

# Yom HaGirush—The Inside Story

By **Edwin Black**

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Today, we speak of a largely forgotten ethnic cleansing largely unparalleled in the history of humanitarian abuses. Recall the coordinated international expulsion of some 850,000 Jews from Arab and Muslim lands, where they had lived peaceably for as long as 27 centuries. As some know, in [2014, the Israeli government set aside November 30 as a commemoration of this mass atrocity](#). It has had no real identity or name like “Kristallnacht.” But today, from this day forward, the day will be known as Yom HaGirush: “Expulsion Day.”

It has been a years-long road to identify and solidify this identity. It began the moment Hitler came to power in 1933. The international Pan-Arab community, coordinated out of Palestine and spanning four continents, formed a vibrant political and later military alliance with the Nazis. This partnership functioned in the rarefied corridors of governments, the riot-torn streets of many cities on all sides of the oceans, and eventually the gun-powdered trenches and frontlines of war-strangled Europe. The overseer of this alliance was [Haji Amin al-Husseini](#), the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, but he led an eager coalition of Arab leaders organized into the Arab Higher Committee, along with popular supporters from the Arab Street. They had fused with Nazi ideology and goals, which included the destruction of the Jews and the defeat of British influence.

After the Mufti fled criminal prosecution in Jewish Palestine in October 1937, he relocated to Baghdad. Iraq became the new center of gravity for the Arab-Nazi collaboration. By the outbreak of World War II in 1939, Iraqi Arabs under the guidance of the Mufti had imported all sorts of Nazi ideology and confederation into Iraq. On June 1–2, 1941, as Germany was poised to attack Russia and needed Arab oil, Nazi Arabs in Iraq launched a bloody two-day pogrom against its Jewish community which had dwelled there for 2,700 years—a thousand years before Muhammad. The hyphenation Arab-Nazi applies, not merely because these Arabs were fascist in mind and deed, but because they actually identified with Germany’s Nazi Party. Some rioters wore swastikas; many had actually marched in the Nuremberg torchlight parades. The Syrian Social Nationalist Party adopted [a flag](#) that spun off from Nazi Germany’s.

In that nightmare June 1–2 riot, Jews were hunted in the streets. When found, Jewish girls were raped in front of the parents, fathers were beheaded in front of their children, mothers were brutalized in public, babies were sliced in half and thrown into the Tigris River. The Baghdad mobs burned dozens of Jewish shops, invaded Jewish homes and looted them.

We will never know how many hundreds were murdered or mutilated because in the investigation that followed, many were afraid to come forward. But that bloody event

became known as the Farhud, meaning *violent dispossession*. The Farhud spelled the beginning of the end of Iraqi Jewry—more than 140,000 souls.

Just before the State of Israel declared its independence in 1948, the Arab League promised the world it would execute a mass expulsion of all of its Jews. The Arab League actually coordinated forms and procedures among more than a dozen countries. For example, in Iraq, Law 51 on criminality was modified to include “Zionist”—which could be defined as any Jew found with a Hebrew marking even from a prayer book. Law 1 on denaturalization was modified to deprive Jews of their long-held citizenship, and then Law 5 permitted confiscation of Jewish assets.

Similar disenfranchisements were repeated across the Arab and Muslim world. Guiding and assisting in these processes were some 2,000 Nazis—ex-concentration camp guards, Gestapo, SS officers and Wehrmacht commanders who had escaped Nuremberg trials to continue Hitler’s war against the Jews—but now in the Middle East.

At the same time, the Arab League promised to invade the new state of Israel. “This will be a war of extermination and a momentous massacre, which will be spoken of like the Mongolian massacres,” [promised Azzam Pasha](#), secretary-general of the Arab League.

For four months, the World Jewish Congress pleaded with the United Nations, then convening in Lake Success, New York to stop the ethnic cleansing. Was this a secret? Hardly. *The New York Times* was then the newspaper of record in the United States. Its bold-type headline alarm declared [“Jews in Grave Danger in All Moslem Lands.”](#) The article prominently listed the expelling countries and how many thousands of Jews would be ethnically cleansed. French Morocco: 190,000; Iraq: 130,000; Algeria: 120,000; and on, until the total touched the dark edge of 900,000.

