

**Submission to the UN Human Rights Council “Commission of Inquiry” on Israel
created May 27, 2021 by resolution A/HRC/RES/S-30/1**

Organization: HARIF on behalf of the descendants of Jewish refugees from the Middle East and North Africa – victims of Arab and Iranian discrimination and repression on the basis of Jewish identity.

Biography: HARIF is a UK charity representing Jews from North Africa and the Middle East (UK no.1186454), and dedicated to promoting their history, culture and heritage. Over 2,000 years of history in the Middle East and North Africa came to an abrupt and tragic end just 50 years ago. Jews departed for Israel and the West, leaving an enormous cultural and economic void behind. In another 20 years, few Jews who were born in these countries will still be alive. A vital chapter of Jewish identity, history and culture – an entire civilisation – will be lost. HARIF is here to make sure it is not forgotten.

Issues to which our submission applies:

- (1) “Underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability and protraction of conflict in and between the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem [*sic*], and Israel; as well as systematic discrimination and repression based on national, ethnic, racial or religious identity;”
- (2) “Facts and circumstances regarding alleged violations of international humanitarian law and alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law leading up to and since 13 April 2021;”
- (3) “Identification of those responsible;”

Submission: (This submission itself does not constitute an endorsement of the “Commission of Inquiry” or its mandate.)

Jews forced to leave Palestine and Arab countries as a result of persecution and violence now constitute over 50 percent of Israeli Jews

Real stories of Jewish suffering come to light

15 April 2008

<https://www.jewishrefugees.org.uk/2008/04/real-stories-of-jewish-suffering-come.html>

In the wake of the successful passing of US Congress resolution on Jewish refugees, Justice for Jews from Arab Countries US campaign director Shelomo Alfassa, writing in *Cutting Edge News*, reminds us that the substance of the JJAC campaign is to

document the very real suffering of individual Jews from Arab countries, who are only now telling their tragic stories.

“The main focus of the (JJAC) global Campaign is to register the narratives of the Jews that were displaced from Arab and Muslim countries. This is a paperwork process, a tedious one. It requires people who were born in, and who fled from, Arab and Muslim countries to document where they came from and what they had to leave behind. Over the course of several years, many thousands of people have been registering with JJAC, providing not only names and addresses, but descriptions and documentation of the loss of their possessions. More than the possessions however are the tragic stories of their experiences.

An Iraqi Jewish woman called Rachel recounts: “My husband was arrested three times and was tortured in prison. He was almost killed the latest time while I was pregnant. We had to escape from Iraq on foot and had to leave all our property and belongings.”

An Iraqi Jewish woman called Lorraine recollects: “My father was imprisoned twice in 1948 and 1978, for selling one of his carpets because we had no cash. We fled and had to make life for ourselves without the parent’s emotional or financial support. We were orphaned for more than 20 years. My parents had to remain in Iraq and from 1964 to 1990, Jews could not sell their property. When my parents were able to escape, they were humiliated, helpless and penniless, leaving behind everything with only the clothing on their backs.”

An Iraqi Jewish woman name Fortune recounted: “My father was arrested at our home and tortured almost half to death. We saw him again after eight months. He was able to obtain a passport and fled to Lebanon where he then managed to flee to Switzerland and eventually Israel. My mother supported us alone as one by one my family fled the country. One relative fled to Turkey then to Israel after learning her entire family was murdered while she was in school. My brother and I fled to Northern Iraq where Kurds were paid to bring us to Tehran and then we went to Israel.”

A Jewish woman, Victoria from Tunisia, told: “On several occasions my father was taken away in the middle of the night by the police without charges. My brother and I were harassed in school and discriminated because we were Jews. I was often humiliated in front of my classmates. We lived in CONSTANT fear.”

A Syrian Jewish woman called Stella remembers: “As all the young people were escaping from Syria, the government was putting their families in jail. The locked up several fathers and mothers. The next day the community decided to stay in the synagogue where a black flag was flown outside the building. After crying and praying all day, we gathered at the government building, like a rally, and demanded they better kill us, as we screamed for our freedom. It was like a civil war. My father had been captured, but eventually came home as a sick man. The next day he had a heart attack and died.”

David, an Egyptian Jew recounts: “The police came into my jewelry store then took me to a police station where we were handcuffed and beaten. The put us on a truck and took us to a prison camp where they hit us with belts and sticks. We were terrorized by the officers all night. I lost everything. A year later I was transferred to another prison, and three years later I was deported.”

Frieda, a Jew from Egypt tells that her father: “Was arrested and taken outside of Cairo to what we call a concentration camp to be interrogated with other ‘Jews’ and foreign nationals.

My mother was placed on house arrest. When we left we had 48 hours to get ready and we left behind everything.”

Joe, a Jewish man from Egypt recounts: “I remember the darker side: my lost childhood, neighbors and school friends I will never see again, the harassment, the killings of innocent Jewish families, the sudden and unlawful confiscation of Jewish property. Most of all, I can still feel like it was only yesterday the deep and intense fear for our lives as crowds shouted ‘edbah el Yahud’ [slaughter the Jews].”

An Egyptian Jewish man called Steven recalls: “My mother went to the bank to withdraw the money she had saved which was in the tens of thousands. The bank teller said, ‘We don’t give money to Jews.’ She went to gain access to her safe deposit box to get her jewelry, diamonds and gold, and was denied. My father died penniless in Israel, he had left everything in Cairo.”