

Iranian Jews Dismiss Outside Calls to Emigrate

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A campaign to convince Iran's 25,000 Jews to flee the country has stalled, with most opting to stay in their native homeland.

In recent months, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, Israeli officials and some American Jewish communal leaders have urged Iranian Jews to leave. But so far, despite generally being allowed to travel to Israel and emigrate abroad, Iranian Jews have stayed put.

According to the statistics compiled by HIAS, 152 out of 25,000 Jews left Iran between October 2005 and September 2006 – down from 297 during the same period the previous year, and 183 the year before. Sources said that the majority of those who have left in recent years cited economic and family reasons as their main incentive for leaving, rather than political concerns.

Since the August 2005 election of Ahmadinejad, Washington and Jerusalem have tried to make the fate of Iranian Jewry become a part of a broader diplomatic game with Teheran.

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