

Israeli textbook gives Arab perspective

by UPI

JERUSALEM -- Israel's Education Ministry has approved a school textbook that acknowledges the hardships of Palestinians at the time of Israel's creation. The text, "Living Together in Israel," describes the invasion of Israel by Arab armies in 1948 and 1949, when the United Nations created the Jewish state in what was British-ruled Palestine. However, unlike previous editions, the third-grade text offers a Palestinian perspective on the fighting and displacement of about 700,000 Palestinian Arabs, the Los Angeles Times reported Monday. "When the war ended, the Jews prevailed, and Israel and its neighbors signed a truce," a passage in the book reads. "The Arabs call the war the 'Nakba,' meaning the war of catastrophe and destruction. The Jews call it the War of Independence." "The book offers Arab pupils a balanced picture, so that they may put what they are exposed to in their home environment into the proper context," Israeli Education Minister Yuli Tamir said. However, some in the country's right wing expressed fears the text would incite radicalism. "Once the Arab pupils are taught that the establishment of Israel was a disaster, they might infer that they should be fighting against us," said Limor Livnat, of the right-wing Likud Party.

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