

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

Issues to which 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;”
- (4) "Recommendations on accountability measures, with a view to avoiding and ending impunity and ensuring legal accountability, including individual criminal and command responsibility;"

Specific names of victims

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

Part A. Name of victim.

Specific names of Jewish refugees who fled persecution, ethnic cleansing, oppression and systematic discrimination or were expelled, from Arab and Muslim countries in the Middle East and North Africa and who returned to their indigenous roots in Israel.

Their names are highlighted in the original immigration document.

[original document inserted]

Part B. Root causes. Systematic discrimination and repression. Violations of international law. Those responsible. Criminal responsibility.

The Jewish people’s connection to the land of Israel dates back more than three thousand years. Over the millennium, Jews were repeatedly subjugated by successive conquering empires. Some Jews maintained a continuous presence in the land of Israel, while most were exiled. When the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the First Temple in the 6th century BCE and the Roman commander Titus destroyed the Second Temple in the 1st century

CE, Jews were forced to make their way to other lands, including in the Middle East and North Africa. What followed was over two thousand years of exile and oppression.

Despite waves of persecution in a multiplicity of Arab and Muslim lands following the advent of Islam in the 7th century CE, Jewish communities survived and preserved their unique belief-system, traditions and enduring bond with Jerusalem and the land of Israel, most often under great stress, hardship and second-class (*dhimmi*) status. After the modern state of Israel was created in 1948, these long-suffering Jewish communities, the longest-standing refugees in human history, finally found shelter and freedom in their ancestral homeland.

What follows is a brief synopsis of the tribulations of the Jews in Middle East and North African countries over the ages, and the journey of these refugees primarily back to the land of Israel.

Today, Jewish refugees and their descendants in Israel who fled persecution, or ethnic cleansing, or were expelled from Middle East and North African Arab countries, number approximately 3.5 million people. (They account for a little more than half of Israel’s Jewish population of 6.93 million.)

On the Palestinian definition of a “refugee” – which claims to include all descendants of 1948 refugees – 3.5 million Jewish “refugees” from Arab and Muslim lands live in Israel alone, and over a million more are in Europe and the Americas.

A total of 1,006,600 Jewish refugees fled persecution from Arab countries, Iran and Turkey after the creation of the modern state of Israel in 1948. Today, Jewish communities are non-existent in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, and Yemen. Minute populations remain in Morocco and Tunisia. Less than 10% and 20% of the pre-1948 Jewish population in Iran and Turkey respectively, remain.

The flight of Jewish refugees from persecution, forcible transfer, and ethnic cleansing in Arab countries, Iran and Turkey after the creation of Israel in 1948

Last country of residence	Approx. Jewish population in 1948	Approx. Jewish population in 2022
Algeria	140,000	200
Egypt	75,000	10
Iran	100,000	9,000

Iraq	135,000	10
Lebanon	5,000	70
Libya	38,000	0
Morocco	265,000	3,000
Syria	30,000	0
Tunisia	105,000	1,400
Turkey	80,000	16,000
Yemen	63,000	10
Total	1,036,000	29,700

**Jewish refugees from the Middle East and North Africa
who immigrated to the homeland of the Jewish people**

Country of birth*	1948-1951	1952-1960	1961-1971	1972-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000-2015	2016	2017	Total per country
Algeria	3,810	3,433	12,857	2,137	1,830	1,443	4,008	322	294	30,134
Egypt, Sudan	16,024	17,521	2,963	535	352	201	357	27	28	38,008
Iran	21,910	15,699	19,502	9,550	8,487	3,627	2,088	51	32	80,946
Iraq	123,371	2,989	2,129	939	111	1,235	239	17	13	131,043
Lebanon	235	846	2,208	564	179	87	85	12	8	4224
Libya	30,972	2,079	2,466	219	66	89	197	18	6	36,112
Morocco	28,263	95,945	130,507	7,780	3,809	2,877	4,516	483	323	274,503
Syria	2,678	1,870	2,138	842	995	1,646	70	7	2	10,248
Tunisia	13,293	23,569	11,566	2,148	1,942	1,364	4,242	362	278	58,764
Turkey	34,547	6,871	14,073	3,118	2,088	1,084	1,448	240	371	63,840
Yemen	48,315	1,170	1,066	51	17	671	228	20	9	51,547
Totals	323,418	171,992	201,475	27,883	19,876	14,324	17,478	1,559	1,364	779,369

(* 26,681 not known and excluded)

ALGERIA

Jewish population in 1948: 140,000

Jewish population today: virtually non-existent (less than 200)

The Jewish community in Algeria dates back at least to the first century CE, with some scholars maintaining there was a Jewish presence as far back as the 6th century BCE, following the destruction of the First Temple – at least 700 years before Islam.

After the Muslim or Arab conquest in the 7th century, the Jewish community was subjected to Islamic domination.

The Jewish community grew significantly when a large number of Jews fleeing oppression in Spain moved to Algeria beginning in the 14th century.

As *dhimmi*'s Jews were subject to a special tax (the *jizya*) and periodic outbursts of fanaticism and local persecutions.

In the 16th century Ottoman rulers prohibited Jews from riding horses, bearing arms, or being in a physically superior posture or social situation to Muslims. Most Jews lived in abject misery.

In 1805 the *Dey*'s (ruler) Jewish chief aide was assassinated, and a massacre of Jews took place in Algiers.

After the French occupation of Algeria in 1830, Jews were no longer classified as *dhimmi*s and the situation of Jews improved. Jews were ultimately given full French citizenship in 1870. Discriminatory conditions still existed for Southern Algerian Jews who were categorized as indigenous as opposed to French.

French antisemitism also operated in Algeria. The naturalization of some 35,000 Jews resulted in a wave of antisemitism. There were 27 pogroms in Algerian localities at the end of the 19th century. The riots were carried out by both Europeans and Muslims, and the local authorities were often lax in their response. Jews were attacked and in Tlemcen in 1881, in Algiers in 1882, 1897, and 1898, in Oran and Sétif in 1883, and in Mostaganem in 1897, where the violence reached its peak with widespread looting and killing, and desecration of synagogues. The French army refused to intervene during a pogrom in which two Jews were killed and over a hundred shops destroyed during the Dreyfus affair in 1898.

There were approximately 130,000 Jews living in Algeria in the 1930s, when the situation for Jews deteriorated due to rising Nazi influence. Muslim Algerians, inspired by Nazi ideology, massacred and injured dozens of Jews in 1934.

During World War II, as a colony of France under Vichy rule, Jews were subjected to social and economic persecution, barred from attending public schools, expelled from economic life, and prohibited from engaging in a long list of businesses, as well as practicing law and medicine, and required to wear an identifying mark. Algeria was the only Vichy-controlled North African territory where a “Special Department for the Control of the Jewish Problem” was created, whose function was specifically to apply the Jewish statutes. As a result, the

restrictions on Jews were much more vigorously enforced in Algeria than in Morocco and Tunisia.

