Source: The Times of Israel - <https://www.timesofisrael.com/murder-looting-burning-remembering-the-aden-riots-of-1947/> - (Photos from this collection by Avraham Hermes and Rahamim Ben Zur; All images courtesy of Dani Goldsmith and Facebook Aden Jewish Heritage Museum)

The violent outbreak began on December 2, when an agitated mob carrying a banner inscribed with "Long Live Palestine" marched towards the two Jewish schools. Upon reaching the area, the mob became unruly, burning Jewish-owned cars, stoning Jewish homes, and setting fire to the two Jewish schools later that evening. The rioters thwarted all efforts by the fire brigades to extinguish the flames. Later that night, a squadron of soldiers recruited from indigenous tribal populations was dispatched to the area. Although the mob eventually dispersed, leaving behind the smoldering remains of Jewish schools, cars, and shops, the situation remained tense through the night⁹².

However, the violence resumed early on the morning of December 3, as Arab mobs attacked the Jewish quarter, setting fire to homes on the outskirts of the neighborhood. Despite the declaration of a state of emergency and a curfew in the afternoon hours, the British authorities struggled to enforce order due to the presence of looters, including women and children⁹³.

As the Muslim soldiers took charge, Arab hooligans intensified their attacks, setting fire to Jewish homes with impunity. They placed burning rugs at the doors of Jewish buildings right in front of the soldiers, who did nothing to stop them. Jews attempting to save their homes were shot at by the soldiers, leaving the Arab mobs free to continue their arson and looting⁹⁴.

Building after building was burned, and those who tried to escape were met with extreme cruelty. Doors that couldn't be opened by rifle fire were forced open by the armored cars of the military, and many Jewish homes were riddled with bullets. People fleeing their homes were shot at by the soldiers as they sought refuge elsewhere. Arab

92 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 212-219.

93 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 212-219.

94 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 212-219.

mobs broke into numerous Jewish homes, stabbing many of the occupants who were unable to escape earlier⁹⁵.

Figure 3 - An Adeni Jew standing in front of his burned down home (Aden, 1947)



Source: The Times of Israel - <https://www.timesofisrael.com/murder-looting-burning-remembering-the-aden-riots-of-1947/> (Photos from this collection by Avraham Hermes and Rahamim Ben Zur; All images courtesy of Dani Goldsmith and Facebook Aden Jewish Heritage Museum)

On December 4, two British naval vessels arrived at the port of Aden, bringing a force of around one hundred men. They were later reinforced by more British soldiers, leading to the gradual withdrawal of the Muslim soldiers. Barbed wire barricades were set up around the Jewish quarter, and the situation was eventually brought under control, bringing an end to the onslaught against the Jews⁹⁶.

Some Muslims attempted to save Jews and protect their property. However, there was a prevailing sentiment among Arabs that the Jews of Aden, through their presumed unwavering support for Zionism, had aligned themselves with the enemies of the Arab world and therefore deserved punishment. The debate among Arabs centered not on whether the Jews should be retaliated against, but on the appropriate methods of doing so⁹⁷.

An editorial from the newspaper *Saut al-Yaman* noted that some Arabs justified the anti-Jewish riots, arguing that the Jews, in their arrogance, had shown disdain for the Arab cause, seemingly forgetting that their livelihood depended on the Arab community. If the Jews of Aden were truly native to the region, as they claimed, wrote the editorial, they would have done the same or, at the very least, maintained a neutral stance. Instead, the Jews of Aden "mocked us, threw bottles at us, and instilled contempt for our feelings in their women and children."⁹⁸

95 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 212-219.

96 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 212-219.

97 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 219-224.

98 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 219-224.

The Jewish exodus

In December 1948, operation "On Wings of Eagles" commenced with an aircraft transporting fifty orphans from Aden to Israel. By March 1949, a total of 55 flights had carried approximately 5,400 refugees from Aden to Israel. The large American aircrafts used for the airlift were modified to accommodate 125 to 145 passengers per flight instead of the usual 56. The nonstop, 1,760-mile journey from Aden to Lydda Airport took eight hours⁹⁹.

Facing economic devastation, the destruction of most of their homes, bleak prospects for recovery, and a loss of confidence in British protection, the majority of Aden's Jewish population took advantage of the airlift operation to leave for Israel. By November 1949, the Jewish community had dwindled from its 1947 peak of 8,000 to just 1,300 people, and by March 1950, only 850 remained. Many of those who stayed were merchants who had already sent their families to Israel and were awaiting the liquidation of their business affairs¹⁰⁰.

With the mass departure of most members of the Jewish community in Aden, only a small remnant remained after 1950, living in a severely diminished quarter still bearing the scars of devastation and destruction from the 1947 riots. The once thriving and cohesive Jewish quarter was now largely occupied by non-Jews who had purchased or leased the homes of those who had emigrated to Israel¹⁰¹.

From the beginning of the 1960s, amidst the deluge of propaganda broadcast by the radios of Cairo and Sana'a, recurring strikes by Arab laborers, anti-British violence, and the turbulent political climate in the Middle East, a growing sense of insecurity and unease spread among Aden's minorities, particularly the Jews. The responsibility of protecting the Jewish community increasingly weighed on the local authorities. The British found themselves struggling to manage the rising tide of Arab nationalism, and the presence of the Jews in Aden became increasingly viewed as a burden¹⁰².

