

Refugees – Palestinian & Jews from Arab Countries – in U.S. Legislation 101st-112th Congresses

Summary:

- There is not a single piece of U.S. legislation during this period that included any Congressional affirmative recognition of Palestinian refugees.
- There are multiple pieces of legislation during this period targeting Palestinian refugees, generally by targeting UNRWA.
- There are multiple pieces of legislation during this period affirmatively recognizing, and demanding that the Administration recognize and treat as a priority, Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

Year	Bill/Resolution	Refugee-related Content
1998	H.R.1757 : Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 Sponsor: Rep Gilman (R-NY) Introduced: 6/3/1997 Status: Vetoed by the President	<i>“Syria routinely commits a wide array of serious human rights violations, and according to a recent Human Rights Watch report, is engaging in the abduction of Lebanese citizens and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.”</i>
2003	S.1029 : Israeli-Palestinian Peace Enhancement Act of 2003 Sponsor: Ensign (R-NV) , John [NV] Introduced: 5/8/2003 Status: Died in Committee	<i>Refers to a peace agreement that “provides a permanent resolution for both Palestinian refugees and Jewish refugees from Arab countries”</i>
2003	S.1944 : Israeli-Palestinian Peace Enhancement Act of 2003 Sponsor: Ensign (R-NV) Introduced: 11/24/2003 Status: Died in Committee	<i>Refers to a peace agreement that “provides a permanent resolution for both Palestinian refugees and Jewish refugees from Arab countries”</i>
2003	H.CON.RES.311 : Expressing the sense of Congress that the international community should recognize the plight of Jewish refugees from Arab countries and that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East should establish a program for resettling	<i>See resolution title.</i>

	<p>Palestinian refugees. Sponsor: Rep Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) Status: Died in Committee</p>	
2003	<p>H.R.1950: Millennium Challenge Account, Peace Corps Expansion, & Foreign Relations Authorization Act of 2003 Sponsor: Rep Hyde (R-IL) Introduced: 5/5/2003 Status: Passed in the House with Palestinian refugee language. Version passed into law – HR 2673 – does not include that language</p>	<p><i>“(1) recognizes the importance of United States humanitarian assistance to Palestinian refugees as an essential component to the peace process in the Middle East;</i> <i>(2) acknowledges the hardships endured by many innocent Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and in other neighboring countries;</i> <i>(3) notes that the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) is the international body that seeks to find ‘lasting solutions’ to the plight of refugees throughout the world, with the sole exception of the Palestinians, for whose exclusive benefit a special agency, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), was established in 1950 and which makes no effort to permanently resettle Palestinian refugees, even those who reside under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority, in order to ensure the perpetuation of the problem of Palestinian refugees;...”</i></p>
2004	<p>S.RES.325: A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the creation of refugee populations in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf region as a result of human rights violations. Sponsor: Santorum (R-PA) Introduced: 3/29/2004 Status: Died in Committee</p>	<p><i>“Whereas the United States has demonstrated interest and concern about the mistreatment, violation of rights, forced expulsion, and expropriation of assets of minority populations in general, and in particular, former Jewish refugees displaced from Arab countries...”</i> <i>“The Senate urges the President to--</i> <i>(1) instruct the United States Representative to the United Nations and all United States representatives in bilateral and multilateral fora that, when the United States considers or addresses resolutions that allude to the issue of Middle East refugees, the United States delegation should ensure that--</i> <i>(A) the relevant text refers to the fact that multiple refugee populations have been caused by the Arab-Israeli conflict; and</i> <i>(B) any explicit reference to the required resolution of the Palestinian refugee issue is matched by a similar explicit reference to the resolution of the issue of Jewish refugees from Arab countries; and</i> <i>(2) make clear that the United States Government supports the position that, as an integral part of any comprehensive peace, the issue of refugees and the mass violations of human rights of minorities in Arab countries must be resolved in a</i></p>