The Algerian Office for Aryanization also adopted other laws that did not even exist in Vichy France. 2,000 Jews were placed in labor and concentration camps in the country. Prisoners were forced to perform hard labor under terrible unsanitary conditions and many died from beatings, hunger, exhaustion, and disease.

Algerian Jews played a significant role in the Algerian resistance movement, and Algeria was liberated in November 1942.

Following World War II, the Jewish population rose to 140,000. There were 60 Algerian Jewish communities, each with their own rabbi, synagogue, and educational center.

After declaring independence from France in 1962, the Algerian government granted Algerian citizenship only to those inhabitants whose fathers or paternal grandfathers were Muslim. Algeria's Supreme Court Justice declared that Jews were not entitled to legal protection. Jewish property was confiscated. Jews were deprived of their economic rights and endured social and political discrimination. 95% of the country's Jewish population fled, primarily to France.

In 1967-68, the Algerian government took possession of all but one of the Jewish communities' synagogues and turned them into mosques.

As a result of the anti-Jewish persecution, nearly all remaining Algerian Jews fled the country, with 26,000 immigrating to Israel. By 1968, only 1,500 Jews remained in Algeria.

In 1994, the miniscule remaining population were threatened by an Islamic terror group.

Today, there are less than 200 Jews living in Algeria.

See: "Algeria," *Justice for Jews from Arab Countries*, <http://www.justiceforjews.com/algeria.html>; "Fact Sheet: Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries," Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-refugees-from-arab-countries#algeria>; "Algeria," World Jewish Congress, <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/DZ>; "Country Profiles," JIMENA, <https://www.jimena.org/jimena-country-by-country/>; "2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Algeria," *U.S. State Department*, March 30, 2021; "The Jews of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia," *Yad Vashem*, https://www.yadvashem.org/articles/general/the-jews-of-algeria-morocco-and-tunisia.html#footnoteref5_6z2o4l2; Carol Iancu, "The Jews of France and Algeria at the time of the Dreyfus Affair," *Studia Hebraica* 7 (2007), pp. 51-56; "Mountford, Timothy (fl. 1804-1810) to Tobias Lear re: assassination and expulsion of Jews from Algiers (pogrom)," June 28, 1805, in the *Gilder Lehrman Collection*, <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/collection/glc02794063>; Eugene Plantet, *Beys de Tunis et des Consuls de France Avec le Cour 1577-1830*, Germer Baillièrre, Paris, 1894, pp. 504 ff

EGYPT

Jewish population in 1948: 75,000

Jewish population today: virtually non-existent (less than 10)

Jews lived in Egypt since biblical times, over 3,000 years ago and over 2,000 years before the advent of Islam.

Israelite tribes first moved to the Land of Goshen (the north-eastern edge of the Nile Delta) during the reign of the Egyptian pharaoh Amenhotep IV (1375-1358 B.C). During the reign of Ramses II (1298-1232 BC), Jews were enslaved for the Pharaoh's building projects. Ramses II's successor, Merneptah, continued the same anti-Jewish policies, and around the year 1220 BC, the Jews revolted and escaped across the Sinai to Canaan. This is the biblical Exodus commemorated in the holiday of Passover.

Over the years, many Jews in the land of Israel who were not deported to Babylon sought shelter in Egypt, among them the prophet Jeremiah. A Jewish population in Alexandria emerged during the Ptolemaic era (3rd century BC) but was largely diminished by the Roman emperor Trajan's army. The noted scholar Maimonides lived in Egypt in the 12th century CE.

By 1897, over 25,000 Jews lived in Egypt. Jews played a substantial role in Egyptian society and contributed to industry, culture and finance. But in 1926, the first Nationality Code was instituted, which restricted citizenship to those who "belonged racially to the majority...whose language is Arabic or whose religion is Islam," thereby denying Jews citizenship.

Although the Jewish population grew to 63,500 in 1937, the Jewish community faced increasing persecution into the 1940s due to the rise of Egyptian nationalism. During anti-Jewish riots in 1945, over 300 Jews were killed or injured, and a synagogue, a Jewish hospital, and an old-age home were burned down.

In 1947, an Egyptian law was enacted setting limitations on employing Jews, as well as requiring majority shareholders of companies to be Egyptian nationals. Since as a rule Jews were denied citizenship, many Jews lost their jobs and businesses.

After the State of Israel was created in 1948, thousands of Jews were forced into internment camps and arrested as alleged collaborators with Israel. Rioters bombed the Jewish Quarter, Jewish homes, synagogues and businesses. Hundreds were killed or wounded, and thousands more were arrested. 14,000 Jews fled Egypt in 1948.

Egyptian oppression reached new levels following Gamal Abdel Nasser's ascension to power and the Suez crisis in 1956. In 1952, rioters destroyed 500 Jewish businesses and many Jews were killed or injured. Jewish property was confiscated, and Egyptian Jewry lost the bulk of their economic substance and their ability to maintain Jewish religious, educational, social and welfare institutions. Nasser declared Jews as enemies of the state and expelled 25,000. The

deported Jews were allowed to take only one suitcase with them and twenty dollars in cash. They were forced to “donate” their remaining property to the Egyptian government. One thousand more Jews were sent to prisons and detention camps.

By 1957, only 15,000 Jews remained in Egypt.

The Six-Day War in 1967 saw a further wave of persecution. Egyptian Jews were subjected to more arbitrary arrests and expropriation of property. Jewish males over the age of 16 were imprisoned in internment camps or tortured. By 1968, only 2,500 Jews remained. In the 1970’s the remaining Jews were given permission to leave the country and the community dwindled to a few families.

In 1971, it was estimated that Egyptian Jews had lost personal property then valued at \$500 million, \$300 million of communal property, and \$200 million worth of religious artifacts.

A handful of Jews remain in Egypt and the community is on the verge of extinction.

See: “Jewish refugees expelled from Arab lands and from I,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 30, 2017, <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Issues/Pages/Jewish-refugees-expelled-from-Arab-lands-and-from-Iran-29-November-2016.aspx>; “Egypt,” Justice for Jews from Arab Countries, <http://www.justiceforjews.com/egypt.html>; “Fact Sheet: Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries,” Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-refugees-from-arab-countries#algeria>; “Egypt,” World Jewish Congress, <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/EG>; “Country Profiles,” JIMENA, <https://www.jimena.org/jimena-country-by-country/>; “2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Egypt,” U.S. State Department, March 30, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/egypt/>

IRAN

Jewish population in 1948: 100,000 Jewish population today: 9,000
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Jews have lived in Iran/Persia since the 6th century BCE, approximately a thousand years before the arrival of Islam.

After the Muslim conquest of Persia in 642 CE, Jews were reduced to second-class *dhimmi* status, subject to a special poll tax applied only to non-Muslims and forced to wear a gold patch distinguishing them from non-Jews (a precursor to the infamous yellow Star of David used to distinguish Jews under Nazi rule).