Given the precarious situation, the British government repeatedly advised the Jewish community to avoid making any unnecessary demands. London also warned that, in light of the growing public hostility towards Israel among local Arabs and the recent boycott of Jewish goods, the Jews of Aden would fare better by keeping a low profile¹⁰³.

In the days leading up to the Six-Day War in June 1967, approximately 300 Jews left Aden for Israel and England. The Arab Israeli War of 1967 further inflamed anti-British sentiment in Aden, leading to increased lawlessness and sabotage. The remaining Jews faced an extremely hostile environment, with their lives in imminent danger. On June 19, 1967, the British authorities imposed a curfew in Aden and evacuated the remaining Jews to the airport, from where they were flown to Israel and England, leaving no trace of the once-vibrant Jewish community¹⁰⁴.

99 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 229-234.

100 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 229-234.

101 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 234-244.

102 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 234-244.

103 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 234-244.

104 Ahroni, 1994, pp. 234-244.

Chapter 4

Aden Economic Section

Section 1 – Methodological Benchmarks

Based on the information presented above regarding the makeup of the Jewish community in Aden in 1948, the following dates and figures will serve as a methodological benchmark for different points of analysis regarding the breakdown of distinct categories of Jewish assets:

Valuation Start Year:

The year 1948 represents a reasonable benchmark regarding the beginning of the Jewish community's gradual departure from Aden, as well as a reasonable date from which to assess property values, as it predates the downward price- spiral associated with larger waves of Jewish departure in the years following.

Size of the Jewish community:

For the purposes of this report, a total Jewish Adeni population of 8,000¹⁰⁵ Jews, as supported by Roumani, will be used to value Jewish property.

Distribution of Jewish population:

Based on the information presented below in detail, the Adeni Jewish population was calculated to be 100% urban.

The distinction between rural and urban communities allows one to draw a simple distinction between vastly different types of communities (in terms of geography, literacy rates and type of education and employment, average size and value of land and property etc.)

Urban areas are widely recognized as larger metropolitan centers and their immediate environs/hinterlands, while rural communities are characterized by their distance from urban centers, their relatively smaller numbers, and an agriculture-centric way of life.

Jewish demographics:

As mentioned in detail below, the average size of a Jewish family being utilized for the relevant period covered, is 5.

Section 2 – Economic Indicators

The following section is meant to describe the types of activities and occupations that characterized Jewish economic life in Aden in the time-period under consideration. The data and conclusions from this section will serve as a point of departure for further analyses regarding the Jewish community's economic strength in Aden.

The Development of Aden's Economy

The principal wealth of Aden, a colony devoid of agriculture, forests, and mineral wealth, was derived from its port and entrepôt trade, which was its lifeblood. Aden was a center for the fueling of ships, the handling of cargo, and the building and repair of vessels...Skilled workers, engineers, and technicians came from various parts of the British Empire. Thus, according to the November 1842 census, the population of Aden reached 16,587, including a wide diversity of ethnic groups: Arabs, Jews, Somalis, Baniyans, Parsis, Bohras, Europeans, and others. The number of Jews quadrupled, from around 250 to 1,100. In the course of a period of only a few years, Aden prospered and became one of the greatest commercial ports in the world.¹⁰⁶

As mentioned earlier, the great strategic value of Aden's location was translated by the British into great commercial success. The British, realizing the enormous potential of Aden's natural port and crucial location, invested in moving and developing the harbor as well as the surrounding area in order to fortify their position and stabilize the area and its population.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, the opening of the Suze Canal in 1869, as well as the city's "commitment to *laissez faire* free enterprise, stimulated the flow of new immigrants" to Aden, including Jews from a variety of different countries.¹⁰⁸

Jewish Participation in Aden's Economy

Historically, the Jewish community of Aden practiced similar trades to Jews belonging to the Jewish community in Yemen; many were artisans who worked with precious and non-precious metals. In addition, the Adeni community was also engaged in the operating of horse-drawn carriages for the purposes of waste removal.¹⁰⁹ However, with the arrival of the British, in 1839, the economic position of the Jews began to change. Initially, the economic development and rapid immigration that arrived in Aden on the heels of British economic activity made many traditional Jewish occupations obsolete. Later, however, many Jews were able to take advantage of new opportunities. By 1910, for example, a Jewish teacher affiliated with the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* in Aden noted that he "found a community of some four thousand Jews, several of whom engaged in commerce and export and import of animal hides, ivory, coffee, colonial products, and textiles. Others monopolized the ostrich feather industry, making fur

106 Ahroni, pgs. 33, 34

107 Ibid., pgs. 34-36

108 Ibid. pg. 38

109 Tobi, pg. 57

collars and selling them on board the ships which passed through Aden.”¹¹⁰

Tobi, on the other hand, stresses the immediate positive transformation in the condition of the Jewish community’s economic prospects following the arrival of the British:

