



Israeli Ambassador to UK challenges Nakba lies, highlights plight of Jews expelled from Arab lands

Dec 4, 2020 | News



Israel's Ambassador to the UK challenged the lies and misinformation spread by the Nakba Day movement and called for more recognition of the plight of Jews who were persecuted and expelled from Arab lands.

The Palestinians have long claimed that Israel "ethnically cleansed" the Palestinians from their land. However, this is completely false.

At the time Israel was reborn as a nation, many Arabs left Israeli territories at the behest of Arab leaders. The message was that the Arab armies would wipe out the Jewish people and then the Arabs, many of whom were immigrants to Israel themselves, would then return after Israel had been destroyed.

That plan, however, was rudely interrupted by the Jewish people who, instead of being wiped out, stood their ground and defended their homeland. Israel defeated the invading Arab armies and established their homeland in Israel as they had every legal right to do. Any Arab living in Israel was given equal rights and Israeli citizenship, showing that the Jewish people were willing to live in peace with all.

In contrast, when Israel was reborn as a nation, Jews in Arab nations began to feel pressure and hostility against them from their Arab and Persian neighbours. Eventually, this persecution led to expulsion, including loss of citizenship and dispossession of land, businesses and property. Some Jews were killed, many were abused and forced to leave with just a single suitcase of possessions.

During this time, more than 850,000 Jews were forced from their homes throughout the Middle East, from Morocco all the way to Iran. These ancient Jewish communities predated the birth of Islam. Most of these communities no longer exist today.

The story of the expulsion of entire Jewish communities from Arab lands, as well as from Iran, is an important part of modern Jewish history that profoundly affected the Jewish nation as a whole as well as the demographic composition of the Middle East and North Africa. Yet it is hardly ever mentioned in the international media or acknowledged at the UN.

Thankfully, Israel's new Ambassador to the UK has spoken out and challenged the lies of Nakba and shined a light on the tragedy of Jewish refugees that the world has ignored.

Speaking during an online event to mark Jewish Refugee Day, Ambassador Tzipi Hotovely [said](#):

"Here in this country (UK), the perception about Israel is: 'Some European colonialists came to the Middle East and found shelter for the Jewish people'.

"That is not historically right."

She added: "It's important to remember Jews were always part of the Middle East and we are natives like our Arab neighbours. We are not colonialists who came from Europe."

She also condemned the 'Nakba Day' movement – a so-called 'disaster' day designated by Palestinians after the state of Israel was founded in 1948.

She said: "They choose to deny the right of the Jewish State to exist... as if they were exiled from Israel. They don't tell the whole story".

Ambassador Hotovely said the persecution of Jews from the Middle East was a key part of the current political narrative.

She said: "All too often their plight has been forgotten outside Israel..."

"Jews born in Arab states came to rebuild their future in Israel... It's so important we remember it."

She added: "Many are not aware of the fact that almost a million [Arab Jews] had to leave [their homes]. Israel accepted them – they are an integral part of the Israeli story."

"I really hope that every Jew in this community, in general, people around the world will know this important chapter in history," she added.

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New Israeli ambassador in Britain describes Nakba as 'Arab lie'

December 8, 2020 at 2:00 pm | Published in: Europe & Russia, Israel, Middle East, News, Palestine, UK



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Israel's **new Ambassador to the United Kingdom**, 42-year-old Tzipi Hotovely has used her first speech during an event organised by the Board of Deputies of British Jews to describe the Nakba as "a very strong and very popular Arab lie." She added that the displacement of Palestinians since 1948, when Israel was created in their land, is "a made up story".

The far-right politician has a track record of making remarks about the Palestinians which are perceived to be racist and inflammatory. Her latest comments can be viewed on Twitter in a short video clip of the recent online meeting. It was uploaded by British Jews Against Occupation.

The organisation condemned the Board of Deputies' decision to host Hotovely. "We will never defeat racism while our communal organisations are giving it a platform," it told the Board. "Hotovely's views cannot be allowed to be normalised in our community with invites to celebratory events."

Hotovely's remarks have sparked outrage, not only because of their racism but also because an organisation recognised by the government as representative of mainstream Jewish thought in Britain provided a platform for such views.

British Jews Against Occupation has circulated **a petition urging Jews** in Britain to write to the Foreign Office to reject her accreditation. "Hotovely has demonstrated a complete disregard for international law throughout her political career, and has an appalling record of racist and inflammatory behaviour," it explains. "This includes inviting the far-right organisation Lehava to speak in the Knesset, supporting campaigns to prevent relationships between Jews and Arabs, and referring to Israeli human rights activists as 'war criminals' and 'an enemy within'."

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Senior Reform Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner also criticised Hotovely's record. "Her political views on Palestinians, annexation and religious pluralism clash with our core values," she told the *Guardian*. Labour peer Lord Jeremy Beecham told the *Jewish Chronicle* that, "The appointment of an ultra-right wing ambassador, while typical of the present government of Israel, will do nothing to win friends in the UK – or indeed any other reasonable country."

In June, when Hotovely's appointment was first announced, it looked as though her views were too extreme even for the Board of Deputies. **According to the Jewish Chronicle**, she launched an outspoken attack on the Board over its support for a Palestinian state in its 2019 Jewish Manifesto. She accused the 260-year-old body of failing to consult "Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, our ambassador, [or] any other political authority" ahead of the manifesto's release.

Despite the apparent disagreement, the Board has tended to support the views of the Israeli far-right in opposition to internationally accepted positions. **A recent example** was to put pressure on the British government to change the status of Jerusalem.

The Nakba describes the forced expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians by Zionist paramilitary groups from 1947 onwards. Around 600 Palestinian villages have since been wiped off the map in order to create a Jewish majority in Israel. Israeli historians have called this process "ethnic cleansing". Despite volumes of evidence, Nakba denial has been mainstreamed by far-right Zionist groups.

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