In the 17th century, Jews were required to declare themselves “New Muslims” and to practice Judaism in secret. During the 19th century, Jews were persecuted and entire Jewish communities forced to convert to Islam.

Under the Pahlavi dynasty, established in 1925, secularization took hold. Reza Shah Pahlavi prohibited mass conversion of Jews to Islam, Jewish schools taught Hebrew and Jewish newspapers were established. However, following the rise of Hitler, Reza Shah's pro-Nazi sympathies led to the forced closures of Hebrew schools and the spread of antisemitic propaganda.

The Iranian government opposed the partition plan and the creation of the modern Jewish state, as did Iranian Muslim clerics. State-run media carried anti-Israel and antisemitic messaging. Though in 1950 Iran granted *de facto* recognition of Israel, anti-Jewish sentiment rose in the early 1950s under Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddegh. Between 1948 and 1953, 31,000 Jews, approximately one-third of the total Jewish population, left Iran (5,000 returning by 1975).

A coup deposed Mosaddegh in 1953 and he was replaced with Reza Shah's son Mohammad Reza Shah. During the latter's rule, Jewish life flourished until the Islamic Revolution in 1979. On the eve of the revolution there were 80,000 Jews in Iran.

Forty to fifty percent left immediately after the Islamic Revolution, and seventy-five percent had left within the decade. Many were shocked into flight when the new regime soon executed the titular head of the Jewish community, Habib Elghanian. One of the country's leading businessman and philanthropists, Elghanian was executed in May 1979 by a firing squad on charges that included "contacts with Israel and Zionism." Many fled under cover of night abandoning homes and businesses, while others lost everything after the new government confiscated their assets.

After the Islamic Revolution, daily life became much more difficult and dangerous. At least 14 Jews were executed for their religious beliefs or connection to Israel, including Feizollah Mekhoubad, a 77-year-old cantor of a Tehran synagogue who was tortured, had his eyes gouged out, and was executed in 1994 after being accused of having links to Israel. Jewish businessman Ruhollah Kakhodah-Zadeh was hanged in May 1998 for assisting Jews to emigrate from Iran. Iranian Jewish refugees recount that executing Jews periodically was a policy to keep them in line. In 1999, 13 Jews were arrested and ten convicted of spying for Israel and the United States. They were released by 2003 after international pressure, but the arrests spread fear in the community, their loyalty having been brought into question.

Iranian leaders continue to promote antisemitism and Holocaust denial. Iran's government-controlled media publishes antisemitic material and embeds it into the school curriculum. The Iranian government funds terror groups, such as Hezbollah and Hamas, that murder Jews in Israel and around the world.

A degree of religious freedom for Jews was, and is, permitted in Iran. Travel is also permitted, but some Jews who have traveled to Israel have been interrogated, fined and imprisoned upon their return. Jews who have remained in Iran are permitted to emigrate with restrictions. As long as they stay, Iranian Jews must be careful to eschew Zionism and not to question their *dhimmi* status, the legitimacy of the regime, or the system of Sharia law by which they are governed. Under current laws, for instance, if a Muslim kills a Jew, he is obligated to pay

financial restitution, while if a Jew kills a Muslim, he is subject to the death penalty. Jewish schools are required to have Muslim principals. A Jewish sibling that converts to Islam is entitled to inherit the entirety of his parents' estate, disinheriting his Jewish siblings.

At this time, approximately 90% of the Jews who lived in Iran prior to the Islamic Revolution have left. 9,000 remain.

See: "Jews in Islamic Countries: Iran," *Jewish Virtual Library*, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jews-of-iran>; "Iran," *World Jewish Congress*, <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/IR>; "Country Profiles," *JIMENA*, <https://www.jimena.org/jimena-country-by-country/>; Larry Cohler-Esses, "How Iran's Jews Survive in Mullahs' World," *The Forward*, August 18, 2015, <https://forward.com/news/319269/irans-jews-win-secure-place-in-mullahs-world-with-strings-attached/>; "2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iran," U.S. State Department, March 30, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/iran/>; Karmel Melamed, "The Iranian revolution was 40 years ago. Persian Jews in Los Angeles are still feeling the pain," Feb. 25, 2019, *JTA*, <https://www.jta.org/2019/02/25/global/the-iranian-revolution-was-40-years-ago-persian-jews-in-los-angeles-are-still-feeling-the-pain>; Report of the Special Rapporteur on Torture, Commission on Human Rights, E/CN.4/1995/34, January 12, 1995, para. 404; Orly R. Rahimiyan, "Judeo-Persian Communities vi. The Pahlavi Era (1925-1979)," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, XV/2, pp. 124-132, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/judeo-persian-vi-the-pahlavi-era-1925-1979>

IRAQ

Jewish population in 1948: 135,000 Jewish population today: virtually non-existent (less than 10)
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Jews lived in Iraq/Babylonia from the 6th century BCE after King Nebuchadnezzar conquered Judea and sent most of the population into exile in Babylonia – approximately a thousand years before the arrival of Islam. It is the place of the oldest Jewish Diaspora, with a continuous history through to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, a span of over 2,600 years.

Babylonia was the center of Jewish scholarship and Jews prospered there for 1,200 years before the Muslim conquest in 634 CE. Under Muslim rule, Jews became subject to special taxes and restrictions, and were later prohibited from building synagogues. From 900 through 1900 CE, when Iraq was conquered by the Turkish, the Mongols, and the Persians, Jews residing in Iraq were often subject to *dhimmi* second-class status, poll taxes and other discriminatory laws.

Modern day Iraq was carved out of ancient Babylonia, Assyria, and the southern part of Turkey after World War I. Under British rule, which began in 1917, the quality of life of the Jewish community progressed. Jews played a central role in developing the judicial and postal

systems and served in Parliament. Jews were allowed to form Zionist organizations and study Hebrew.

The situation for Jews deteriorated drastically when Iraq achieved independence in 1932. Under the new government, Jews faced discrimination, employment quotas, and persecution. In June 1941 a pogrom known as the “Farhud,” meaning “violent dispossession,” occurred. It was incited over Baghdad radio by the Nazi-collaborator, Palestinian leader, and Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Amin al-Husseini. For two days, Iraqi mobs – soldiers in civilian clothes, policemen and large crowds of Iraqi men, including Bedouins brandishing swords and daggers – slaughtered, raped and pillaged the Jews of Baghdad. Between 150 and 780 Jews were murdered (exact counts are not known), thousands were injured, an indeterminable number of women were victims of widespread rape. The violence was celebrated in Arab communities throughout the world and in Nazi Germany. During the next 10 years, Jews endured random outbreaks of rioting and violence.

After the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the Iraqi criminal code was amended to make Zionism a crime punishable by death, allowing police to raid Jewish homes suspected of committing the crime of Zionism. 1,500 Jews were imprisoned and tortured, stripped of their property, and thousands of Jews were dismissed from government jobs.

