

# Myth of Palestinian-Arab Refugees

## Overview:

- When five Arab armies invaded Israel in 1948 with the intent of wiping it off the map, both Jewish and Arab refugees emerged as Israel won the war.
- In addition to roughly 800,000 Jewish refugees who were kicked out of their homes in the Arab World, the war waged by the Arab nations – after Arab leaders told Palestinian-Arabs to leave their homes to allow Arab forces to destroy Israel – caused hundreds of thousands of Palestinian-Arabs to become refugees as well.
- The ‘refugees’ discussed in the media, however, are not actually refugees. Rather, they are the descendants of refugees and by definition, should not be considered refugees.
  - Palestinian-Arab refugees are the only refugees in the world who pass their refugee status on to their children. All other refugees’ children are not refugees; rather, they are citizens of the country in which they are born.
  - Palestinian-Arab leaders claim that 5 million Palestinian-Arab refugees exist today. However, according to the US Senate, roughly 99.5 percent of these ‘refugees’ are not actual refugees.<sup>i</sup>
- **If the Arab World and the international community stopped perpetuating this issue, Palestinian-Arabs would no longer live in refugee status and would have better lives.**

## The perpetuation of the Palestinian-Arab refugee crisis has been the result of two humanitarian failures:

### 1) The UN’s double standard against Palestinian-Arabs:

- The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) still counts descendents of Palestinian-Arab refugees from the 1948 war as “refugees,” contrary to the practices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the international community’s definition of “refugee.”<sup>ii</sup>
- UNRWA also keeps the Palestinian-Arab refugees in poverty-stricken refugee camps instead of helping them resettle in different countries.
  - All other refugees in the world receive help from the UNHCR, which helps them resettle in other countries.
- **Though the UNHCR has helped the status of hundreds of thousands of refugees in the last decade,<sup>iii</sup> UNRWA continues to keep stateless Palestinian-Arabs in squalid conditions. This is despite the fact that the UN spends three times more on a single Palestinian-Arab refugee than on a non-Palestinian-Arab refugee.<sup>iv</sup>**
  - While the UN spends so much money on the descendants of Palestinian-Arab refugees, it spent nothing to help the 1 million Jewish refugees who Arab countries expelled during and after the 1948 War. The new State of Israel and the international Jewish community absorbed these refugees without any UN help.

**The Palestinian-Arab population is the only group of people with refugee status that has grown since 1948; every other group with refugee status in all other conflicts has decreased in number. While the international community has resettled all other refugee groups, it refuses to resettle misplaced Palestinian-Arabs.**

### 2) The refusal of Arab countries to absorb Palestinian-Arabs:

- Prominent Arab politicians have perpetuated the plight of the Palestinian-Arabs to **use them as political pawns against Israel**. They know that if enough ‘refugees’

accumulate and move to Israel, Israel will lose its Jewish majority and cease to exist as a Jewish state.

- “If the refugees return to Israel, Israel will cease to exist” - Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser (April 1961)<sup>v</sup>
- The Arab countries bordering Israel refused and still **refuse to grant asylum** to the Palestinian-Arab refugees and their descendants. Some countries even bar them entry altogether.<sup>vi</sup>
- Arab countries such as Lebanon have **discriminatory laws that prevent Palestinian-Arabs** from obtaining adequate housing, high-paying jobs (e.g. lawyer, doctor, engineer), and health care simply **because of their status as Palestinian by birth**.<sup>vii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Times of Israel, US Senate dramatically scales down definition of Palestinian ‘refugees,’ May 25, 2012.

<sup>ii</sup> United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East, Palestinian Refugees (<http://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees>)

<sup>iii</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (<http://www.unhcr.org/4ac0873d6.pdf>)

<sup>iv</sup> Danny Ayalon: “The Truth About the Refugees: Israel Palestinian Conflict,” December 4, 2011.

<sup>v</sup> The Center for Online Judaic Studies, Quotes by Gamal Abdel Nasser, 1954-1967

<sup>vi</sup> “Why Is Jordan Keeping Out Palestinian Refugees?” *Gatestone Institute*, April 17, 2012.

<sup>vii</sup> “Exiled and Suffering: Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon” *Amnesty International*, October 2007.