

The Palestinian Refugee Lie



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BUILDING THE ZIONIST DREAM

Introduction

The Arab narrative of the events that transpired during the Jewish revival in the Land of Israel is full of innumerable lies and distortions. Their tale of what happened to the Arab inhabitants of the Land of Israel is presented as historical fact, but in actuality is nothing more than a fabricated myth. This myth served as the impetus for the creation of the “Palestinian people,” a term that never existed prior to the 1950s and which only began to surface in literature in the 1960s.¹

This booklet explores the issue that cultivated and cemented this myth into political dialogue: the “Palestinian refugee problem.” As we will see, “the Palestinian refugee problem” only exists by virtue of a special United Nations (UN) agency that perpetuates the situation by ensuring that these

“refugees” never relinquish their refugee status.

When discussing this issue, it’s important to put the facts on the table: In 1948, the Palestinian Arabs underwent a form of displacement following the Arab attempt to annihilate the fledgling Jewish state. Some of them were expelled, but most either voluntarily abandoned or fled their homes. But this experience neither makes them refugees (as per the regular standards of the UN) nor unique. Millions of people in the twentieth century have undergone similar and infinitely worse experiences.

The uniqueness of the “Palestinian refugees” is that unlike millions of other refugees who were absorbed by their host countries, the Palestinian Arabs were not. Rather, they continued to retain their refugee status. Seventy years have passed since Israel’s War of Independence, yet the Arab states and the UN continue to perpetuate the refugee status of the Palestinian Arabs for political gain.

“The demand of the right of return [for Palestinians] is in fact intended to eliminate the State of Israel.”

These words were uttered by the former Egyptian Foreign Minister, Mahmoud Salah al-Din, who already in 1949 clarified the true objective of perpetuating the Palestinian's refugee status. Given this, it is crucial to understand that the notion of "right of return" is a propaganda tool aimed exclusively at the elimination of the State of Israel, and is therefore part and parcel of the larger anti-Israel agenda.

This booklet provides information to counter this widespread and false campaign conducted against Israel. It exposes the hypocrisy behind the myths of the "Palestinian refugees," the "right of return," and the special UN agency set up for them - UNRWA.

Chapter 1: The Importance of Refuting the Refugee Lie

“To us, the refugees issue is the winning card which means the end of the Israeli state”²

Sakher Habash, one of the founders of Fatah and Yasser Arafat’s aide

The “right of return,” an ostensibly nonthreatening legal term, is a prominent component of the Palestinian Arab narrative that seeks to facilitate the influx of some 5 million Palestinian Arab “refugees” to Israel. This major point of contention between Israel and the Palestinians can be traced back to the myth of the “Palestinian refugees,” without whom the demand for “right of return” would be irrelevant.

The ultimate goal of preserving this myth is to destroy the State of Israel. As is clearly noted in the above quote by the prominent Palestinian

leader Sakher Habash, the “return” of millions of Palestinian Arabs to Israel would mean the destruction of the Jewish and democratic character of the State of Israel.

This lie also serves as living proof of the hypocrisy espoused by the international community, which requires Israel to uphold completely different standards than those of other countries that have faced similar situations throughout history.

This hypocrisy unequivocally proves how many international organizations that claim to promote human rights are in reality focused on one thing only: spreading hateful propaganda whose goal is to eliminate the existence of Israel as the Jewish state. It is therefore of the utmost importance to dispel this lie and to reinvigorate the belief in the justness of Zionism.

Chapter 2: Onward Hypocrisy! International Refugee Institutions

“It is perfectly clear that Arab nations do not want to solve the Arab refugee problem. They want to keep it as an open sore, as an affront against the United Nations and as a weapon against Israel. Arab leaders don’t give a damn whether the refugees live or die.”³

**Lt. Gen. Sir Alexander Galloway, former
Director of UNRWA in Jordan**

The death and destruction of World War II brought about a refugee crisis numbering in the tens of millions. In response, the United Nations established the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),⁴ an international refugee agency aimed at solving the refugee crisis spanning throughout Europe and Asia.

Since its inception, UNHCR has helped resettle tens of millions of refugees worldwide. The agency is currently caring for over twenty million refugees,⁵ with a focus on providing various solutions to resettle the refugees as quickly as possible.