Although emigration was prohibited, many Jews made their way to Israel with the aid of an underground movement. In 1950 Iraq legalized Jewish emigration, on condition that they renounce their citizenship and ultimately forfeit their property. 110,000 Jews were airlifted to Israel in 1950-1951 in Operation Ezra & Nehemia, and 20,000 others were smuggled out through Iran. Emigration was banned in 1952 with approximately 6,000 Jews remaining. Those who remained were subjected to continued persecution and forced to carry yellow identity cards.

After the Six Day War in 1967, many of the then 3,000 Jews were arrested and dismissed from their jobs; Jewish property was expropriated; bank accounts were frozen; businesses were shut; telephones were disconnected, and many placed under long periods of house arrest. In 1969, 9 Jews were hanged in public squares and others were tortured to death. Baghdad radio called on Iraqis to “enjoy the feast” when the Jews were hanged, and thousands of Iraqis flocked to the public square and chanted “Death to Israel” in front of the bodies hanging from the scaffolds.

The vast majority of the remaining Jewish community fled the country in the 1970s and the last remaining synagogue was closed in 2003. Antisemitism, including Holocaust denial, is still widespread in the country and propagated via state-owned media. Since 1948, 131,000 Jews from Iraq emigrated to Israel. The ancient Jewish community in Iraq, which at one time constituted one-third of the total population of Baghdad, is now non-existent.

See: “Jewish refugees expelled from Arab lands and from Iran,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 30, 2017, <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Issues/Pages/Jewish-refugees-expelled-from-Arab-lands-and-from-Iran-29-November-2016.aspx>; “Iraq,” Justice for Jews from Arab Countries, <http://www.justiceforjews.com/iraq.html>; “Fact Sheet: Jewish

Refugees from Arab Countries,” *Jewish Virtual Library,*
<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-refugees-from-arab-countries#algeria>; “Iraq,”
World Jewish Congress, <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/IQ>;
“Country Profiles,” JIMENA, <https://www.jimena.org/jimena-country-by-country/>; Joseph
Samuels, “When the Mob Came for the Jews of Baghdad,” May 28, 2021, *Wall Street Journal,*
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/when-the-mob-came-for-the-jews-of-baghdad-11622237901>;
Carole Basri, “The Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries: An Examination of Legal Rights - A
Case Study of the Human Rights Violations of Iraqi Jews,” *Fordham International Law
Journal, Volume 26, Issue 3, 2002, Article 6, p. 656,*
<https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1881&context=ilj>

LEBANON

Jewish population in 1948: 5,000 Jewish population today: virtually non-existent (approx. 30)
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The history of the Jews in Lebanon is different from the story of the Jews in other Middle East and North African countries because in ancient times the territory of what is today Lebanon was part of the Jewish kingdom. Beginning in biblical times, approximately 1,000 BCE, Jewish communities established themselves in Lebanon, primarily near (today’s) Beirut. There are passages from the Torah which recount that wood from cedar trees in southern Lebanon was used for construction of King Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem, around 950 BCE. According to tradition, in the 1st century CE, King Herod had a temple constructed for his Jewish subjects living in the city of Tyre, and also supported the Jewish community in Beirut. The community grew, and by the 6th century, synagogues had been built in both Beirut and Tripoli.

In the late 18th and 19th centuries, Jews settled in smaller villages in Lebanon and most Jewish communities were interspersed with those of the Druze. During the first half the 20th century, Jewish immigrants from Greece and Turkey led to a growth of the Jewish population in Lebanon.

By 1911, Jews played a significant role in Lebanese society. Lebanese Jews participated in the struggle for independence from France in 1943 and were strongly attached to their Lebanese identity, publishing, for instance, two Jewish community newspapers.

There were instances of rioting and incitement around the time of the establishment of the State of Israel. After the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the Jewish population grew from 5,000 to 6,000 as a result of Jews experiencing persecution in Syria and Iraq.

In the mid-50’s, approximately 7,000 Jews lived in Beirut. Jews began to emigrate from Lebanon after the first Lebanese civil war in 1958.

Lebanese Jews were also threatened in 1967 and many emigrated to a number of countries, including France and Israel.

In 1975, the situation deteriorated dramatically with the outbreak of the Muslim-Christian civil war. The war resulted in the destruction of the Jewish communal infrastructure in Beirut. Syria's growing presence and influence in the country, compelled most of Lebanon's remaining 1,800 Jews to flee.

After the Israel-Lebanon war in 1982, eleven Jewish leaders were captured and killed by Islamist terrorists.

In the 1990s, Jews were unable to practice their religion freely. Today, less than 30 Jews remain in Lebanon, in a position of vulnerability and praying in secret.

See: "Lebanon," *Justice for Jews from Arab Countries*, <http://www.justiceforjews.com/algeria.html>; "Lebanon," *World Jewish Congress*, <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/DZ>; "Country Profiles," *JIMENA*, <https://www.jimena.org/jimena-country-by-country/>; "2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Lebanon," *U.S. State Department*, March 30, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/lebanon/>

LIBYA

Jewish population in 1948: 38,000 Jewish population today: 0

The history of the Jewish people in Libya dates back at least to the 3rd century BCE – a thousand years before the advent of Islam. For over 2,300 years Jews lived in Libya under Greek, Roman, Arab, Ottoman, Italian, British, and then again Arab rule.

Under Muslim rule, Jews were treated as *dhimmi* with second class status. During the 19th century under the Ottoman Empire, Jews suffered recurring pogroms.

From 1911 until the late 1930's, under the Italian occupation of Libya, Libyan Jews enjoyed mostly positive conditions. Then fascist antisemitic laws were progressively applied in the colony, barring Jews from government jobs, requiring them to have "Jewish race" stamped on their passports, and expelling Jewish children from school. Notwithstanding the antisemitic pressure, by 1941 Jews constituted a quarter of the population of Tripoli and maintained 44 synagogues throughout the country. In the second half of 1940, after Italy joined World War II on the side of Germany, the situation of Jews in Libya worsened. In 1941 Jews who were dual citizens of enemy countries, including those who had lived in Libya their entire lives, were expelled. Some expelled from Tripoli and Benghazi were sent to Bergen-Belsen and Dachau.

Many Jews from Tripoli were sent to forced labor camps. More than 2,500 Jews from Benghazi were transported to desert camps (including the Giado camp), deliberately starved and kept in conditions where disease was rampant. More than one-fifth of them perished.

At the end of the war Libya came under British rule. Growing Arab nationalism resulted in violent pogroms against the Jewish community. In 1945, in the city of Tripoli, a savage antisemitic riot occurred. More than 140 Jews including dozens of children were killed, hundreds injured, nine synagogues burned, thousands of homes and businesses plundered, and 4,000 rendered homeless.

