

Passover and Refugees

"It's not much of a stretch to link the Passover Seder with the pressing humanitarian and political issue of refugees and immigration. After all, when Jews worldwide recount the story of the Israelites slavery, redemption and Exodus, they are telling the refugee story of their own people."

- The Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz

In the U.S., the vilification, harassment, incarceration, and deportation of refugees has destroyed people's lives and poisoned our culture. The attempt to terminate DACA risks the lives of hundreds of thousands of young people who have grown up as Americans.

In Israel the government has announced plans to forcibly deport 40,000 refugees to Rwanda or other African countries where they will face persecution, violence, enslavement, or death.

These African refugees have fled persecution in Eritrea and Sudan but rather than granting them refugee status as is required by international law, Israel is using its own laws—originally manufactured to criminalize the rightful return of Palestinian refugees—to detain the African refugees and deny their claims. Israeli government officials have called the African refugees everything from “criminals” to “cancer.” Asylum seekers have been subject to mob and vigilante violence. Many of these refugees have already fled under a policy labeled “self-deportation”.

This forced deportation is illegal according to international law. Israel says their crime is illegally crossing the border and that they are a threat to the security of the state. Their real “crime” is that they are not Jewish and that they are Black.

The new policy comes under a set of amendments to Israel's 1954 “Anti-Infiltration Law,” which prohibits the rightful return of Palestinian refugees displaced in 1948, and has now been extended to criminalize African refugees. Under this law, asylum seekers may be confined to an open internment camp, known as “Holot”, managed by the Israeli Prison Services, where they are denied rights to health care, adequate food, and basic services.

The UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees declares that no state may expel a refugee to a territory where their life would be threatened because of race, religion, nationality, or political opinion. Though the majority of African asylum seekers come from Eritrea and Sudan, Rwanda has agreed to accept these asylum seekers in exchange for \$5,000 a head. After being deported to Rwanda, refugees are frequently forcibly smuggled into Uganda, Libya or Sudan, where they face lack of papers, risk of violence, enslavement, or death. Israel is planning to close the detention center over the next three months and the remaining 40,000 refugees face illegal and forced deportation to third countries or imprisonment.

Internationally, 80-90% of Sudanese and Eritrean asylum seekers are granted refugee status. In Israel, the number is less than .5%.

As a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, Israel should establish an effective and fair asylum process for each refugee to determine refugee status and offer protections throughout this process.

Israel must grant permanent or long term temporary residency and access to social services, the right to work, the right to an education, the right to services, the right to travel freely.

Do **#BlackLivesMatter** in Israel? Add your name and voice to the thousands of Americans who have called for a stop to the deportation plan, grant refugee status, and stop the campaign of hate against refugees. Visit http://jocsm.org/signhere_stopdeportingrefugees/

This flyer was written by Jewish Voice for Peace New Haven (www.jvpnh.org), and distributed at the New Haven Sunday Vigil on Sunday, March 4, 2018. We welcome JVP members who join this vigil once a month.

Since 1999, the New Haven Sunday Vigil has been held here every week from 12-1pm at Broadway, Park and Elm Streets in New Haven, CT, to emphatically say NO to the state of permanent, ongoing war against the world being waged by our government and its allies- a war which is terrorizing the planet and destroying lives in order to consolidate enormous power and wealth in the hands of a very few people.

JOIN US TO RESIST THIS ENDLESS WAR!

<https://newhavensundayvigil.wordpress.com>