

**S T A T E   O F   I S R A E L**

**MINISTRY OF JUSTICE  
HEAD OF LEGAL ASSISTANCE**

Dear Mr. Rehov,

This is to commend you on your latest film, "The Silent Exodus," on the exodus of Jews from Arab countries in the latter part of the twentieth century. We were happy to put our trust in your work and contribute our small part to the film because of your proven record of handling complex subjects with utmost intelligence, clear-headedness and sensitivity.

As in your previous films - notably "The Road to Jenin" - you have managed to restore objectivity, balance and measure in a field often characterized by misconceptions, passion and one-sided slogans. We believe that the history of the Jews of Arab lands, with an emphasis put on an analysis of the factors that led to the almost complete destruction of age-old communities, deserves the type of treatment you have afforded it.

For the first time, a documentary manages to expose the plight of Jews from Arab countries in a comprehensive manner. Starting off with an analysis of the defining, second-class status of "dhimmitude" imposed, throughout the ages, by Islam on Jews (and Christians) in the lands of the Middle-East and North Africa, and proceeding to show the complex evolution of Moslem-Jewish relations in Arab lands under colonial rule in the first of half of the twentieth century, the film manages to trace the deeper roots of current Arab-Israeli enmity. While the creation of the State of Israel and the succeeding Arab-Israeli wars are analyzed as events which precipitated the departure of Jews from their ancestral homes in the Arab world, the film proves to what extent the onus is on Arab regimes which made the life of "their" Jews intolerable, thereby compelling their exodus. By forbidding any simple reading of the elements involved, your film nevertheless manages to clearly establish Arab responsibility in the creation of this "other" (Jewish) refugee population of the Middle East.

Beyond your rigorous analysis of the issues at hand, your film manages to portray in a touching manner the personal saga of individual Jews and their families. Our hope is that it will serve as a trigger for other Jews originating in Arab lands to come forward and tell their story - a story which, as the title of your film suggests, has been silenced for too long and which deserves to be told and heard.

Sincerely,

Jean-Claude Niddam  
Head of Legal Assistance