		<p><i>manner that includes--</i></p> <p><i>(A) redress for the legitimate rights of all refugees displaced from Arab countries; and</i></p> <p><i>(B) recognition of the fact that Jewish and Christian property, schools, and community property was lost as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict.”</i></p>
2004	<p>H.RES.838: Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the creation of refugee populations in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf region as a result of human rights violations.</p> <p>Sponsor: Rep Nadler (D-NY)</p> <p>Introduced: 10/7/2004</p> <p>Status: Died in Committee</p>	<p><i>“Whereas the discussion of refugees in the Middle East generally centers on Palestinian refugees, even though estimates indicate that, as a result of the 1948 war in which numerous Arab armies attacked the newly-founded State of Israel, more Jews (approximately 850,000) were displaced from Arab countries than were Palestinians (approximately 726,000) from Israel”</i></p> <p><i>“Whereas the United States has demonstrated interest and concern about the mistreatment, violation of rights, forced expulsion, and expropriation of assets of minority populations in general, and in particular, former Jewish refugees displaced from Arab countries...”</i></p> <p><i>“The House of Representatives urges the President to--</i></p> <p><i>(1) instruct the United States Representative to the United Nations and all United States representatives in bilateral and multilateral fora that, when the United States considers or addresses resolutions that allude to the issue of Middle East refugees, the United States delegation should ensure that--</i></p> <p><i>(A) the relevant text refers to the fact that multiple refugee populations have been caused by the Arab-Israeli conflict; and</i></p> <p><i>(B) any explicit reference to the required resolution of the Palestinian refugee issue is matched by a similar explicit reference to the resolution of the issue of Jewish refugees from Arab countries; and</i></p> <p><i>(2) make clear that the United States Government supports the position that, as an integral part of any comprehensive peace, the issue of refugees and the mass violations of human rights of minorities in Arab countries must be resolved in a manner that includes--</i></p> <p><i>(A) redress for the legitimate rights of all refugees displaced from Arab countries; and</i></p> <p><i>(B) recognition of the fact that Jewish and Christian property, schools, and community property was lost as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict.”</i></p>

2004	<p>H.CON.RES.460: Regarding the security of Israel and the principles of peace in the Middle East. Sponsor: DeLay (R-TX) Introduced: 6/22/2004 Status: PASSED by the House</p>	<p><i>“Whereas the President acknowledged that any agreed, just, fair, and realistic framework for a solution to the Palestinian refugee issue as part of any final status agreement will need to be found through the establishment of a permanent alternative and the settling of Palestinian refugees there rather than in Israel”</i></p>
2004	<p>S.RES.393: A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate in support of United States policy for a Middle East peace process. Sponsor: Frist (R-TN) Introduced: 6/24/2004 Status: PASSED by the Senate</p>	<p><i>“Whereas an agreed just, fair, and realistic framework for a solution to the Palestinian refugee issue as part of any final status agreement will need to be found through the establishment of a Palestinian state, and the settling of Palestinian refugees there, rather than in Israel”</i></p>
2004	<p>H.R.3814: Israeli-Palestinian Peace Enhancement Act of 2004 Sponsor: Sessions (R-TX) Introduced: 2/11/2004 Status: Died in Committee</p>	<p><i>Certification required that includes certifying that an agreement “provides a permanent resolution for both Palestinian refugees and Jewish refugees from Arab countries;”</i></p>
2006	<p>S.RES.494: A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the creation of refugee populations in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf region as a result of human rights violations. Sponsor: Santorum (R-PA) Introduced: 5/25/2006 Status: Died in Committee</p>	<p><i>“Whereas the United States has demonstrated interest and concern about the mistreatment, violation of rights, forced expulsion, and expropriation of assets of minority populations in general, and in particular, former Jewish refugees displaced from Arab countries, as evidenced, inter alia, by—“</i> <i>“The Senate urges the President to--</i> <i>(1) instruct the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations and all representatives of the United States in bilateral and multilateral fora that when considering or addressing resolutions that allude to the issue of Middle East refugees, they should ensure that--</i> <i>(A) relevant text refers to the fact that multiple refugee populations have been created by the Arab-Israeli conflict; and</i> <i>(B) any explicit reference to the required resolution of the Palestinian refugee issue is matched by a similar explicit reference to the resolution of the issue of Jewish, Christian, and other refugees from Arab countries; and</i> <i>(2) make clear that the Government of the United States supports the position that, as an integral part of any comprehensive peace, the issue of refugees and the mass violations of human rights of minorities in Arab and Muslim countries</i></p>