Another pogrom occurred after the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948, with rioters killing more Jews and destroying hundreds of Jewish homes. Although emigration was illegal, more than 3,000 Jews succeeded in leaving for Israel. In 1949 the British finally allowed emigration and between 1949 and 1951 over 30,000, 90% of Libya's Jews, fled.

Thousands more Jews fled to Israel after Libya gained independence in 1951. In 1958, the Libyan government ordered the dissolution of the Jewish Community Council. In 1961, the Libyan government required Libyan citizens to obtain a special document to prove citizenship and virtually all Jews were denied the document. By this time, Libyan Jews could not vote, hold public office, purchase property, obtain passports, or manage their own communal affairs.

After the Six Day War in 1967, another anti-Jewish riot occurred, in which 18 Jews were killed. By this time, the Jewish population had shrunk to 7,000 people. An Italian operation subsequently airlifted 6,000 Jews out of the country, primarily to Italy. The refugees were forced to leave their homes, businesses and possessions behind.

When Muammar Gadaffi came to power in 1969, only 100 Jews remained in Libya. Gadaffi confiscated all Jewish owned property and prohibited emigration, but some Jews still managed to escape.

By 1974, there were no more than 20 Jews in the country and the last is believed to have died in 2002.

In 2011, a Jewish activist who returned to Libya to restore the synagogue in Tripoli was met with protesters carrying signs stating "There is no place for the Jews in Libya," and "We don't have a place for Zionism." Today, no Jews remain in Libya.

*See: "Jewish refugees expelled from Arab lands and from Iran," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 30, 2017, <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Issues/Pages/Jewish-refugees-expelled-from-Arab-lands-and-from-Iran-29-November-2016.aspx>; "Libya," Justice for Jews from Arab Countries, <http://www.justiceforjews.com/libya.html>; "Fact Sheet: Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries," Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-refugees-from-arab-countries#libya>; "Libya," World Jewish Congress, <http://www.justiceforjews.com/libya.html>; "Country Profiles," JIMENA, <https://www.jimena.org/jimena-country-by-country/>; M. Roumani, *The Jews of Libya: Coexistence, Persecution, Resettlement*, Sussex Academic Press, 2008*

MOROCCO

Jewish population in 1948: 265,000
Jewish population today: 3,000

Jews have lived in Morocco for over 2,000 years – over 1,000 years before the advent of Islam. Morocco's Jewish communities date back to 587 BCE, when Jewish refugees fled the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the First Temple. During the Roman Empire, the Jewish diaspora of Israel spread throughout North Africa's Mediterranean coast. In 70 CE, following the Roman destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, additional Jewish refugees settled in Morocco.

At the end of the 7th century, the Muslim conquest reached Morocco. Jews were now forced to live as subordinate, second class *dhimmi*s. In 1146, under the Almohades dynasty, Jews were forced to convert to Islam or be killed. Some chose a third option of becoming Jews in secret while at home and Muslim in public. Those who converted were required to identify themselves by wearing a specific yellow head garment and subjected to severe anti-Jewish oppression and violence.

By the 13th century, when the Berber Marinid dynasty came to power, Jews were once again allowed to live openly. Thousands of Spanish Jews fleeing persecution in the 14th and 15th centuries moved to Morocco. Many of the Jewish refugees of the Spanish Inquisition were subjected to violence, famine, and a struggle for survival. In 1438, Jews began to be forced to live in *mellahs* or designated Jewish districts. In 1465, Moroccan Jews suffered a widespread murderous pogrom perpetrated by the Muslim population of Fez.

In the 17th century, the Alawids came to power; Jews lived as *dhimmi*s and were required to pay exorbitantly high taxes. A prominent Jewish councilor and his family were burned in public in order to instill terror, synagogues were destroyed, and Jews were expelled. Massacres, great cruelty and systematic discrimination against Jews continued until the Sultan of Morocco decreed equal rights to Jews, following negotiations with Sir Moses Montefiore in 1863. Despite this edict, Jews still faced rampant lethal violence and discrimination.

In 1912 the signing of the Treaty of Fez turned Morocco into a French protectorate. Just weeks later, Muslim army recruits mutinied and descended on the Jewish quarter (the *mellah*) in what is known as the *Tritl* (the "sack") of Fez. Men, women and children were murdered in cold blood, hurled from roofs, mutilated and raped; the synagogues were desecrated, and 12,000 Jews found themselves homeless.

Subsequently, the treaty initiated a new era for the Jews of Morocco in which they enjoyed greater cultural, social, and political freedoms.

In 1941, the French Vichy regime promulgated laws against Moroccan Jews. However, Moroccan Sultan Mohammed V opposed the decrees and frustrated their implementation.

By 1948 there were 265,000 Jews in Morocco, constituting the largest Jewish community in North Africa. When modern Israel was established in June 1948, Moroccan Jews were

attacked; 44 were killed and many others were wounded during the riots. An unofficial economic boycott was instigated against Moroccan Jews. 18,000 Moroccan Jews fled to Israel.

In 1954 and 1955 pro-nationalist forces attacked and murdered Jews, and looted Jewish property, in places throughout the country. Between 1948-1956 some 85,000 Jews left for Israel from Morocco, then still under French rule. In 1956, when Morocco declared its independence, Jewish emigration to Israel was suspended. Thousands of Jews were illegally smuggled out of the country by way of a courageous underground network.

In 1961, the government relaxed the laws on emigration to Israel, as part of a deal that entailed a payment to Morocco for each Jew that left the country for Israel. Between 1961-1967 approximately 120,000 Jews left Morocco for Israel.

The Six Day War in 1967 saw increased hostility towards the Jewish population which led to further emigration to Europe and North America, as well as Israel.

Today, the Jewish community numbers approximately 3,000.

See: "Morocco," *Justice for Jews from Arab Countries*.

<http://www.justiceforjews.com/morocco.html>; "Fact Sheet: Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries," Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-refugees-from-arab-countries#algeria>; "Morocco," World Jewish Congress, <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/MA>; "Country Profiles," JIMENA, <https://www.jimena.org/jimena-country-by-country/>; "2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Morocco," U.S. State Department, March 30, 2021, <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/MA>; Lyn Julius, "When the Jews sheltered with the sultan's lions," *The Times of Israel*, April 16, 2021, <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/when-the-jews-sheltered-with-the-sultans-lions/>

SYRIA

Jewish population in 1948: 30,000 Jewish population today: 0

Jews lived in Syria since the days of King David in 1,000 BCE, for more than 3,000 years, and 1,700 years before the advent of Islam.

During the 8th to 10th centuries, Jewish life in Syria flourished. The Great Synagogue was built in Aleppo and Torah scholars taught and led the Jewish community.

With the Spanish Inquisition in 1492, Spanish Jews fled and immigrated to many Eastern Mediterranean countries, including Syria. During parts of the Ottoman rule of Syria, Jewish communities fared well.