However, despite the important work of UNHCR and the tremendous efforts and resources it has invested in providing various solutions to refugees worldwide, the Palestinian refugee problem has never been addressed by UNHCR.

Why?

The answer is simple: UNHCR, which is charged with overseeing the well-being of (almost) all the world's refugees, is strictly forbidden from getting involved with "Palestinian refugees." Instead, there exists a completely separate agency solely dedicated to the "Palestinian refugees": the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).⁶

In other words, the United Nations maintains two separate agencies whose job is to care for refugees: UNHCR, which handles all the world's tens of

millions of refugees (including in the Middle East), and UNRWA, which only handles the “Palestinian refugees” even though they initially numbered fewer than 600,000⁷ (or 700,000 according to the UN’s more generous estimate⁸).

In light of this, the obvious question arises: Why is there a need for two different refugee agencies, one for all the refugees of the world and another exclusively for Palestinians? This question is especially perplexing considering the fact that UNRWA has never resettled even a single “Palestinian refugee” throughout its entire period of activity since 1949.

Chapter 3: The Difference of Definition of Refugee Status between UNHCR and UNRWA

According to UNHCR, a refugee is a person “owing to well-founded fear of persecution, 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, is 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, is unwilling to return to it.”⁹

According to UNRWA, refugees are “persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost

both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict.”¹⁰

This clear distinction is merely the tip of the iceberg in understanding the hypocrisy and double standards surrounding the “Palestinian refugees.” A separate agency for the Palestinians is needed in order for the UN to continue perpetuating the refugee status of the Palestinians, because the vast majority of “Palestinian refugees” would not be considered refugees according to the regular UN standard.

When comparing the refugee definitions provided by UNHCR and UNRWA, there are several significant differences that point to double standards, injustice, and hypocrisy, courtesy of the UN.

Following are several examples.

1. Duration of time where the refugee lived before fleeing

A regular refugee: He must prove that he escaped from his country of birth or from a place in which he maintained a permanent residency.

A Palestinian refugee: He must prove that he resided in Mandatory Palestine starting from June 1946 – only two years prior to the 1948 Israeli War of Independence. This anomalous criterion was mandated by the UN knowing that a large amount of Arabs in Mandatory Palestine were migrant workers who immigrated from neighboring Arab countries seeking work opportunities; this following the economic prosperity created by the Zionist movement. They were not permanent residents, and most of them had no official legal status. Thus, the standard UN refugee definition does not apply to them and a special criterion is needed.

2. Circumstances of displacement

A regular refugee: He must prove that he was forcefully displaced from his land against his will.

A Palestinian refugee: He does not need to prove that he was forcefully displaced from his land against his will. Most of the Palestinian refugees obeyed the call from their Arab leaders in 1948 and voluntarily

left their homes, so as to not hinder the Arab armies' attempted massacre of the Jewish population of Israel. The Arab leaders promised that they could return to their homes as victors after the massacre was complete. The fact that their plan to annihilate the Jewish population of Israel did not come to fruition is not a legitimate reason to allow for their return.

3. Refugee status for future generations and the legal status of family members of refugees

A regular refugee: Only the person who was forced to flee is granted refugee status; not his family members, and certainly not his children and grandchildren.

A Palestinian refugee: Refugee status is genetic. Not only does the spouse of the refugee receive refugee status, but the children and grandchildren do as well. Actually, there is no limit to the number of generations of "Palestinian refugees." Today, there are fourth generation "Palestinian refugees" who are descendants of migrant workers who arrived some two years before the 1948 War of Independence.

4. A refugee who committed war crimes, crimes against humanity and/or terrorist activity

A regular refugee: A refugee who commits war crimes, crimes against humanity, or terrorist activity automatic forfeits his refugee status.

A Palestinian refugee: A Palestinian refugee does not lose his status under any condition, even if he is found guilty of committing crimes against humanity and/or engaged in terrorist activity! There are many examples of Palestinian terrorists who have carried out terror attacks yet still enjoy UN refugee status, with all of its benefits.