		<p><i>throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf must be resolved in a manner that includes--</i></p> <p><i>(A) consideration of the legitimate rights of all refugees displaced from Arab countries; and</i></p> <p><i>(B) recognition of the losses incurred by Jews, Christians, and other minority groups as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict.”</i></p>
2006	<p>H.RES.848: Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the creation of refugee populations in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf region as a result of human rights violations.</p> <p>Sponsor: Ros-Lehtinen, Ileana (R-FL)</p> <p>Introduced: 5/25/2006</p> <p>Status: Died in Committee</p>	<p><i>“Whereas the United States has demonstrated interest and concern about the mistreatment, violation of rights, forced expulsion, and expropriation of assets of minority populations in general, and in particular, former Jewish refugees displaced from Arab countries as evidenced, inter alia, by-- ...”</i></p> <p><i>“(3) the President should instruct the United States Representative to the United Nations and all United States representatives in bilateral and multilateral fora to--</i></p> <p><i>“(A) use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States to ensure that any resolutions relating to the issue of Middle East refugees, and which include a reference to the required resolution of the Palestinian refugee issue, must also include a similarly explicit reference to the resolution of the issue of Jewish, Christian, and other refugees from Arab countries; and</i></p> <p><i>“(B) make clear that the United States Government supports the position that, as an integral part of any comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace, the issue of refugees from the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf must be resolved in a manner that includes recognition of the legitimate rights of and losses incurred by all refugees displaced from Arab countries including Jews, Christians, and other minority groups.”</i></p>
2006	<p>H.R.5278: UNRWA Integrity Act</p> <p>Sponsor: Kirk (R-IL)</p> <p>Introduced: 5/3/2006</p> <p>Status: Died in Committee</p>	<p><i>““To amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to assist Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza to move to post-refugee status, and for other purposes.” [shutting down UNRWA and resolving the refugee issue outside of negotiations]</i></p>
2007	<p>S.RES.175: A resolution recognizing the 59th anniversary of the independence of the State of Israel.</p> <p>Sponsor: Brownback (R-KS)</p> <p>Introduced: 4/26/2007</p> <p>Status: Adopted by Unanimous Consent</p>	<p><i>“Whereas Israel has also provided a refuge to, and has successfully absorbed, more than 800,000 Jewish refugees who fled persecution in neighboring states in the Middle East...”</i></p>

2007	<p>H.RES.185: Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the creation of refugee populations in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf region as a result of human rights violations.</p> <p>Sponsor: Nadler (D-NY) Introduced 2/16/2007</p> <p>Status: PASSED by the House</p>	<p><i>“Whereas the Palestinian refugee issue has received considerable attention from countries of the world while the issue of Jewish refugees from the Arab and Muslim worlds has received very little attention; “</i></p> <p><i>“Whereas the United States has demonstrated interest and concern about the mistreatment, violation of rights, forced expulsion, and expropriation of assets of minority populations in general, and in particular, former Jewish refugees displaced from Arab countries as evidenced, inter alia, by---”</i></p> <p><i>“(2) the President should instruct the United States Representative to the United Nations and all United States representatives in bilateral and multilateral fora to--</i></p> <p><i>(A) use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States to ensure that any resolutions relating to the issue of Middle East refugees , and which include a reference to the required resolution of the Palestinian refugee issue, must also include a similarly explicit reference to the resolution of the issue of Jewish refugees from Arab countries; and</i></p> <p><i>(B) make clear that the United States Government supports the position that, as an integral part of any comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace, the issue of refugees from the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf must be resolved in a manner that includes recognition of the legitimate rights of and losses incurred by all refugees displaced from Arab countries, including Jews, Christians, and other groups...”</i></p>
2007	<p>S.RES.85: A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the creation of refugee populations in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf region as a result of human rights violations.</p> <p>Sponsor: Lautenberg (D-NJ) Introduced: 2/16/2007</p> <p>Status: Died in Committee</p>	<p><i>“Whereas the United States has demonstrated interest and concern about the mistreatment, violation of rights, forced expulsion, and expropriation of assets of minority populations in general, and in particular, former Jewish refugees displaced from Arab countries...”</i></p> <p><i>“The Senate urges the President to--</i></p> <p><i>(1) instruct the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations and all representatives of the United States in bilateral and multilateral fora that, when considering or addressing resolutions that allude to the issue of refugees in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf, they should ensure that--</i></p> <p><i>(A) relevant text refers to the fact that multiple refugee populations have been created by the Arab-Israeli conflict; and</i></p> <p><i>(B) any explicit reference to the required resolution of the Palestinian refugee</i></p>