The 1800's signaled a change for the Jews of Syria. In 1840 during the so-called Damascus affair, Jews were accused of conducting ritual murder, and again in 1860 outlandish claims were made about Jews being criminals. As a result, beginning in 1850, Jews left Syria for Egypt and later for England. In 1908, a large community of Syrian Jews immigrated to the United States.

By 1943, 30,000 Jews lived in Syria in three distinct communities, each with its own traditions, based in Aleppo, Damascus and Kamishli.

After World War II, Syria gained independence from France, the new Syrian government imposed restrictions on Jewish life, restricting the teaching of Hebrew in Jewish schools, prohibiting immigration of Jews into British Mandatory Palestine, and calling for boycotts of Jewish businesses. The government confiscated Jewish property and froze Jewish bank accounts.

Following the UN's adoption of the partition plan for Mandatory Palestine in 1947, Arab mobs rampaged in the Jewish community of Aleppo, killing dozens of Jews, burning and looting over 200 Jewish homes, businesses, and synagogues, and destroying sacred ancient Jewish artifacts and manuscripts. The 2,500-year-old Jewish community was left in ruins. Jews were discharged from all government positions and their bank accounts frozen. 7,000 of Aleppo's 10,000 Jews fled in terror. The government confiscated their property.

After the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948, the government severely restricted the Jewish community's freedom of movement and economic rights. In 1949, banks were instructed to freeze the accounts of Jews and all their assets were expropriated.

Over the next several decades, Syrian Jews were subject to severe persecution and stripped of their citizenship. Jewish schools were closed and handed over to Muslims. Jews could not acquire telephones or driver's licenses and were barred from buying property. An airport road was paved over the Jewish cemetery in Damascus. Jews were subject to secret surveillance by the state. The community lived under siege. Syrian Jews were, in effect, hostages of a hostile regime. They could leave Syria only on the condition that they leave members of their family behind. Any Jew who attempted to flee faced either the death penalty or imprisonment at hard labor. Those who attempted to flee were usually caught, arrested and cruelly tortured in the dungeons of the secret police.

In 1992, following international pressure, Jews were finally granted exit visas and the remaining Jews fled the country.

Today, no Jews live in Syria.

See: "Jewish refugees expelled from Arab lands and from Iran," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 30, 2017, <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Issues/Pages/Jewish-refugees-expelled-from-Arab-lands-and-from-Iran-29-November-2016.aspx>; "Syria," Justice for Jews from Arab Countries, <http://www.justiceforjews.com/syria.html>; "Fact Sheet: Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries," Jewish Virtual Library,

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-refugees-from-arab-countries#syria>; "Syria," World Jewish Congress, <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/SY>; "Country Profiles," JIMENA, <https://www.jimena.org/jimena-country-by-country/>; "2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Syria," U.S. State Department, March 30, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/syria/>

TUNISIA

Jewish population in 1948: 105,000 Jewish population today: 1,400
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The Jewish community in Tunisia dates back at least 2,000 years to 200 CE when Jews lived in the Latin territory of Carthage under Roman rule – almost 500 years before the advent of Islam.

Throughout their history, Tunisian Jews encountered periods of relatively good treatment interspersed with periods of extreme antisemitism and harsh discrimination.

Discriminatory measures were introduced against the Jews in the 4th century, when Christianity became the state religion. Jews were dismissed from all public offices and the construction of new synagogues was forbidden.

During the Byzantine period, conditions deteriorated further. Jewish religious practices were banned, synagogues were turned into churches, and Jews were forced to accept baptism. The Jews were considered heathen and faced persecution.

After the Muslim conquest in the 7th century, Jews were subject to discriminatory measures as *dhimmi*s, including the *jizya* head tax.

In the 12th century, Almohad rulers required that all the Jews of the Maghreb wear an identifying sign and special clothing. Jews were forced to convert to Islam, but practiced Judaism in the secrecy of their own homes.

From the 13th to the 15th century, the Jews of Tunis were required to wear distinguishable clothing and a yellow cloth on their head or neck.

In 1535 Jews in parts of Tunisia were expelled, massacred or sold as slaves.

In 1650 the Jews of Tunisia were confined to special quarters (*Hāra*).

The French protectorate of Tunisia was established by treaty in 1881 and the situation of Tunisian Jews greatly improved. Jews were granted new freedoms and released from the degradation imposed by Muslim rulers. Jews were given the opportunity to become French citizens under certain conditions and identified strongly with French and European culture.

Nevertheless, violence was not eradicated. In 1917, riots broke out in all of the large cities of Tunisia, during which Jews were attacked by Tunisian soldiers who beat them, plundered their shops and looted their houses while the police did nothing to stop them.

The situation of Jews in Tunisia shifted dramatically in 1940 when Tunisia was subjected to the policies of the Nazi collaborationist Vichy government and anti-Jewish legislation was implemented. Jews were fired from government jobs, forbidden from practicing many professions, and had their businesses confiscated.

No other North African country was as severely impacted by the Nazis as Tunisia, which was actually occupied between November 1942 and May 1943. During these six months, the Germans and their local collaborators instituted a regime of forced labor, confiscation of property, hostage-taking, mass extortion, deportation, and executions. There were 24 camps, some situated on the front lines of the war. Thousands of Tunisian Jews were sent to these camps and lost their lives due to disease or from bombings by allied forces where the Germans forced them to work. At least 160 Tunisian Jews were deported to European death camps.

In 1948, the Jewish community numbered 105,000, with 65,000 living in Tunis alone.

After Tunisia gained its independence in 1956, life became more precarious for Tunisian Jewry when the country undertook a process of "Arabization." The new government adopted a series of laws targeting the Jewish community, including abolishing rabbinical courts and the Tunisia Jewish Community Council, destroying synagogues, Jewish cemeteries, and Jewish quarters. The 1959 Constitution, which decreed Tunisia to be a Moslem country and a faithful member of the Arab community, along with accumulated antisemitic incidents, influenced many Jews to emigrate.

In 1961, violent incidents between French forces and Tunisian demonstrators at the naval base of Bizerte, ignited a blaze of antisemitism. A new sense of insecurity swept Tunisian Jews and a wave of Jews left Tunisia, many for France.

In 1962 it was forbidden to send letters and parcels to Israel, and direct telephone communications between the two countries were cut off. Jews holding Tunisian citizenship could only leave the country without their property, except for 30 dinars and some clothes. Thirty-five Jews from Djerba were arrested on suspicion of smuggling and were imprisoned and tortured. By 1965, the Jewish population of Tunisia amounted to no more than half of what it had been in 1962.

At the time of the Six Day War in 1967, Tunisian Jews suffered further waves of persecution. Jews were attacked by rioting Arab mobs, Jewish shops were plundered, the Great Synagogue of Tunis was set on fire, and Torah scrolls were torn to shreds on the streets. Although the government denounced the violence, such events spread panic and insecurity among the Jews of Tunisia, and at least ten thousand more fled to Israel and France.