In many countries, it was made clear to the Jews that if they resisted, they would be subjected to more Farhuds and then deported to Nazi-style concentration camps. After all, Arab regimes during WWII, led by the Mufti, made efforts to send Jews to Auschwitz. The Mufti had been given guided tours of several camps including the SS’s camp system headquarters. During the war, local officials throughout the Arab-influenced world set up concentration camps as centers of slave labor and torture. Of *the dozens of camps in Arab lands, names such as* Im Fout in Morocco, Djelfa in Algeria, and Giado in Libya have been lost to faded footnotes.

By the late 1940s, Farhud-invoking songs were popular, and numerous mini-Farhud pogroms had already burned through Jewish communities. So, community by community, the Jews were carted to remote locations where clandestine airlifts—often organized by the company that became Alaska Airlines—flew the Jews, packed in like human sardines, out to Israel.

The Arabs thought they were creating a demographic bomb for the new state of Israel. But Israel’s refugee camps were quite temporary and most of the hundreds of thousands were fully absorbed into the Jewish State. This crime against humanity swelled Israel’s population almost by half, demographically converting the largely European population

of newly independent Israel to one which was half Sephardic or Mizrahi—essentially derived from Arab states. This Arab-engineered expulsion gives the great lie to the smear that Israelis are a bunch of well-off Jews from London, Los Angeles, and Lvov. And it re-focuses and balances the issue of Arab refugees from 1948.

In 1948, the newly formed and fabricated state of Jordan invaded and created the West Bank. In three official conferences in Ramallah, Jericho, and Hebron the Arabs voted to create no separate national identity, but rather become subjects of Jordan.

In 1964, as Israel, proved it could not be driven into the Sea, the Soviet KGB helped engineer the creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Arabs then expropriated the name “Palestinians” from Zionists—basically committing identity theft. No one can show me any identification of Arabs as Palestinians before 1964. On *The Edwin Black Show*, I have publicly asked for just one example. Yet the “Palestinian” cause has been championed ... based on false history, fake facts, Jewish ignorance, and the forgotten realities of 850,000 expelled Jews. There have been many expulsions and forced migrations in history. The Spanish Inquisition broadly covers a single sphere of expulsion. The Trail of Tears covers one category of forced migrations, that of Native Americans. But never since the Roman Empire has the world seen some 15 countries openly coordinate the deprivation and expulsion of their citizens based solely on their religion.

Even though this grave act was always a flame burning in the families of the dispossessed, it was forgotten by the world. The “sha-sha” virus can infect an entire people proving there is both collective memory and collective amnesia.

But I stumbled upon the Farhud in researching my 2003 book [\*Banking on Baghdad\*](#). This rekindled the torch of awareness. “The Farhud Recognition Project,” energized by Sephardim in the United States, only asked for the mass murder to be remembered. I dove further into the topic resulting in my 2010 book, [\*The Farhud—Roots of the Arab-Nazi Alliance in the Holocaust\*](#), which tracked the Arab-Nazi alliance, the awful pogroms, and the post-war expulsion. In June 2015, I and a group of committed communal leaders were able to do what many memory-seared families called the impossible: proclaim [\*International Farhud Day at the United Nations\*](#) in an historic event globally livestreamed by the UN itself.

But I always wanted to do more and give identity and homage to the mass expulsion. In November 2021, with the support of my colleagues in many countries, on [\*a special edition of The Edwin Black Show\*](#), I proclaimed November 30 forever more to be a day of remembrance named Yom HaGirush.

That name, Yom HaGirush marks when Jewish communities across many countries were once again dispossessed, but became repossessed in the free nation of Israel. The Jewish State now possesses these people and their descendants—and they in turn now possess their Jewish State. Possession is nine tenths of survival. Israel has become the final stop for the Jews.

From Morocco to India, and from Yemen to Afghanistan, the lives and centuries of legacies were incinerated. It was done in broad daylight with barely a murmur from the world. It happened not even five years after the world learned that six million Jews has been exterminated and millions more made refugees. Mark it down on a piece of paper: Yom HaGirush. [YomHaGirush.com](http://YomHaGirush.com) is now in embryonic form but soon will be a vibrant worldwide resource and a warning to the world that when we say, “never again,” we mean it.

*Edwin Black is the author of The Farhud and many other books. In 2015, he originated International Farhud Day. In 2021, he originated Yom HaGirush.*

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