

DPI/NGO Relations invites you to a

Briefing

***“The Sephardic Jews in Greece:
The Untold Story”***

*In Observance of the International Day of
Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust (27 January)*

Thursday, 29 January 2009

10:15 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.*

In

Conference Room 1

Background Information

From early in its history, Thessaloniki (the second-largest city in Greece) embraced the Jews who sought its hospitality. For 20 centuries, the city has been—literally and figuratively—a safe harbour for the itinerant and persecuted Jews from all over the world. As a result it was honored with the title “La Madre de Israel,” [or “mother of cities amongst the people of Israel”], as it was the most populous city of Sephardic Jewry in the world. In the summer of 1942, the persecution of the Jews of Thessaloniki started with men between the ages of 18 and 45 being conscripted for forced labour. On 15 March 1943 the Germans began deporting the Jews from Thessaloniki by the summer of 1943 sending most of them toward Auschwitz-Birkenau. By the summer of 1943 they had deported just over 46,000 Jews. Thessaloniki lost 94 percent of its Jews in the Holocaust. Today only some 1,200 remain and their story is little known. As we observe the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust (27 January), our Briefing focuses on their story and features personal accounts of some of those who survived the Holocaust in Thessaloniki.

Briefings

- **All Briefings Begin Promptly At 10:15 a.m.**

Moderator: Maria-Luisa Chávez; Chief, NGO Relations, Department of Public Information (DPI)

Speakers

His Excellency Mr. John Mourikis, Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations

Mr. Isaac Benmayor, a son of a Holocaust survivor from Thessaloniki, Ph.D from Oxford University on Modern Greek Linguistics

Mr. Leon Mallah, Holocaust survivor who currently resides in Queens, New York

Benjamin Perlstein, a student in the Jerusalem-based programme of *KIVUNIM: New Directions—The Institute of Experiential Learning for Israel and World Jewish Communities Studies*

The discussion will be followed by a Question and Answer period.

* Please note that this Briefing will take place in Conference Room 1. **Those without yearly UN Ground passes (including guests) will need to RSVP by Monday, 26 Jan. Please call 212-963-7234 or 212-963-7233 or e-mail gillet@un.org, hu2@un.org.**

For briefing information please call the DPI/NGO Information Line at +1-212-963-7709 or +1-917-367-9380, or e-mail section1d@un.org. For information pertaining to UN passes, please call +1-212-963-7233 or e-mail hu2@un.org. To receive the briefing information electronically and to be added to our e-mailing list, please e-mail dpingo@un.org. You can also visit the DPI/NGO Section website at www.un.org/dpi/ngosection, where an archived webcast of the briefings may also be available.

Should you require a guest pass to attend an NGO briefing, please **fax** your name and affiliation to +1-212-963-2819 **no later than two days before a briefing**. All guest passes should be picked up **from the desk in the visitor's entrance between 9:30 a.m.-10 a.m. Those who arrive after 10.00 a.m. will have to pick their passes up from the NGO Resource Centre. NGOs are reminded that Briefings start promptly at 10:15 a.m.**