

Morocco's Culture of Religious Tolerance

- The Jewish community of Morocco has historical ties to the Maghreb region dating back more than 2,000 years,¹ with approximately 270,000 Jews having lived in Morocco until the late 1940s, when many immigrated to Israel.²
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5431.htm>
- During World War II, the Late King Mohammed V famously rejected an appeal by the French Vichy regime to gather up Moroccan Jews for deportation.³
<http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0109/p09s01-coop.html>
- Israel's relations with Morocco have historically been friendlier than with any other Arab country, as Morocco continues to be the most tolerant environment for Jews in the Arab world.⁴ There are currently approximately 3000 Jews living in Morocco, as well as 30 active synagogues, and 3 Jewish school networks.⁵
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3202767.stm
- In great contrast to other parts of North Africa or even Europe, Morocco is internationally recognized for the peaceful coexistence enjoyed by Jews and Muslims within its communities. Indicatively, there were no uprisings or attacks against the Jewish population in Morocco during the 1967 Six-Day War, as in nearby Tunisia.⁶
- From 1994-1999, the Late King Hassan II collaborated with David Levy, Israeli Foreign Minister of Moroccan origin. Following the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords, Israeli Minister of Defense Yitzhak Rabin

¹ "History of Jews in Arab Countries: Before and After 1948." Historical Society of Jews from Egypt. 1999-2000.

² Ephross, Peter. "Around the Jewish World: Crafting a legacy in Morocco: Jews, officials share same goal." 21 March, 1999. Global News Service of the Jewish People- JTA.

³ Berdugo, Serge. "Morocco: A Model of Arab—Jewish Coexistence." Morocco's Jewish Community Council. 2007.

⁴ "Israel sees Morocco as mediator." September 2, 2003. BBC World Service. 22 January 2007; Bard, Mitchell. "The Jews of Morocco." The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2007.

⁵ Berdugo, Serge. "Morocco: A Model of Arab—Jewish Coexistence." Morocco's Jewish Community Council. 2007; Bard, Mitchell. "The Jews of Morocco." The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2007.

⁶ "Background Note: Morocco." *Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs*. US Department of State. 2006.

⁷ Ephross, Peter. "Around the Jewish World: Crafting a legacy in Morocco: Jews, officials share same goal." 21 March, 1999. Global News Service of the Jewish People- JTA. 22 January 2007.

publicly honored King Hassan for the part that he played in the Middle East Peace Process. Following the enactment of the accords, Morocco increased its economic and political liaisons with Israel, thus solidifying diplomatic ties.⁷ In 1994, Rabat and Tel Aviv established liaison offices which served as unofficial embassies.⁸

- Moroccan-Israeli economic relations were bolstered by the 1994 Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit in Casablanca, to which King Hassan II invited the representatives of 61 countries and 1,114 global business leaders. Following the conference, the Casablanca Declaration was signed to support the newly-established peace process, leading to the inauguration of the Economic Summit Executive Secretariat in Rabat, which works to further public-private partnership, support contact, share data, and encourage private sector investment in the region.⁹
<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Regional%20Economic%20Development%20Working%20Group>
- The Late King Hassan II and current King Mohammed VI have repeatedly served as President of the Islamic Conference's Jerusalem Committee, a role in which King Mohammed VI consistently asserts his stance that Jerusalem should be shared by Muslims, Christians, and Jews, with East Jerusalem serving as the capital of a sovereign Palestinian state.
- King Mohammed VI reiterated his solidarity with and protection of all Moroccan Jews, as well as his support for Israel, in response to the 2003 terrorist strikes against Jewish targets in Casablanca. That summer, at his Tangier palace, King Mohammed arranged a highly-publicized event for Israel's new Grand Rabbi, Shlomo Moshe Amar, a native of Casablanca.¹⁰
- Today, Serge Berdugo and Andre Azoulay, prominent members of Morocco's Jewish community, serve as Ambassador at large and Counselor to King Mohammed VI, respectively. Amb. Berdugo is also

⁸ "Middle East Senior Israeli politicians in Morocco." 2 May 1999. BBC World Service.

⁹ "First Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit - Casablanca." Oct 30 - Nov 1, 1994. *Regional Economic Development Working Group*. 22 January 2007.

¹⁰ Howe, Marvin. *Morocco: The Islamist Awakening and Other Challenges*. New York, Oxford University Press, 2005; p. 125.

the elected President of the World Organization of the Moroccan
Jewry.¹¹

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2002/14008.htm>

¹¹ "International Religious Freedom Report." *Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor*. US Department of State. 2002.

This information has been produced by the Moroccan American Center for Policy (MACP).

www.moroccanamericanpolicy.com

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Additional information is available at the Justice Department in Washington, D.C.