

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.ⁱ
- **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.”ⁱⁱ
- 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,ⁱⁱⁱ 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.^{iv}**
 - 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)^v
- 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.^{vi}
- 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**.^{vii}

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

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

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

^{iv} Danny Ayalon: “The Truth About the Refugees: Israel Palestinian Conflict,” December 4, 2011.

^v The Center for Online Judaic Studies, Quotes by Gamal Abdel Nasser, 1954-1967

^{vi} “Why Is Jordan Keeping Out Palestinian Refugees?” *Gatestone Institute*, April 17, 2012.

^{vii} “Exiled and Suffering: Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon” *Amnesty International*, October 2007.