The Jews were again subjected to obvious de facto discrimination and understood that they would never be considered full-fledged citizens. In 1971, a rabbi was killed in the very heart of

Tunis. During the Lebanese War in June 1982, there were riots against Jews in the towns of Zarzis and Ben-Garden. In 1982 the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) transferred to Tunis, and Tunisia became a center for anti-Jewish and anti-Israel propaganda.

In 2002, a terror attack outside of the El Ghriba synagogue, a pilgrimage site for nearly 2,000 years, killed 17 people. In 2010, rioters outside of an ancient synagogue shouted: “Death to Jews.” Since 2013, 100 gravestones and have been desecrated and a synagogue vandalized.

Today, only 1,400 Jews remain in Tunisia.

See: “Tunisia,” *Justice for Jews from Arab Countries*, <http://www.justiceforjews.com/tunisia.html>; “Fact Sheet: Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries,” *Jewish Virtual Library*, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-refugees-from-arab-countries>; “Tunisia,” *World Jewish Congress*, <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/TN>: “Country Profiles,” *JIMENA*, <https://www.jimena.org/jimena-country-by-country/>; “2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Tunisia,” *U.S. State Department*, March 30, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/tunisia/>; “The Jewish Community of Tunisia,” *ANU Museum of the Jewish People*, <https://dbs.anumuseum.org.il/skn/en/c6/e136252/Place/Tunisia>; “Tunis, Tunisia,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica* and reproduced on <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/tunisia-tunisia>; Shimon Yaish, “The forgotten tragedy of Tunisian Jewry, featuring a conversation with Haim Saadoun,” *Israel Hayom*, April 9, 2021, <https://www.israelhayom.com/2021/04/09/the-forgotten-tragedy-of-tunisian-jewry/>

TURKEY

Jewish population in 1948: 80,000 Jewish population today: 16,000
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The Jewish community in what is now Turkey dates to the 4th century BCE, when Jews lived under Greek rule – a 2,400 year presence and over 1,000 years before the advent of Islam.

From the 4th century CE, Jews lived under oppressive and restrictive Roman/Byzantine Christian rule.

Beginning in the 14th century, the Ottomans gained control of Turkey (Anatolia) and the conditions for Jews improved relative to Jews then living in Christian Europe. The status of Jews depended on the whims of the Sultan, one of whom ordered that the attitude of all non-Muslims should be one of “humility and abjection” and that they should not “live near Mosques or tall buildings.” (Murad III) Others were more tolerant, although Jews were still considered second-class citizens, required to pay special taxes, and to abide by restrictions dictating where to live and work, and what to wear.

Under the Ottoman Empire tens of thousands of Jews fleeing persecution in Christian lands sought refuge in Turkey (Jews expelled from Hungary in 1376, France in 1394, Sicily in the early 1400s, Salonika in the 1420s, Bavaria in 1470, Spain and Portugal in 1492, Apulia (Italy) in 1537, Bohemia in 1542).

In the aftermath of World War I, the Ottoman Empire was replaced. The creation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 resulted in changes for the treatment of Jews. Jews were subject to secularization laws which banned religious education in all schools and prohibited the teaching of Hebrew.

In 1934 there was a wave of antisemitic violence and pogroms in Eastern Thrace. During and prior to the incidents, the Jews of the region received threatening letters that warned them to leave their homes or to face death, and their properties and businesses were looted.

Turkey was officially neutral during WWII. At the same time, Turkey denaturalized up to 5,000 Turkish Jewish citizens living abroad. Over 2,000 Turkish Jews were deported to concentration camps, including Auschwitz and Sobibor.

In February 1942, a ship carrying 791 Jewish refugees traveling from Romania to Palestine was forced to stop in Istanbul with a failing engine. Turkey denied the refugees permission to disembark, towed it out to sea and cast it adrift. A day later the ship was attacked and sunk by a Soviet submarine, killing all but one of 791 aboard.

A wealth tax imposed in 1942 disproportionately affected minorities, but especially Jews who were unprotected by an embassy. Many Turkish Jews were obliged to sell their businesses and factories to pay the tax. Those unable to pay the tax were forced to work in labor camps. Although the tax was eventually revoked, in the wake of these measures, thousands of Jews emigrated from Turkey.

As soon as the modern state of Israel was created, almost 40% of Turkish Jews left and immigrated to Israel. The wave was halted temporarily in 1948 when Turkey caved to Arab pressure to suspend migration, but emigration began again in March 1949 when Turkey officially recognized Israel and removed the suspension.

In 1955, anti-Jewish rioters destroyed 1,000 homes and 4,000 businesses (belonging to a number of minority groups) leading to the emigration of thousands of more Turkish Jews.

In 1986, Jewish worshippers were murdered by Palestinian terrorists who gunned down 23 Jews in the Neve Shalom synagogue in Istanbul.

In 2003, multiple truck bombs went off around Istanbul, one exploding in front of Neve Shalom Synagogue and another exploding in front of Bet Israel Synagogue, killing 28 and injuring 300. Responsibility was found to lie with al-Qaeda, that included a Turkish ringleader and other Turkish organizers.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's rise to power in 2003 (first as Prime Minister and later as President), his Islamist ideology and antisemitic policies, have fueled a hostile environment of antisemitism in Turkey.

Today, approximately 16,000 Jews remain in Turkey.

See: "Turkey," *World Jewish Congress*, <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/TR>; "Country Profiles," *JIMENA*, <https://www.jimena.org/jimena-country-by-country/>; "2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Turkey," U.S. State Department, March 30, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/turkey/>; M.J. Akbar, "The shade of swords: jihad and the conflict between Islam and Christianity," Routledge, 2002; Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, New York Princeton University Press, (1984), updated (2014); Sule Tokas, "Jewish Immigration to the American Continent," *The Journal of Migration Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1, January-June 2018, pp. 30-64

YEMEN (and ADEN)

Jewish population in 1948: 63,000 Jewish population today: virtually non-existent (approx. 10)

The date when Jews first settled in Yemen is unknown, with some believing it was prior to the destruction of the First Temple in the 7th century BCE. The first historical evidence of Jews in Yemen dates from the third century CE, hundreds of years before the advent of Islam.

After the Muslim conquest in the 7th century, Jews became *dhimmis*, second-class citizens subject to a poll tax.

Active Muslim persecution of Jews gained full force when the Shiite-Zaydi clan seized power in the 10th century.

The Jews of Yemen were treated as pariahs who need to be reminded of their submission to the ruling faith. Jews were considered to be impure and forbidden from touching a Muslim. They were obligated to humble themselves before a Muslim, to walk on his left side, and to greet him first. Upon entering the Muslim quarter, a Jew had to take off his footgear and walk barefoot. If attacked with stones or fists by Islamic youth, a Jew was not allowed to defend himself. Jews could be killed by Muslims with impunity; only blood money was required to be paid in theory, and in practice Muslim witnesses were required but would not testify against other Muslims.