From the day the British conquered Aden, they began to pave the existing roads and build new ones among the houses. This required much finance, which came from India, and the Jews began to cash in on this. For example, they began to deal in ostrich feathers for European style hats and in silk from China. They became shopkeepers and traders. Some of them became wealthy, especially the president of the community Menahem Messa....¹¹¹

Messa stood out as a successful businessman who “established a gigantic business firm and managed to amass a vast, almost legendary, fortune...Indeed, the Messa dynasty was able by virtue of its immense wealth and influence to dominate the social and religious life of its coreligionists in Aden for more than one hundred years, providing the Jewish community with a chain of presidents.”¹¹² Messa’s son, for example, “ruled for 60 years, having inherited 10,000 Pounds from his father and leaving in his turn some 2,000,000 Pounds - all this in 1922!”¹¹³ Menahem Messa was also known as a great philanthropist, having “invested a considerable amount of money in the building of the magnificent Magen Abraham synagogue completed in 1858...[t]he “new” synagogue... had a capacity of about two thousand people and was built upon the foundations of an older synagogue that the Arabs had previously destroyed.”¹¹⁴ Messa’s sons invested in the establishment of other “religious and educational institutions in Aden” as well as in the renovation of the Magen Abraham synagogue built by their father.¹¹⁵ The synagogue, known by the people as ‘the Great Synagogue’ was considered “one of the most magnificent religious institutions in the world. It was the pride of the Jewish community in Aden and an attraction for Jewish tourists.”¹¹⁶ Finally, “the pinnacle of the Messa family’s philanthropic projects was the building in 1910 of a modern school for boys and, later, one for girls. The boys’ school was renamed in 1911 after King George V, following his visit to Aden as the Prince of Wales.”¹¹⁷

By the mid-twentieth century, most of the Jews in Aden

earned their living from commerce, some as owners of lock shops and stores and others as their employees. The lock-shops were located mainly in the Aden bazaar area, along with those of non-Jews. The big modern stores at Steamer Point catered to passengers from ships passing through Aden. A small number of young men were employed as karranis (clerks) in governmental offices. Others earned a living as small craftsmen, silver- and goldsmiths, tailors, money changers, bookbinders, and the like. Still others

110 Ahroni, p. 46

111 Tobi, pg. 57.

112 Ahroni, pg. 47

113 Tobi. pg. 61

114 Ahroni, pg. 48

115 Ibid., pg. 50

116 Ibid.

117 Tobi, pg. 51

*worked in the cigarette industry owned by a Greek company. Jews had the monopoly on Aden's fez (tarbush) industry and ostrich-feather trade.*¹¹⁸

Another indication of the economic status of the Adeni community was their financial support of the growing Zionist Yishuv in Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine, later to become the State of Israel:

*Since the early part of the century there had been a close relationship between the Aden community and various organizations based in the Land of Israel, such as the Keren Hayesod the Keren Kayemeth, (JNF) and the World Zionist Organization in Jerusalem. For example, one of the first activities of the WZO in Aden was to sell Israel bonds to the Jews in order to help building up of the homeland. Similarly, the JNF collected large sums of money and there was hardly a house which did not have the famous "Blue Box" in it.*¹¹⁹

While their financial support of the Jewish State is not hard evidence, it serves to illustrate the level of wealth that the Jews possessed. This is in stark contrast to the Jewish community in Yemen who were extremely poor. In fact, when the Jews of Yemen began to disperse ahead of their mass departure to Israel, the Jewish community arrived in Aden where they awaited to be airlifted to Israel, whereupon the Jewish community of Aden assumed responsibility for the wellbeing of the Yemenite Jews. One author writing on the Yemenite community's presence in Aden describe the absorptive capacity of the Adeni Jewish community:

*I very much doubt if there is a small Jewish community anywhere else in the world which has absorbed in so short a space of time such waves of immigrants as did the Adeni Jews in their response to the plight of their Yemeni brethren. They did this with patience, love and a moral sense of duty.*¹²⁰

This communal absorption serves as another indication of the relative wealth of the Adeni community when compared to the Yemenite Jewish community.

Jewish Socioeconomic Breakdown

Their relative wealth notwithstanding, the Jewish community of Aden's 8,000 members varied in socioeconomic status. According to an expert on the Jewish community of Aden - the Manager of the Aden Jewish Heritage Museum in Tel Aviv, Danny Goldschmidt - some Jews were very wealthy while the majority were not. However, even those Jews classified as poor in Aden did not compare to the abject poverty that characterized poor Jews in Yemen. Poor Adeni Jews were employed and were able to support themselves in a relatively stable fashion. By comparison, poor Yemenite Jews lived in such poverty that they often found themselves without enough food for the upcoming days.

118 Ahroni, pg. 111

119 Tobi, pg. 111

120 Tobi, pg. 94

According to the aforementioned expert, Aden was composed of three socioeconomic brackets: the majority of the community (80%) belonged to the 'Poor' class; a further 15% belonged to the 'Lower-Middle' class; and the remaining 5% belonged to the 'Wealthy' class.