		<p><i>issue is matched by a similar explicit reference to the resolution of the issue of Jewish, Christian, and other refugees from Arab and Muslim countries throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf region; and (2) make clear that the United States Government supports the position that, as an integral part of any comprehensive peace, the issue of refugees and the mass violations of human rights of minorities in Arab and Muslim countries throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf must be resolved in a manner that includes--</i></p> <p><i>(A) consideration of the legitimate rights of all refugees displaced from Arab and Muslim countries throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf; and</i></p> <p><i>(B) recognition of the losses incurred by Jews, Christians, and other minority groups as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict.”</i></p>
2007	<p>H.R.3674: Iraqi Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement, and Security Act of 2007</p> <p>Sponsor: Hastings (D-FL)</p> <p>Introduced: 9/26/2007</p> <p>Status: Died in Committee</p>	<p><i>“...Palestinian refugee camps in Iraq near the Syrian and Jordanian borders remain in dire need of humanitarian assistance.”</i></p>
2008	<p>H.CON.RES.428: Expressing the sense of Congress that the United Nations should take immediate steps to improve the transparency and accountability of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) in the Near East to ensure that it is not providing funding, employment, or other support to terrorists.</p> <p>Sponsor: Rothman (D-NJ)</p> <p>Introduced: 9/24/2008</p> <p>Status: Died in Committee</p>	<p><i>“Whereas UNRWA’s definition of refugees includes not only the Palestinian refugees themselves, but also their descendants, resulting in a more than 400 percent increase in the number of beneficiaries from 900,000 in 1950 to 4,500,000 today...”</i></p>
2008	<p>H.RES.939: Condemning the glorification of terrorism and the continuing anti-Israel and anti-Semitic rhetoric at the United Nations.</p> <p>Sponsor: Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL)</p> <p>Introduced: 1/23/2008</p>	<p><i>“Whereas on November 29, 2006, the United Nations Trusteeship Council hosted panels that advocated the right of return of 7,000,000 to 8,000,000 refugees , without reference to Jewish refugees from Arab lands...”</i></p>

	Status: Died in Committee	
2009	<p>H.R.557: United Nations Transparency, Accountability, and Reform Act of 2009 Sponsor: Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) Introduced: 1/15/2009 Status: Died in Committee</p>	<i>"It is the sense of Congress that, in order to alleviate the suffering of Palestinian refugees, responsibility for those refugees should be fully transferred to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees."</i>
2009	<p>H.CON.RES.29: Expressing the sense of Congress that the United Nations should take immediate steps to improve the transparency and accountability of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) in the Near East to ensure that it is not providing funding, employment, or other support to terrorists. Sponsor: Rothman (D-NJ) Introduced: 1/28/2009 Status: Died in Committee</p>	<i>"Whereas UNRWA's definition of refugees includes not only the Palestinian refugees themselves, but also their descendants, resulting in a more than 400 percent increase in the number of beneficiaries from 900,000 in 1950 to 4,500,000 today..."</i>
2009	<p>H.R.2475: Foreign Relations Authorization and Reform Act, Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011 Sponsor: Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) Introduced: 5/19/2009 Status: Died in Committee</p>	<i>"It is the sense of Congress that, in order to alleviate the suffering of Palestinian refugees, responsibility for those refugees should be fully transferred to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees."</i>
2010	<p>H.R.5065: UNRWA Humanitarian Accountability Act Sponsor: Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) Introduced: 4/20/2010 Status: Died in Committee</p>	<i>"It is the sense of Congress that-- (1) the President and the Secretary of State should lead a high-level diplomatic effort to encourage other responsible nations to withhold contributions to UNRWA, to any successor or related entity, or to the regular budget of the United Nations for the support of UNRWA or a successor entity (through staff positions provided by the United Nations Secretariat, or otherwise) until UNRWA has met the conditions listed in subparagraphs (A) through (F) of section 301(c)(2) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (as added by section 2 of this Act); (2) citizens of recognized states should be removed from UNRWA's jurisdiction; (3) UNRWA's definition of a `Palestine refugee' should be changed to that used for a refugee by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; and</i>