5. Refugee status after acquiring citizenship in another country

A regular refugee: A regular refugee loses his refugee status immediately upon acquisition of citizenship in another country.

A Palestinian refugee: A Palestinian refugee does not lose his status even after receiving citizenship

in another country. For example, there are over one million Palestinian “refugees” that were granted Jordanian citizenship, yet are still regarded as “refugees.” Furthermore, there are Palestinian “refugees” who hold citizenship from various countries in Western Europe, the United States, and Canada – yet are still regarded as refugees. There is even a small number of “Palestinian refugees” who hold Israeli citizenship!

6. Refugee status in relation to socio-economic standing

A regular refugee: A regular refugee loses his refugee status if he acquired wealth and assets, and succeeded in rehabilitating his economic standing.

A Palestinian refugee: A Palestinian “refugee” does not lose his status even if he becomes wealthy. In contrast to the misleading picture of poor, helpless refugees, many are exceedingly wealthy and own homes replete with the most advanced technology

of the 21st century. In this absurd situation, a rich fourth generation “Palestinian refugee” is entitled to financial assistance from the UN.

7. The greatest absurdity of all – refugee status after death

A regular refugee: A regular refugee loses his refugee status upon his death and is deleted from the UN refugee registry.

A Palestinian refugee: Because UNRWA has never conducted a population census that provides specific information regarding the number of refugees (which is currently estimated today at some five million), there is no way to track a “refugee” who has already died, or to remove an ineligible refugee from the registry.

Chapter 4: The World's Refugees and Palestinian Refugees - Double Standards and Hypocrisy

“We recognize, as I think most do, although it’s not a position that we publicly articulate, that the right of return is unlikely to be exercised to the territory of Israel to any significant or meaningful extent. It’s not a politically palatable issue, it’s not one that UNRWA publicly advocates, but nevertheless it’s a known contour to the issue.”¹¹

**Andrew Whitley, the New York Director of the
United Nations Relief and Works Agency, 2010**

Following World War II, UNHCR was charged with caring for some 60 million refugees.¹² The immense refugee crisis created by WWII was properly handled by UNHCR, and as of today there is not one refugee from the war who has not been resettled. UNHCR

even won the Nobel Peace Prize for its endeavors, and rightfully so, as it would be difficult to imagine if the refugee problem created by WWII had not been adequately addressed. Then again, that is exactly what happened to the “Palestinian refugees.”

While UNHCR was resettling millions of refugees, UNRWA was mandated to assist – and only to assist, not to resettle – the Palestinian Arabs who fled or who were forced to leave their homes during Israel’s War of Independence. The official number of Palestinian refugees provided by UNRWA personnel in 1949-1950 was roughly 700,000,¹³ a figure that is inflated according to initial Arab, Israeli and British documents.¹⁴

Since 1948, the number of Palestinian refugees has grown to five million. This means that unlike UNHCR that has successfully resettled and rehabilitated millions of refugees, UNRWA has been counterproductive. This is because the true function of UNRWA is to perpetuate the status of “Palestinian refugees” so as to never rehabilitate them, or, heaven forbid, enable them to achieve a

normal life as the rest of the world's refugees have done.

Throughout the twentieth century, the accepted international approach has been to encourage population exchanges in order to resolve international, ethnic, and religious conflicts. That was how the international community operated in cases of conflicts throughout the world, and thus was able to resolve bloody conflicts, some of which had existed for centuries.

The following examples were violent conflicts between various ethnic and religious groups that caused refugee crises on the scale of hundreds of thousands and even millions of people.

1. **India and Pakistan:** As part of the conflict resolution between India and Pakistan, an exchange of populations was carried out. Millions of Muslims left their homes in India and moved to Pakistan, while millions of Hindus left Pakistan and moved to India. Despite the difficult transition and economic plight of these refugees, they and their

descendants have been absorbed and assimilated into their new countries.

2. **The German minority in Eastern Europe:** After World War II, at least twelve million ethnic Germans who had lived for centuries in Eastern Europe (Poland, Hungary, Romania, etc.) were forced to leave their homes and move to West Germany. Today, they and their descendants live peacefully in Germany.