Table 9 - Distribution of Adeni Jews per Socioeconomic Class, 1948

Socioeconomic Class	Percentage of Jewish Households	A No. of Households per Class	B No. of Urban Households per Class	A – B No. of Rural Households per Class
Wealthy	5%	80	80	-
Lower-Middle	15%	240	240	-
Poor	80%	1,280	1,280	-
Total	100%	1,600	1,600	-

Figure 4 - Friends gather at the house of Dr. Abu Isaac, an Adeni Jew (Aden, 1948)



Source: Jewish Diaspora Museum - <https://dbs.bh.org.il/place/aden> - (Beth Hatefutsoth Photo Archive, courtesy of Nati Ferrera, Israel)

Figure 5 - Women kneading dough for a family event (Aden, 1957)



Source: Jewish Diaspora Museum - <https://dbs.bh.org.il/place/aden> - (Beth Hatefutsoth Photo Archive, courtesy of Aliza Mor, Israel)

Figure 6 - Jewish man at the entrance of his house (Aden, 1948)



Source: Jewish Diaspora Museum - <https://dbs.bh.org.il/place/aden> - (Beth Hatefutsoth Photo Archive, courtesy of Nati Ferrera, Israel)

Section 3 – Land Distribution

Jews and Land Ownership in Aden

As described further in the section below describing the rural assets of Jews living in Aden, the Jewish community in Aden was entirely urban and did not own land in Aden. Hence, the land ownership system in the British Protectorate of Aden was not relevant to the assets owned by the Jewish community in Aden at the time.

Section 4 – Rural Assets

4.1 Objectives and Scope of Work

The Adeni Jewish community was entirely urban and lived in the Jewish quarter. There is no evidence to suggest that the Jewish community held any rural assets. Furthermore, given that Aden was a port city as part of a British protectorate, there weren't rural lands and assets in Aden.

Section 5 – Urban Assets

5.1 Objectives and Scope of Work

This section will carry out a summary of urban land and urban property owned by Jews in Aden.

5.2 Research Analytical Conclusions

The Jewish community of Aden was entirely urban. This is due to the fact that Aden itself was a port city that was reliant on trade and local business as opposed to relying on a wide agricultural economic base. Nearly the entire Jewish community, aside from a handful of families that resided in Steamer Point, lived in the Jewish quarter where they owned their own homes and businesses.

(T)hey built the Jewish quarter which consists of four or five streets, in fact crisscrossing alleyways. Since many Jews engaged in horse-drawn removals, the houses were built on two floors- the upper one for living quarters and the lower one as a stable for the horses. This occupation eventually died out so the lower story was converted into stores for imported skins of many kinds.¹²¹

The Jewish quarter was built over six roads and alleyways connecting roughly 400 houses, almost entirely Jewish-owned. Some of these houses were divided into two or three apartments, housing different families in each one.¹²² “Most of the Jewish houses were three-story buildings with flat roofs at the top. The ground floor generally served as bakhhar (“warehouse for goods”), and the upper two floors for residential purposes. Because of the extreme heat, most of the residents used to sleep on the flat roofs.”¹²³

The following images, taken from the Adeni Jewish Heritage Museum in Tel Aviv, show an aerial drawing of the Jewish quarter, in which each house is numbered, as well as a corresponding list, which shows the family living in each house. Of the 406 houses listed, 15 belonged to non-Jews, while the remaining 391 properties belonged to Jews. Given that at the base date for valuation in 1948 there were 8,000 Jews in Aden, the resultant calculation points toward a concentration of over 20 people on average per household. While this number seems unrealistic, it can be partially explained by the common practice of multigenerational housing. In addition, as previously noted, several of the properties in the Jewish quarter would have been divided into two or three apartments, housing more than one family.

At this point in the research, no data regarding the value of an average urban asset in Aden was encountered.