Jews in Yemen experienced periods of violent persecution and ultimatums to convert or be killed, such as those in the 12th century. The mid-14th and early 15th centuries were another period of marked exploitation and oppression.

In the 17th century a decree to humiliate Jews forbade the wearing of a head-covering (contrary to Jewish religious edicts). Eventually, Jews were allowed to wear rags over their heads. That decree remained in force until 1872, when the Ottomans consolidated their rule over Yemen.

In 1679, the Zaydis decreed that all the Jews of Sana'a who did not convert to Islam would have their house and property confiscated and were sent into exile to live in a desolate, malaria-infested area. Three-quarters of the city of Sana'a's Jews perished from disease and starvation. The surviving Jews were taken back to central Yemen about a year later, when their craftsmen skills were needed by the Muslim population. Most of their houses and religious articles had been destroyed. They were forced to live in quarters outside the cities.

In 1762, the ruling imam (al-Mahdi Abbas) ordered the destruction of all synagogues.

In the 19th century, Jews were subject to antisemitic laws that prohibited them from riding animals, wearing bright colors, and building houses above a certain height so as to ensure they lived in an inferior position. They were forced to give up Jewish customs, also to endure the Shiite practice of abducting and forcibly converting Jewish children whose fathers had died (the "orphan decree"). An edict (the "latrine decree") forced the Jewish community to take responsibility for cleaning out the public toilets and baths, as well as removing animal carcasses and dung from the streets.

Due to worsening conditions, in 1882 successive waves of Jews began fleeing Yemen primarily to the land of Israel, making their way to Jerusalem and Jaffa.

Continuing strife between the Zaydi imam and Turkish overlords, during Turkish rule, caused great suffering for impoverished Yemenite Jews. In 1905, the Zaydi imam besieged and starved the occupants of the city of Sana'a and thousands of Yemenite Jews perished from starvation.

After World War I in 1918, when North Yemen became independent, persecution increased. Antisemitic laws, which had lain dormant for years, were revived. Jews were not permitted to walk on pavements or to ride horses. In court, a Jew's evidence was not accepted against that of a Moslem. In 1922, the government of Yemen reintroduced the Islamic law decreeing that Jewish children below the age of 12 whose father had died be forcibly converted to Islam.

When a Jew decided to emigrate, he had to leave all his property behind. Despite that fact, and Yemenite ruler Imam Yahya forbidding emigration to Palestine in 1929, one-quarter of the Jewish population, or approximately 16,000 Yemeni Jews, emigrated between 1919 and 1947.

After the Second World War, thousands more Yemenite Jews wanted to come to Palestine, but the British prevented it. The refugees ended up in the crowded slums in Aden.

After the UN endorsed the Partition Plan in 1947, the police joined Muslim rioters in a bloody pogrom in Aden, killing more than 80 Jews and wreaking widespread destruction, including four synagogues. The destruction of most of their stores and businesses left Aden's Jewish community economically paralyzed. The Jewish quarter was burned to the ground.

Early in 1948, looting occurred after six Jews were falsely accused of murdering two Arab girls and the government began forcefully to expel Jews. The refugee camp in Aden swelled to more than 20 times the numbers for which it was built, and the threat of disease made evacuation urgent.

It was not until September 1948 that the British authorities in Aden allowed the refugees to proceed to Israel. Yahya's successor eased the ban on emigration and the dangerous situation led to Israel's rescue of Yemenite Jewry by air between the end of 1948 until mid-1950. Operation on Eagles' Wings (aka Operation Magic Carpet) brought 50,000 people, almost the entire Jewish Yemenite community, to Israel as refugees.

Rioting that followed the Six-Day War led to the evacuation of almost all of the remaining members of the South Yemen community to Israel and to Britain in June 1967.

In 2009, Yemeni authorities moved 70 Jews from northern Yemen to a compound in Sana'a, admitting they could not protect them elsewhere. Since 2009, 151 Jews have been airlifted to Israel through the support of the Jewish Agency and various Israeli government ministries. Many others have been smuggled out of the country to Argentina or the United States.

In 2012, a Yemeni Jew was murdered in Sana'a and a young Jewish woman was abducted, forced to convert to Islam and forcibly wed to a Muslim man.

In October 2015, the Yemeni government handed down an ultimatum to the tiny Jewish community: convert to Islam or leave. The government ultimatum stated that they would not be able to protect the Yemeni Jews if they remained in the country as Jews. Yemen's Jews sought out asylum in Israel and the United States.

Nineteen of the last remaining Jews in Yemen were airlifted to Israel on March 21, 2016, by the Jewish Agency. The secret operation, which rescued all but approximately 50 Yemeni Jews, had been planned for more than a year. The remaining Jews refused to leave.

Today, there are about 10 Jews left in Yemen. They are the only original non-Muslim minority in the country. They are treated as second-class citizens, prohibited from owning land, serving in political office, choosing their professions, and are subject to targeted discrimination by the Houthi authorities.

See: "Yemen," Justice for Jews from Arab Countries, <http://www.justiceforjews.com/yemen.html> ; *"Fact Sheet: Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries,"* and *"Yemen Virtual Jewish History Tour,"* Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-refugees-from-arab-countries>, and <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/yemen-virtual-jewish-history-tour>; *"Yemen," World Jewish Congress,* <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/YE>; *"Country Profiles,"* JIMENA, <https://www.jimena.org/jimena-country-by-country/> ; *"2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Yemen,"* U.S. State Department, March 30, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/yemen/>; Ken

Blady, Jewish Communities in Exotic Places, Jason Aronson Inc, c. 2000; Yehuda Nini, The Jews of the Yemen: 1800-1914, Routledge, 2020; "Yemen's Jewish Population, Once over 50,000, Drops to Below 10," JTA, March 31, 2021, <https://www.jta.org/quick-reads/yemens-jewish-population-once-over-50000-drops-to-below-10>

Jewish Refugees & Arab and Muslim Perpetrators

Jewish refugees from the land of Israel were exiled to Arab and Muslim countries where they were persecuted and oppressed or lived as second-class citizens for thousands of years. But against all odds, this indigenous population of the land of Israel persevered, retained their religious identity, and came home. Arab and Muslim countries repeatedly made the journey as difficult as possible: legal stumbling blocks to departure; forced ransom payments; theft of their personal belongings, their homes and businesses, their treasured religious artifacts and community property. Escape, attempts to escape, and expulsion, were interspersed by continuing systematic discrimination, repression, violent attacks and deep insecurity.

The voices of Jewish victims will not be silenced by this Commission of Inquiry. [*first set of submissions*: In these original documents from 1948 to 1951 are the specific names of 175,000 Jewish refugees.] [*second set of submissions*: In these original documents from 1952 to 1959 are the specific names of 150,000 Jewish refugees, in addition to the 175,000 names sent previously.] They are among the 800,000 Jewish refugees who fled eleven Middle East and North African nations, from 1948 onward, and returned to their historic homeland of Israel.