3. **Armenia and Azerbaijan:** With the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the twentieth century, ethnic and religious unrest developed within some of the entities that formerly comprised of the Soviet bloc. Such unrest occurred in Armenia and its neighboring Azerbaijan. Muslims in Azerbaijan killed Christian Armenians and Armenians killed Muslims. As a result of these atrocities, some one million people fled their homes and became refugees. This issue was resolved following a peace agreement signed with the help of UNHCR in 1994,

in which vigorous efforts were made to resettle the refugees according to religion; that is, Christians in Armenia and Muslims in Azerbaijan.

4. **The Balkans:** During the twentieth century, some seven to ten million people were displaced as a result of massacres, ethnic cleansing, and violent conflicts throughout the Balkan Peninsula. Following these displacements, nation-states and regions of homogeneous national, ethnic, and religious groups were created.

5. **Cyprus:** Conflict between the Greeks and Turks has endured for hundreds of years. Cyprus, populated by both Greeks and Turks, has borne the brunt of much of this conflict, which peaked in 1974 when the Turkish army invaded the north of Cyprus. This resulted in the creation of "Northern Cyprus," an independent state separate from Cyprus that is only recognized by Turkey and not the international community. As a result of the violence, some two hundred thousand

Greeks fled from north to south, while sixty thousand Turks fled in the opposite direction. These refugees were resettled and are no longer considered refugees.

The common denominator between all of these examples is that they were all resolved by UNHCR and the international community. All of these refugees received aid from UNHCR and all were resettled. "Palestinian refugees" are the only refugee group in the world for which an exclusive refugee agency was created by the UN, and yet they are also the only refugee group in the world whose prolonged situation has deliberately not yet been resolved.

Chapter 5: The Treatment of the “Refugees” in Arab countries

“The Arab armies entered Palestine to protect the Palestinians from the Zionist tyranny but, instead, they abandoned them, forced them to emigrate and to leave their homeland, and threw them into prisons similar to the ghettos in which the Jews used to live in Eastern Europe”¹⁵

Mahmoud Abbas, Palestinian Authority Chairman

To illustrate the absurdity of the “Palestinian refugee problem,” one need only look at the status accorded to the Palestinians by their fellow Arab countries, where they share a common language, culture, and for the most part, religion. It was those countries that invaded Israel in 1948 in order to “help the Arabs of Palestine,” or so at least they claim.

Lebanon: Palestinian refugees are prohibited from obtaining Lebanese citizenship, and Palestinian refugees are denied rights that guarantee them permanent housing, employment, property, social contacts, and family reunification. There are severe restrictions on their rights to employment that often prevent Palestinians from being able to improve their standard of living.¹⁶

Syria: Palestinian refugees have no civil or political rights, and receive a merely nominal citizenship status. Long ago they should have been considered full-fledged Syrians, yet due to political brainwashing they remain in Syria as a foreign entity, daydreaming about the “right of return” and stuck forever in their inferior state.¹⁷

Iraq: Palestinian refugees are denied citizenship and are prohibited from purchasing land and homes. Palestinians complain of increasing difficulty in obtaining visas and the humiliations involved in the application process, which requires

renewal every two months. Lack of valid residency documentation puts them at risk of abuse and imprisonment whenever they are asked to identify themselves at one of the many checkpoints across the country.

Dozens of Palestinians have been kidnapped, tortured, and killed in Iraq with the assistance and compliance of the security forces. Many refugees receive either written or verbal death threats to leave their homes. Many Palestinians in Iraq have stopped sending their children to school or to find work, and feel trapped in their homes.¹⁸

Kuwait: The occupation of Kuwait was supported by the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and was terminated in 1991. This resulted in the deportation of 450,000 Palestinians to (mostly) Iraq. This was a population transfer of nearly the same magnitude as the Palestinian exodus in 1948, yet this large deportation has barely earned any mention in academic studies or in the international media.¹⁹

Egypt: “Palestinian refugees” are denied rights that would allow them to gain permanent housing, employment, property, community ties, and family reunification. Thus, “refugees” in Egypt suffer from restrictions on land purchases, education, and are limited in their choice of professions.²⁰