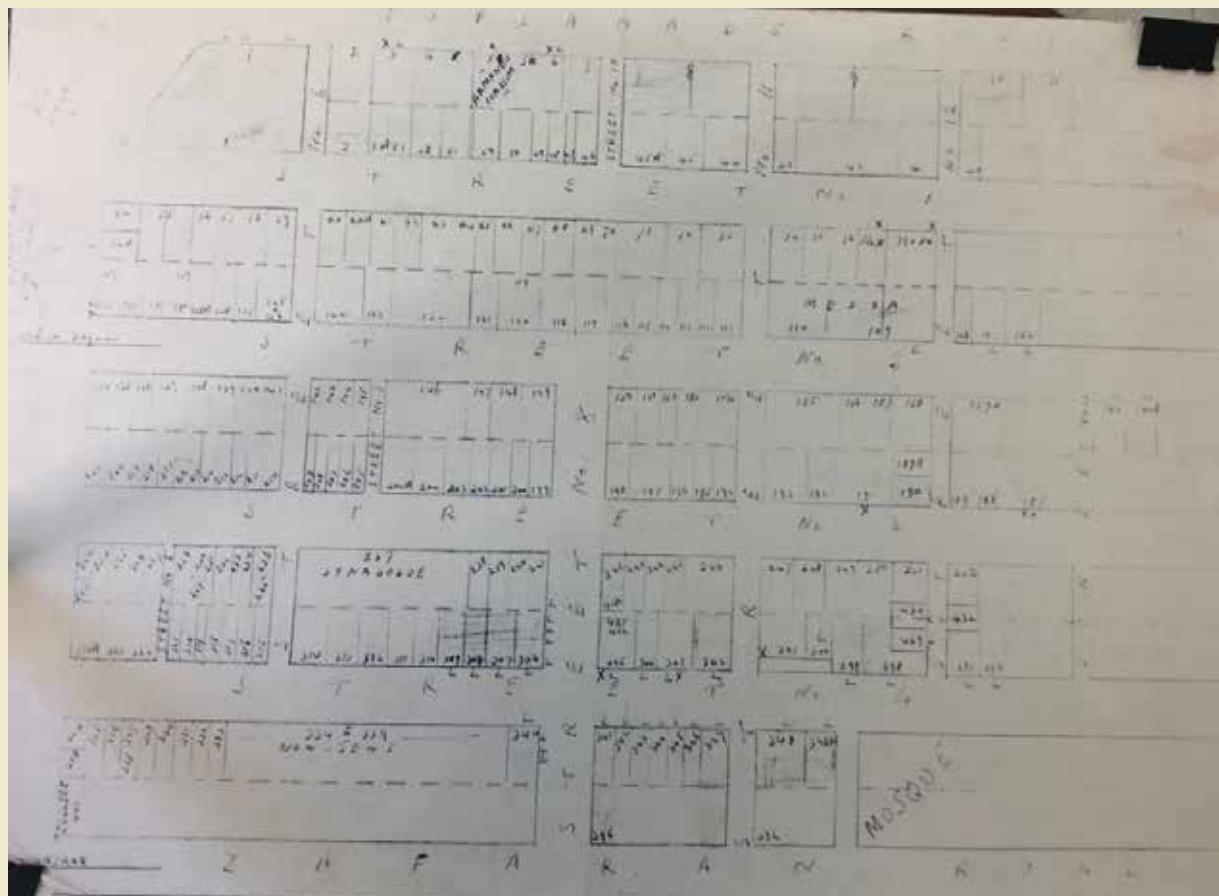
121 Tobi, pg. 59

122 Adaei Jewish Heritage Museum, Tel Aviv

123 Ahroni, pg. 111

There were 391 Jewish owned properties in the Jewish Quarter of Aden. Given that there were 1,600 Jewish households in Aden, this number reflects the number of Jewish properties in the Jewish Quarter, as displayed in Figure 2. The Jewish properties, as displayed above were divided into separate living units, housing several households in each.¹²⁴

Figure 7 - Drawing of Jewish Quarter with Corresponding Houses



Source: Adeni Heritage Museum, Tel Aviv

Figure 8 - List of Owners of Properties in the Jewish Quarter

Source: Adeni Heritage Museum, Tel Aviv

Section 6 – Loss of Employment

6.1 Objectives and Scope of Work

This section will carry out a summary of employment and labor for Jews in Aden.

6.2 Research Analytical Conclusions

The Jews of Aden, as previously mentioned, were for the most part (80%), poor, though as mentioned above, were better off from the abject poverty by which Yemenite Jews were afflicted. According to an expert on the Adeni Jewish community who wished to remain anonymous, such Jews were more aptly described as hungry or lacking basic means by which to live, but that they were capable of living life to a satisfactory standard, though they not possess the means for acquiring additional luxuries. Again, it is instructive to distinguish between the poverty of Yemenite Jews, and the poverty of Adeni Jewry. While the poor class of Yemenite Jews struggled to provide for their basic needs, the poor class of Jews in Aden were able to meet their basic needs in a satisfactory manner.

In terms of their economic practices and occupations, the Jews of Aden were by and large artisans by practice; many were also shop-owners. Situated in a port city, many members of the Jewish community also participated in trading goods and merchandise.¹²⁵

Similar to the Jews of Yemen, the Jews of the Aden Protectorate served as artisans, goldsmiths, and silversmiths in an economic role as vital to the economy of the Aden Protectorate as it was to the economy of Yemen. In fact, the two regions shared a common trade market. Although Adeni Jews were primarily associated with the jewelry handicraft business, others worked as masons, bricklayers and other house-related laborers, mat and reed artisans, and practically the sole bookbinders in the settlement. In contrast with their coreligionists in Yemen and the Protectorates, however, the Jews of Aden assumed a more mercantile role in the economy, as was natural in a port city driven by international trade. With the arrival of the British, the Jewish community welcomed the British tenets of religious freedom and aided their conquest of Aden and its hinterland to become prosperous international merchants.¹²⁶

In addition, consider the effect of the Jewish exodus from Aden had on the entire country of Yemen:

This sudden drain on skilled labor in the colony and the Protectorates can be directly attributed to the Jewish exodus in 1949 and 1950. The Jews of Aden constituted a large percentage of skilled laborers in the port city, and Jewish artisans from Yemen and the Aden Protectorate had been an important source of migrant skilled labor in twentieth-century Aden. Although British officials did not attribute this shortage to the Jewish exodus, it can be deduced that the Jewish exodus consequently contributed to the severe shortage of skilled workers in Aden.¹²⁷

125 Orkaby, pg. 297

126 Orkaby, pg. 297

127 Ibid., pg. 306

Altogether, the Jewish community of Aden was perceived as an integral part of the Adeni economy and the business losses suffered by Jews in Aden were significant.