		<i>(4) in order to alleviate the suffering of Palestinian refugees, responsibility for those refugees should be fully transferred to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.”</i>
2010	<p>H.CON.RES.260: Recognizing the 62nd anniversary of the independence of the State of Israel, and reaffirming unequivocal support for the alliance and friendship between the United States and Israel.</p> <p>Sponsor: Ros-Lehtinen *(R-FL)</p> <p>Introduced: 4/13/2010</p> <p>Status: Died in Committee</p>	<i>“Whereas Israel has also provided a refuge to, and has successfully absorbed, more than 800,000 Jewish refugees who fled persecution in neighboring countries in the Middle East...”</i>
2011	<p>H.RES.314: Declaring that it is the policy of the United States to support its ally Israel in seeking peace with its neighbors, particularly toward a two-state solution that results in a free, nonmilitarized Palestinian state living side-by-side in peace and security with the Jewish State of Israel, the home of the Jewish people.</p> <p>Sponsor: Pearce (R-NM)</p> <p>Introduced: 6/16/2011</p> <p>Status: Died in Committee</p>	<i>“Whereas Prime Minister Netanyahu further stated, ‘Palestinians from around the world should have a right to immigrate, if they so choose, to a Palestinian state, and that this ‘means that the Palestinian refugee problem will be resolved outside the borders of Israel’”</i>
2011	<p>S.1848: United Nations Transparency, Accountability, and Reform Act of 2011</p> <p>Sponsor: Rubio (R-FL)</p> <p>Introduced: 11/10/2011</p> <p>Status: Died in Committee</p>	<i>“...UNRWA's overly inclusive definition of a ‘Palestine refugee’ has resulted in an increase in UNRWA's reported number of ‘Palestine refugees’ from under 1,000,000 in 1950 to over 4,500,000 in 2011, encompassing multiple generations of descendants of the original Palestinian refugees...” [for additional relevant text, see bill]</i>
2011	<p>H.R.2829: United Nations Transparency, Accountability, and Reform Act of 2011</p> <p>Sponsor: Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL)</p> <p>Introduced: 8/30/2011</p> <p>Status: On the House calendar</p>	<i>“... UNRWA's overly inclusive definition of a ‘Palestine refugee’ has resulted in an increase in UNRWA's reported number of ‘Palestine refugees’ from under one million in 1950 to over 4.5 million today, encompassing multiple generations of descendants of the original Palestinian refugees. [for additional relevant text, see bill]</i>
2012	<p>S.3241: Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2013</p>	<i>Amendment added in committee by Kirk (R-IL) to include report language stating:</i>

Sponsor: Leahy (D-VT)
Introduced: 5/24/2012
Status: Pending in Senate

“The Committee directs the Secretary of State to submit a report to the Committee not later than one year after enactment of this act, indicating:
(a) the approximate number of people who, in the past year, have received UNRWA services--
(1) whose place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948 and who were displaced as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict; and
(2) who are descendants of persons described in subparagraph (1);
(b) the extent to which the provision of such services to such persons furthers the security interests of the United States and of other United States allies in the Middle East; and
(c) the methodology and challenges in preparing such report.”