Saudi Arabia: “Palestinian refugees” are forbidden from even applying for Saudi citizenship. They are denied rights that would guarantee them permanent housing, employment, property, community ties, and family reunification.²¹

Jordan: This is an unusual case, as most of the Palestinians living in Jordan were granted full citizenship when it formally annexed the West Bank in 1950. Jordan has the largest Palestinian community of all the host countries; however, the Palestinians are not equal in terms of political participation and are largely underrepresented in the Jordanian Parliament and Senate. In addition, Jordan has done nothing to dismantle the Palestinian refugee camps.²²

Libya: In 1995, then Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi announced his decision to deport thirty thousand Palestinians due to his rejection of the Oslo Accords signed by the PLO.²³ Gaddafi's hypocrisy reached its peak in August 2010, when Libya passed laws making the lives of the Palestinians either difficult or impossible, including a special tax, a ban on work in certain places, a prohibition of family visits, and other restrictions. At the same time when this was occurring, a Libyan-sponsored "human rights" aid ship set sail to the Gaza Strip.²⁴

Palestinian Authority: The Palestinian Authority was established in 1994 as an outcome of the Oslo peace process. It was given responsibility and authority over the majority of densely populated Arab cities in Judea and Samaria. Aided by billions of dollars in international aid, this newly-established entity could have easily resettled the "refugees" under its control, thereby alleviating one of the most contentious issues at the heart

of the conflict. However, over twenty years have passed and nothing has been done. Why? For the exact same reason that the Arab states have not resettled and given them rights: to utilize them as fuel in the battle for the destruction of the State of Israel.

What an amazing display of Arab solidarity by the "Arab nation," to which the Palestinians supposedly belong – at least according to the Palestinian Covenant. Time after time Arab states have rejected proposals for the resettlement of refugees. In 1965, Arab countries signed the Casablanca Protocol that was supposed to grant the Palestinians labor rights but not citizenship,²⁵ but in reality this document changed nothing.

As it turns out, it is Arabs under Israeli rule who enjoy freedom and growth unparalleled to that of any Arab country. This includes both the Israeli Arabs, who were granted full Israeli citizenship and enjoy conditions better than those in any Arab state, and the Arabs in Judea and Samaria

including the “refugees” amongst them. Compared to the harsh living conditions of the Arab states, Palestinians who lived under Israeli rule from 1967 up until the implementation of the Oslo Accords enjoyed a steady rise in living standards, employment, health services and life expectancy, as well as a dramatic reduction in infant mortality and a tremendous growth of higher education.

Chapter 6: Money Money Money - Let the Numbers Do the Talking

“One of the greatest obstacles to peace, and certainly the least acknowledged, is the perpetuation of the Palestinian refugee problem and the inflation of its scale by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).”²⁶

**Einat Wilf, former Member of Knesset and
Chairwoman of the Education Committee**

UNRWA is an economic empire in the Palestinian Authority, employing over 28,000 people of whom the vast majority are Palestinians. In contrast, UNHCR employs less than 8,000 people.²⁷

The annual budget of UNRWA stands at 1.3 billion dollars, some 250 million dollars of which are provided by the US government.²⁸ In addition, UNRWA has a pension fund of over one

billion dollars that is controlled exclusively by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA. The fact that UNRWA, which is defined as a temporary organization, benefits from a billion dollar pension fund is mind-boggling. It is also surprising how no one speaks out against the fact that there is a billion dollar UN fund being managed without any oversight or accountability.²⁹

In UNRWA the employee to refugee ratio is roughly 1:165. The UNHCR ratio is roughly 1:4400. As of 2014, UNRWA spends an average of 271 USD for every “Palestinian refugee” while UNHCR spends an average of 106 USD for every refugee worldwide. This means that the “Palestinian refugees” receive better treatment by the UN than all the other refugees in the world.³⁰

If that is not enough, in 1949, when UNRWA was established, it had 700,000 refugees under its custody – today there are an estimated 5 million refugees! (There number of real 1948 refugees living today is estimated at 30,000³¹). In contrast, UNHCR, which was responsible for resettling tens

of millions of refugees, succeeded in resettling them all and now takes care of millions of new refugees that have no connection to the previous generation.