By all accounts, the richest Jews in Aden were the Messa family. Descendants of the family served consecutively as President of the Jewish community. The aforementioned Banin Menahem Messa was said to be worth 2,000,000 pounds in 1922.¹²⁸ Such wealth can only be attributed to the upper echelon of the Adeni Jewish community, and it can be assumed that his wealth was greater than that of other members of the 'Wealthy' class.

Section 7 – Personal Property & Moveable Assets

7.1 Objectives and Scope of Work

This section will carry out a summary of personal property and moveable assets owned by Jews in Aden. For the purposes of this report, personal property and moveable assets include cash, gold and silver, jewelry, private vehicles, commodity stocks, clothing, household goods, and furniture.

7.2 Research Analytical Conclusions

For the purposes of this report data collected from firsthand testimonials made available by an Israeli government entity was relied on. In the case of Aden, such testimonials, of which there were only two, did not provide an indication of the private property and moveable assets lost by the Jewish community of Aden.

Section 8 – Business Losses

8.1 Objectives and Scope of Work

This section will carry out a summary of businesses owned by Jews in Aden and business losses.

8.2 Research Analytical Conclusions

As was previously mentioned in this report, a large portion of the Jewish community were involved in trade and mercantile activities. When the 1947 riots occurred, 106 out of 170 Jewish owned shops were destroyed.¹²⁹ According to an anonymous expert on the Jewish community of Aden, the Marina Hotel of Aden was also owned by Jews.

It has not been possible to retrieve data indicating the average value of these 170 businesses. Likewise, there was no data distinguishing between the sizes and values of Jewish-owned shops. Similarly, while the Jewish community itself was divided into three different socioeconomic classes, given the location of these 170 Jewish owned shops in the Jewish quarter, and given the lack of more precise data, no differentiation between shops owned by Jews from different socioeconomic classes can be undertaken.

128 Tobi, pg. 64

129 Gilbert, (epub), Chapter 14

Section 9 – Communal Losses

9.1 Objectives and Scope of Work

In addition to private ownership by Jewish individuals throughout Aden, the Jewish community owned communal assets that belonged to the Adeni Jews as a whole. This section will carry out a summary of communal assets owned by the Jewish communities in Aden. Such assets include synagogues, cemetery land, other communal assets such as mikvahs, and schools, as well as holy books and other moveable assets.

9.2 Research Analytical Conclusions

In Aden, the Jewish community was relatively centralized and organized around synagogue life. While several sources describe the beauty and grandeur of the main synagogue, named "Shield of Abraham", there were additional smaller synagogues in Aden serving the community. In total, there were 7 synagogues in Aden.¹³⁰ The Shield of Abraham Synagogue was built in 1880 by the head of the Jewish community at the time, Banin Menahem Messa. The following description was given of the synagogue:

In about 1880, Banin built the grand synagogue called "Shield of Avraham", and it is believed to lie on the ruins of a much smaller synagogue. The synagogue's interior looked as follows: There were four long rows of seats, six to a bench, stretching from the south to the north walls with a space between them and a row of seats surrounding the four inner rows. It was a huge area, with enough room for a thousand worshippers. The pulpit was made of marble, pure, white and polished, with seven marble steps leading up to it. The floor was made of marble sections, patterned black and white as on a chess board. The ark was built into the wall pile or stack and covered by six curtains woven with silk and interwoven with gleaming sapphires, above them as crowns of the Torah. The two tablets of the Ten Commandments, on both sides of the doors were made of polished silver. There were two lamps and a wreath and upon it inscribed the word "shiviti". The huge ceiling was supported by eight wooden columns, four on each side. Each column had a radius of 80 inches and was 40 feet high. There were chandeliers comprising large and small lamps, made of glistening glasses with wicks dipped in pure oil. Thousands of lights gleamed as to the glory of a King on Assembly Day when he entered the synagogue. Along the length of the eastern wall the president built a woman's section with over two hundred places. Outside the western wall was a place for storage. The entrance to the synagogue area was from the east-south. One entered a huge courtyard with stone steps leading into the synagogue.¹³¹

The exact size of the main synagogue is unknown. The synagogue, however, was built to accommodate thousands of people.¹³² In addition to the synagogues in Aden (two of which were private), there were also two Jewish cemeteries in Aden, two Jewish schools, as well as a Hebrew printing press.¹³³

130 Jewish Diaspora Museum - <https://dbs.bh.org.il/place/aden> - According to the Adeni Jewish Heritage Centre, there were only seven synagogues in Aden prior to the exodus of the Jewish community. This figure will be used.

