

Resolution GB 1905 - 10

Jews from Arab Lands

The Governing Board of the World Jewish Congress, meeting in Ottawa on 15 May 2019,

NOTES that while some Jewish communities in Muslim countries such as Morocco continue to live in peace under the protection of their respective governments, in other Arab countries a variety of different measures were taken pursuant to official decrees and legislation enacted by Arab regimes upon the establishment of the State of Israel, including: denial of human and civil rights to Jews and other minorities; expropriation of their property; stripping them of their citizenship; and other means of livelihood, with Jews often being victims of murder, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and expulsions, which together with political upheaval, resulted in the mass uprooting of more than 800,000 Jews from their countries of birth in some 10 Arab countries where the Jewish population is now virtually nonexistent;

RECORDS that on two separate occasions, in 1957 and 1967, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) declared that Jews fleeing from Arab countries were indeed 'bona fide' refugees who "fall under the mandate of my (UNHCR) office";

RECALLS that at its Second Plenary Assembly in Montreux, Switzerland, 27 June – 6 July 6 1948, the World Jewish Congress, "conscious of its responsibilities in safeguarding the rights of Jews in all lands," expressed its concern at "the grave situation facing the Jews living among the Arab peoples," and called on the relevant governments and authorities "to put an end to agitation and propaganda directed against the Jews . . . and to abstain from all forms of discrimination and oppression directed against the Jewish people."

FURTHER RECALLS that the World Jewish Congress has consistently supported the demands for justice by Jews who were forced to leave their homes in Arab countries;

FURTHER RECALLS that in 2008, the U.S. House of Representatives adopted a resolution declaring that "a just, comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace cannot be reached without addressing the uprooting of centuries-old Jewish communities in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf;" in 2010 the Knesset passed legislation preserving the right of Jewish refugees from Arab countries and Iran to compensation; and in 2014 the Canadian government adopted the recommendation by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development that Canada should "officially recognize the experience of Jewish refugees who were displaced from states in the Middle East and North Africa."

FURTHER RECALLS that World Jewish Congress President Ronald S. Lauder stated in a November 2013 article that "At its core, the issue is not about money. It is about recognition — that Jews were victimized and displaced from their countries of birth; legality — that under international law, Jews were legally determined to be refugees; and equality — that all refugees must receive equal rights and redress."

NOTES that the Government of the State of Israel has indicated that it intends to raise the issue of compensation for Jewish refugees from Arab lands in the context of Middle East peace negotiations;

DECLARES that the World Jewish Congress, which represents the communities across the globe where Jewish refugees from Arab lands have settled, stands ready and expects to participate in any formal or informal negotiations or discussions that might bring about constructive and just resolution of the claims of Jewish refugees from Arab lands.