These numbers are even more significant when considering that throughout the years, Palestinian Arabs have received an estimated 25 times more aid, per capita, and adjusted for inflation, than European citizens received under the Marshall Plan after World War II.³²

Chapter 7: Terrorism and Incitement, Courtesy of UNRWA

“I am sure that there are Hamas members on the UNRWA payroll and I don’t see that as a crime”³³

Peter Hanson, former UNRWA Commissioner-General

In 2003, Israel published a document detailing how UNRWA activities were being used as a cover for Palestinian terrorist activity, including arms smuggling in UN ambulances and meetings of the terrorist organization Tanzim in UN facilities.

Former UNRWA Commissioner-General Peter Hansen gave credence to these claims when he candidly admitted in an interview conducted in October 2004: “I am sure that there are Hamas members on the UNRWA payroll and I don’t see that as a crime. Hamas as a political organization does not mean that every member is a militant

and we do not do political vetting and exclude people from one persuasion as against another.”³⁴

US Congressmen have even accused UNRWA of being “wrought by mismanagement, ineffective policies, and [a] failure to secure its finances. We must upgrade UNRWA’s financial controls, management and enforcement of US law that bars any taxpayer dollars from supporting terrorists.”³⁵

One of the many examples that illustrates the gradual takeover of UNRWA by Hamas and other Palestinians terrorist organizations is the terrorist Awad al-Kik (Abu Muhammad). Al-Kik worked as a teacher in UNRWA schools in Gaza while also serving as the head of the engineering and weapons production unit of the Islamic Jihad terror group. As is well known, the Islamic Jihad terror group used these weapons against Israeli civilians. In addition, al-Kik trained generations of “terror engineers” with his knowledge. Despite all of this, even after his terror activity was exposed, UNRWA did not fire him from their institutions.³⁶

Another example of the cooperation between

UNRWA and Hamas is a December 2005 event held in honor of one hundred outstanding teachers in an UNRWA school in Khan Younis, Gaza. Among those present was Dr. Yunis al-Astal, a leader of Hamas, who openly incites and advocates violence against Israel. Al-Astal also issued fatwas stating that Jews will burn in this world and in hell.³⁷

There have been numerous cases in which terrorists were seen using UNRWA vehicles. For example, during an Israel Defense Forces operation in the Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza in 2005, terrorists used UNRWA vehicles to smuggle away armed terrorists and possibly body parts of Israeli soldiers.

UNRWA schools have also been used as weapon caches for Hamas.³⁸ In the 2014 Operation Protective Edge, UNRWA schools were found three times to be housing stockpiles of Hamas rockets.³⁹

The former UNRWA general-council, James J. Lindsay, claims that UNRWA did not take steps to identify and reject terrorists from the ranks of its staff or its service recipients, and did not work to

prevent members of organizations such as Hamas from joining its staff. Moreover, UNRWA does not perform any security checks before employing workers, and does not ensure that the outside-work activities of their employees are in compliance with UNRWA's (nominal) anti-terror laws.

Hamas has taken over UNRWA without any difficulty, and is thereby able to control the education system and the curriculum. UNRWA has an extreme curriculum that fosters hatred instead of promoting peace. The State of Israel does not exist in textbooks, and Jews and Israelis are portrayed as foul sub-human creatures.

In 2009, elections were held for the UNRWA workers union and Hamas-affiliated candidates won all eleven seats in the teachers' sector.⁴⁰ Hamas' control over UNRWA schools in Gaza was thus solidified.

Chapter 8: Jews from Islamic Countries

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 connection."⁴¹

Paul Martin, former Prime Minister of Canada

Contrary to the false Palestinian narrative, the real historical injustice was inflicted on the Jews living in Arab countries during the Israeli War of Independence (1948) and in the subsequent years. Before the establishment of the State of Israel, some 900,000 Jews lived in Arab countries.⁴² With the encouragement of the Arab authorities, a wave of anti-Semitism flooded these countries followed by pogroms and oppressive laws. The Jews realized

that they must escape to avoid a similar fate to that of their brothers in Europe, and within a short period of time there was almost no trace of Jewish existence in Arab lands.