131 Tobi, pg. 65

132 Julius, pg. 307

133 Jewish Diaspora Museum - <https://dbs.bh.org.il/place/aden>

In 1891 a Hebrew printing press was founded by Menahem Awad. A school for boys, Jehuda Menahem Moshe, was opened in 1912. In 1914 the Messa family founded another school for boys, which was later named after King George V of Britain; the community's Jews called it "Al-Iskul." A school for girls, Shalom, was opened in 1928.¹³⁴

On the Southern side the president built a Mikvah (ritual bath house) for men only; the one for women he built not far from the synagogue. Next to and above the Mikvah he built a Yeshivah (religious study house) called "Torah ve-Hamitzvah" where people studied day and night.¹³⁵

Figure 9 - The Shield of Abraham Synagogue in Aden (year unknown)



Source: Jewish Diaspora Museum - <https://dbs.bh.org.il/place/aden>

134 Ibid.

135 Ibid.

Figure 10 - Interior of Shield of Abraham Synagogue



Source: Aden Jewish Heritage Museum

Figure 11 - The George V Jewish Boys' School (which was subsequently burnt down in the 1947 Aden riots)



Source: Julius, pg. 130

Figure 12 - Jewish Schoolchildren in Aden



Source: Aden Jewish Heritage Museum

Section 10 – Calculating Present Day Valuation

Over 75 years have passed since the baseline date for evaluating the property left behind by Jews in Aden. As mentioned in our methodology in Chapter 2 of this report, we argue that a truly compensatory approach to valuating the aggregate assets left behind by Jews demands that this value be actualized to reflect present-day value. Thus, we rely on a compound interest formula which makes use of the principal amount, an interest rate based on ten-year averages of the ten-year yields on US treasury bonds, over a total compound period of 76 years, from January 1st, 1949, through December 31st, 2024:

$$FV = PV (1+i/n)nt$$

10.1 Benchmark Values

As mentioned above, 1948 represents a reasonable benchmark regarding the beginning of the Jewish community's gradual departure from Aden. The present-day valuation will assume a valuation start year of 1948.

10.2 Application of Compound Interest Formula

The compound interest formula, $FV = PV (1+i/n)nt$ was applied on the basis of a combined set of total values per asset category, all valued in 1948 USD, for a period of 76 years.

The formula is analyzed as follows:

FV = Future Value

PV = Present Value

i = Interest rate

n = Number of periods

t = Number of years in the period

The formula was applied using ten-year units with corresponding ten-year US treasury bond average yields. This methodology yielded the results as outlined in Section 12 below.

Section 11– Summary of Findings

A thorough review of historical sources, discussions with subject-matter experts, community leaders, and available testimonial data was conducted. However, due to the lack of reliable testimonial and historical data for Aden, it was determined that the analysis for Egypt, Syria, and Iraq would be used for illustrative purposes. Lost assets found in the first three countries at 1948 values were used to determine the value of lost property per person. This yielded a range, with Iraq providing the lowest value of lost property per person among the three countries, and Egypt being the highest. The low and high values were then multiplied with the population of each remaining country, and a midpoint was calculated from this range. In the absence of “best evidence” to reach accurate and verifiable country-specific values a discount factor of 50% was determined based on precedent discounts and applied across the mid-point value for Aden.

Table 10 – Range of Lost Assets for Aden, (\$)

(\$) Range of Lost Assets	
Aden	1948
Population	8,000
Estimated – Low Range	38,910,285
Estimated – High Range	122,357,420
Estimated - Mid Point	80,633,852
Discount	50%
Estimated – Mid Point (with Discount)	40,316,926

A compound interest formula which makes use of the principal amount and an average yearly rate based on the ten-year yields on US treasury bonds over a total compound period from January 1, 1949, through December 31, 2024, was applied to the mid-point value for each of the countries on a yearly compounding basis. As there is no internationally recognized, risk-free rate, the 10-year US Treasury Yield rate was chosen, as it is an accepted benchmark for the time value of money over long horizons and aligns with established practices in historical asset valuation.

Table 11 – Periodic Compounding Table for Aden, (\$)¹³⁶

Year	LT Govt Bond Yields: 10-Year for US (FRED) + 10-Year Treasury [RLONG] (Robert Shiller)	(\$ Balance)	Year	LT Govt Bond Yields: 10-Year for US (FRED) + 10-Year Treasury [RLONG] (Robert Shiller)	(\$ Balance)
1947			1986	7.68%	385,122,532
1948		40,316,926	1987	8.38%	417,411,847
1949	2.31%	41,248,247	1988	8.85%	454,335,404
1950	2.32%	42,205,206	1989	8.50%	492,946,341
1951	2.57%	43,289,880	1990	8.55%	535,093,253
1952	2.68%	44,450,049	1991	7.86%	577,142,664
1953	2.83%	45,707,985	1992	7.01%	617,600,365
1954	2.40%	46,805,739	1993	5.87%	653,874,093
1955	2.82%	48,124,101	1994	7.08%	700,168,379
1956	3.18%	49,655,650	1995	6.58%	746,239,458
1957	3.65%	51,466,840	1996	6.44%	794,284,842
1958	3.32%	53,173,394	1997	6.35%	844,741,787
1959	4.33%	55,477,575	1998	5.26%	889,210,402
1960	4.12%	57,761,402	1999	5.64%	939,332,228
1961	3.88%	60,003,988	2000	6.03%	995,966,134
1962	3.95%	62,371,646	2001	5.02%	1,045,938,735
1963	4.00%	64,868,071	2002	4.61%	1,094,165,227
1964	4.19%	67,583,881	2003	4.02%	1,138,095,961
1965	4.28%	70,478,160	2004	4.27%	1,186,740,079
1966	4.92%	73,948,035	2005	4.29%	1,237,651,228
1967	5.07%	77,699,665	2006	4.79%	1,296,955,349
1968	5.65%	82,086,459	2007	4.63%	1,356,993,574
1969	6.67%	87,562,310	2008	3.67%	1,406,750,005
1970	7.35%	93,996,680	2009	3.26%	1,452,563,164
1971	6.16%	99,786,092	2010	3.21%	1,499,250,965
1972	6.21%	105,982,809	2011	2.79%	1,541,017,598
1973	6.84%	113,234,682	2012	1.80%	1,568,794,440
1974	7.56%	121,792,393	2013	2.35%	1,605,674,183
1975	7.99%	131,520,561	2014	2.54%	1,646,471,688
1976	7.61%	141,531,468	2015	2.14%	1,681,637,579
1977	7.42%	152,031,923	2016	1.84%	1,712,607,737
1978	8.41%	164,817,808	2017	2.33%	1,752,511,498
1979	9.44%	180,380,729	2018	2.91%	1,803,509,582
1980	11.46%	201,052,361	2019	2.14%	1,842,179,834
1981	13.91%	229,020,420	2020	0.89%	1,858,651,992
1982	13.00%	258,796,891	2021	1.44%	1,885,463,047
1983	11.11%	287,536,286	2022	2.95%	1,941,115,631
1984	12.44%	323,301,008	2023	3.96%	2,017,935,282
1985	10.62%	357,646,351	2024	4.21%	2,102,856,725

