

The Palestinian Arab “Right of Return”

Much of the world falsely claims that Palestinian Arabs have “the right of return”-- the right to move into Israel proper. However, this claim is void because **Israel was not the perpetrator** of the refugee crisis, and has no legal obligation to take in any refugees. Furthermore, other Arab countries perpetuate this issue by **discriminating against Palestinian Arab refugees** in order to use them as a political ploy against Israel.

Israel did not create the refugee issue--the Arab states did.

- In 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 181, which partitioned the British mandated Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state.¹
 - While the Jews peacefully accepted this plan, the surrounding Arab states waged a full out war on Israel, calling for the destruction of the Jewish state.²
 - **Had the Arabs recognized this resolution, there would be no Palestinian Arab refugees, and there would be a Palestinian state.**³
 - In 1948, Emil Ghoury, the Secretary of the Arab Higher Committee, stated that the Palestinian Arab “refugees [are] the direct consequence of Arab states in opposing partition and the Jewish state.”⁴
- Palestinian Arab leaders, as well as other leaders of the Arab world, **encouraged, bribed, and forced their own people to leave their homes.**⁵
 - The Arab Higher Committee ordered tens of thousands of Palestinians to leave their homes in Haifa.⁶
 - Haled al Azm, the Syrian Prime Minister in 1948/49, wrote in his memoir; “since 1948 we have been demanding the return of [Palestinian Arab] refugees to their homes. But **we ourselves are the ones who encouraged them to leave.**”⁷
- On the other hand, **Jewish leaders encouraged Palestinian Arabs to remain** in their homes, and even offered them equal citizenship under Israeli law.⁸
 - In 1948, a British police report from Haifa stated that “every effort is being made by the Jews to persuade the Arab populace to stay and carry on with their normal lives.”⁹

The Right of Return has no binding legal requirements that Israel needs to follow.

- UN Resolution 194 states that “refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace...should be permitted to do so.”¹⁰
 - UN General Assembly resolutions are not binding by law, but merely suggestions--Israel has no legal obligation to take in Palestinian Arab refugees.
 - This resolution does not mention anything about Palestinian Arab refugees. It could refer to any refugees throughout the world.

¹ Jewish Virtual Library. Mitchell Bard. *The Palestinian Refugees: History & Overview*. August 2015.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Center for Online Judaic Studies. *September 6, 1948 Palestinian Refugees*.

⁵ Commentary. Efraim Karsh. *The Palestinians and the “Right of Return”*. May 1, 2001.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Jewish Virtual Library. Mitchell Bard. *The Palestinian Refugees: History & Overview*. August 2015.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

- Refugee law, international criminal law, and humanitarian law do not demand that Israel takes back Palestinian Arab refugees.¹¹
- Although the Jewish state is under no legal obligations to aid Palestinian Arab refugees, **Israel still made an effort to help:**
 - Israel offered to allow separated families to be reunited in Israel.¹²
 - Israel offered to pay compensation to Palestinian Arabs.¹³
 - Israel offered to take in 100,000 Palestinian Arab refugees.¹⁴
 - **All of these peace offerings were rejected by the Arabs.**¹⁵

Arab nations use Palestinian Arab “refugees” as a political ploy in order to gain world sympathy and paint Israel in a poor light.

- Under the Arab League Decree 1547, Palestinians are not allowed to become citizens in any Arab countries except Jordan, “in order to preserve the Palestinian entity and Palestinian identity.”¹⁶
 - In 1994, Libya expelled 30,000 Palestinian Arabs.¹⁷
 - Kuwait forced 400,000 Palestinians to leave in 1991.¹⁸
- While Arab countries close their doors to refugees, Israel accepts and assimilates refugees from across the Arab world.
 - Israel took in 586,000 of around **850,000 Jewish refugees who were forced by Arab countries to leave their homes.**¹⁹
- 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.”²⁰
 - There were approximately 750,000 original Palestinian Arab refugees in 1947. With UNRWA’s special ruling, though, Palestinian-Arab leaders claim that 5 million Palestinian-Arab refugees exist today.²¹ This exaggerated number of refugees is **over 7 times the amount of original Palestinian Arab refugees.**
 - According to the US Senate, **roughly 99.5 percent of these ‘refugees’ are not actual refugees, but the descendants of them.**²²
 - Less than 1/3 of the ‘refugees’ are living in refugee camps.²³

¹¹ The Jerusalem Post. Gavison, Zilbershats, Gore. *There’s No Right of Return*. July 5, 2011.

¹² Jewish Virtual Library. Mitchell Bard. *The Palestinian Refugees: History & Overview*. August 2015.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Elder of Zion. *Arab Discrimination and Abuse Against Palestinians Since 1948*.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Jewish Virtual Library. *Fact Sheet: Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries*. December 2015.

²⁰ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East, Palestinian Refugees

²¹ Times of Israel. *US Senate dramatically scales down definition of Palestinian ‘refugees.’* May 25, 2012.

²² Times of Israel. *US Senate dramatically scales down definition of Palestinian ‘refugees.’* May 25, 2012.

²³ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East, Palestinian Refugees