Not only were the Jews who lived in Arab countries cruelly persecuted, tormented in vicious pogroms, dispossessed of their homes and property, murdered by mobs, and deported from their home countries, but they were also forced to leave behind property several times larger than that of the Arabs of the Land of Israel.

Let's look at the raw numbers: There were roughly 900,000 Jewish refugees from Arab countries, compared to roughly 600,000 Arab refugees from the War of Independence – most of whom fled at the behest of their leaders without seeing a single Israeli soldier. In other words, there was one and one-third Jewish refugee for every Arab refugee.

This injustice has not been addressed whatsoever, not even marginally, perhaps out of concern that the suffering of the Jewish refugees would mitigate the narrative of the Palestinian Arabs. The Jews from

Arab countries paid a heavy price, even though they were not involved in the happenings in Israel. These innocent victims experienced a devastating tragedy and came to a newly born country; and despite the hardships and the many mistakes made by the impoverished and struggling new state, they were successfully rehabilitated.

The Jews from Arab countries are genuine refugees as defined by the United Nations, but they did not receive a penny from the UN. They deserve to have their stories told, to have their history become known, and for their rights to be recognized. Jews too deserve justice and rights.

The “Palestinian refugees” paid the price for the war of annihilation declared by their leaders, a war which many – if not most – undoubtedly agreed with. Seventy years have passed and they are still engaged in self-victimization.

Chapter 9: UNRWA Closure and Refugee Rehabilitation = Cancellation of the “Right of Return” Claim

“In demanding the return of the Palestinian refugees, the Arabs mean their return as masters, not slaves; or to put it quite clearly – the intention is the extermination of Israel.”⁴³

**Muhammad Salah al-Din, former Egyptian
Foreign Minister**

We constantly hear about the supposed Israeli responsibility for the plight of the Palestinians, but the real responsibility falls on the Arab countries and the United Nations who have done all in their power to perpetuate the situation of the “Palestinian refugees” in the efforts against Israel.

The Palestinian Arabs – many of whom arrived

in the Land of Israel as migrant workers following the economic growth created by the Zionist movement – see themselves as part of the Arab nation. However, their Arab brethren fail to work toward solving the refugee problem and instead opt to sacrifice the “Palestinian refugees” on the cruel political altar whose end is not in sight.

The demand for “right of return,” as averred by the former Egyptian Foreign Minister in 1949, is a propagandist invention to destroy the Jewish and democratic character of the State of Israel. Thus far we have seen how most of the Arabs in the Land of Israel came as migrant workers, how they did not have residency status nor were expelled from Israel, and how Arab leaders encouraged them to leave to return as victors with the Arab armies. For all of these reasons and more, the onus to resettle the “Palestinian refugees” lies with the Arab countries.

In recent years, the Israeli public and leaders are beginning to understand how UNRWA is perpetuating the problem, rather than working to solve it. The Arab countries protested and continue

to protest the integration and rehabilitation of “Palestinian refugees,” and UNRWA is the arm through which they carry out this criminal policy. UNRWA was created to perpetuate the Palestinian’s refugee status, and it is excelling in its goal.

There have been several attempts and isolated successes to fix the situation created by UNRWA, including President Trump’s decision to cut US aid to the organization, and a 2012 law passed by the United States Senate requiring UNRWA to report how many of the refugees who receive aid were born prior to 1948.⁴⁴ However, there is only one solution to the “Palestinian refugee” issue: the closure of UNRWA.

Transferring the “Palestinian refugees” to the jurisdiction of UNHCR would bring about their rehabilitation, as it has done for tens of millions of other refugees throughout the course of history. The closure of UNRWA would not be an immediate occurrence, but a gradual process that can only occur if the countries financing it cease their support.

UNRWA’s billion-dollar budget should be

diverted to disbanding the refugee camps and to rehabilitating the “Palestinian refugees” in Arab countries. At the same time, there needs to be economic pressure on Arab countries to provide their Palestinian residents with fundamental human rights deserving of citizens under international law.

Lastly, there needs to be economic and political pressure on the Palestinian Authority to similarly disband the refugee camps and rehabilitate its people.

Only once this occurs can true justice be achieved.

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