

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

Organization: HARIF on behalf of the descendants of Jewish refugees from the Middle East and North Africa – victims of Arab and Iranian discrimination and repression on the basis of Jewish identity.

Biography: HARIF is a UK charity representing Jews from North Africa and the Middle East (UK no.1186454), and dedicated to promoting their history, culture and heritage. Over 2,000 years of history in the Middle East and North Africa came to an abrupt and tragic end just 50 years ago. Jews departed for Israel and the West, leaving an enormous cultural and economic void behind. In another 20 years, few Jews who were born in these countries will still be alive. A vital chapter of Jewish identity, history and culture – an entire civilisation – will be lost. HARIF is here to make sure it is not forgotten.

Issues to which our 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;”

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

Moroccan exodus

The truth about Morocco: fear made Jews leave

11 September 2016

<https://www.jewishrefugees.org.uk/2016/09/the-truth-about-morocco-fear-made-jews.html>

Penina Elbaz is now a successful psychologist in Montreal. As a child in Safi, a southern town in Morocco, she was exposed to bullying and persecution. But

some Moroccan Jews choose to live in denial: the rich think they bought their security. Read her passionate plea about Jews displaced from Arab lands:

“It is about time we showed the world the kind of persecution which Jews in Morocco suffered. Because some rich people wanted to play at being ambassadors for Morocco and talk about their good life, they failed to report, or denied, the persecutions endured by the majority, especially those who had to live in Muslim areas. Our lives were put at risk every day.

I have so many examples: My elderly aunt was pushed against the wall by Muslims and they broke her shoulder. My 14-year-old cousin was pushed against the wall with a knife to her throat. When the Zionist operatives came to the homes of very poor people, I would follow them to see them off when they left for Israel. They lived in dignity, poverty and fear. They were humble but noble. The only possessions they had and took with them were fragments of Torah scrolls in rusty old tins. It was extremely moving; those Zionists were delegated by the Messiah. They saved thousands of lives.

In Morocco anti-Jewish sentiment and their local nationalism were rampant. They wanted the public jobs held by Jewish people, Jewish houses and businesses. They succeeded by inflicting fear and persecution. Jewish people, rich or poor, loved Morocco. They cherished the land, the culture, and their ancestors from this land and their Saints buried in Morocco. They would never want to talk about the persecutions out of pride, for fear that people would judge them. The will to continue to live with no fear made them leave; however, they did take with them the culture and values. They still have feasts celebrating the Saints, the henna parties; the kaftans are still cherished.

When I told some Jewish Moroccans [my story of being held hostage in a Moroccan jail](#), I was told that it would not have happened to them because they had private means of transport and protection. This ignorance and denial are outrageous. It does not allow people to tell their life experiences of trauma in Morocco. Among the people held hostages with me were people of all types, from very poor to very rich. When Muslim fanatics decide to cause harm, they do not need to check to which social class we belong.

Thank God for Israel. Jews from Arab countries found a country where they could live with full citizenship rights. It is not because of the creation of the State of Israel that we were persecuted in Arab countries, we were persecuted because

of increasing Muslim nationalism. It was just a pretext to kick us out of our homeland, Morocco. “