136 Rates from 2024 to 1954 are from “Interest Rates: Long-Term Government Bond Yields: 10-Year.” Federal Reserve Economic Data. 2024 rate represents average interest rate through September 30, 2024 based on available data. Retrieved from <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/graph/?id=IRLT01USQ156N>; Rates from 1954 to 1948 are from “An Update of Data shown in Chapter 26 of Market Volatility.” R. Shiller, Princeton 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.econ.yale.edu/~shiller/data.htm>. R. Shiller notes that pre-1953 rates are government bond yields from Sidney Homer A History of Interest Rates.

On the basis of the illustrated mid-point of lost assets for Aden and the application of the aforementioned periodic compounding formula, the estimated value for all assets on December 31, 2024 USD equals **\$2,102,856,725**.

Table 12 – Range of Lost Assets for Yemen with Present Value, (\$)

Range of Lost Assets (\$)		Estimated Present Value (\$, 2024)
Aden	1948	
Population	8,000	
Estimated – Low Range	38,910,285	
Estimated – High Range	122,357,420	
Estimated – Mid-Point	80,633,852	
Discount	50%	
Estimated – Mid-Point (with Discount)	40,316,926	2,102,856,725

Appendix A: Period One: Ancient Israelite History¹³⁷

The illustrious history of the Jewish people in the region is detailed in the Bible and in the Dead Sea Scrolls. These dates are derived from Biblical references.

YEARS – BCE	NOTES
2000-1750	Old Babylonian period
1813-1452	The life of Abraham; begins period of Jewish forefathers
1240 1280-	Exodus from Egypt, Entry into the Land of Israel
1200-1050/1000	Period of the Judges in Israel
1000-587	Monarchical period in Israel
900-612	Neo-Assyrian period
722/721	Northern Kingdom (Israel) destroyed by Assyrians; 10 tribes exiled
587/586	Southern Kingdom (Judah) and First Temple destroyed

¹³⁷ Jewish Virtual Library, "Timeline for the History of Judaism: Ancient Israelites" accessed on Nov. 6, 2024
<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/timeline-for-the-history-of-judaism>

Appendix B: Period Two: From the destruction of the first Jewish temple to the rise of Islam 587 – BCE – 683 CE

In the years after the destruction of the Jewish Temple, the “Babylonian Exile” dispersed the Jews throughout the region. During this period, Mesopotamia became the preeminent center of Jewish life between the third and sixth centuries C.E. the Jewish communities in exile played a pivotal role in the development of Judaism. A prime example is the Babylonian Talmud, a foundational text of Rabbinic Judaism, composed between the 3rd and 5th centuries in present-day Iraq. This work, second only to the Hebrew Bible, serves as the primary source of Jewish law (halakha) and theology.

The Sages of Babylon also established the tradition of reading the Torah in an annual cycle, a departure from the triennial cycle practiced in ancient Israel.

Throughout the period of exile, there always remained a presence of Jews in the land of Israel.

PERIOD TWO: FIRST TEMPLE TO THE RISE OF ISLAM¹³⁸	
YEARS – BCE	NOTES
541	First Jews return from Babylon to rebuild the city
538-333	Persian Period.
520-515	Jerusalem ("Second") Temple rebuilt.
333-63	Hellenistic (Greek) period.
63	Rome (Pompey) annexes the land of Israel.
YEARS – C.E.	COMMON ERA
70	Destruction of Jerusalem and the second Temple.
132-135	Bar Kokhba rebellion (Second Jewish Revolt
368/426	Jerusalem Talmud compiled. Babylonian Talmud compiled.
570	Birth of Prophet Muhammad

138 Jewish Virtual Library, “Timeline for the History of Judaism: Ancient Israelites” accessed on Nov. 6, 2024 <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/timeline-for-the-history-of-judaism>

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