

Palestinians aspire to live in peace and freedom enjoying justice and equal rights. Palestinians desire what we in Australia take for granted.

Who are the Palestinians?

Palestinians have lived in the land west of the Jordan River for thousands of years. Up until the rise of Zionism in the late nineteenth century; Muslim, Christian and Jewish Palestinians lived together as one community, largely at peace.

Today no matter where Palestinians live, they share two things in common – **their deep connection to their land and their culture.**

Palestinians living under occupation

In the West Bank Palestinian families and communities have lived under Israeli military occupation for over 50 years. All aspects of their lives are controlled by Israel: movement is restricted; building permits denied; access to land and water and trade with other countries severely limited.

Israel has illegally annexed East Jerusalem and illegally settled more than 620,000 Jewish Israeli citizens on stolen Palestinian land in the West Bank and East Jerusalem making a viable two state solution in Palestine increasingly untenable.

The Gaza Strip has been under a permanent state of siege since 2007. The direct results of the blockade imposed by Israel and Egypt has impacted:



Trade: Goods can't get in or out – food, medicines and other necessities are restricted.



Health: The health system is crumbling from damage to hospitals by the Israeli military and a lack of drugs and equipment.



Energy: Severe electricity shortages impact on all aspects of life.



Water: Sewage is untreated and **97%** of water is unsafe to drink



Employment: More than half the population is unemployed.

Palestinians living as refugees

The birth of Israel resulted in **more than 700,000 Palestinians** being forcibly removed from their homes and lands to become internally displaced or refugees in neighbouring countries. Palestinians call this the Nakba – or the catastrophe.

In 1967, an **additional 300,000 Palestinians** became refugees, some for the second time.

To this day they and their families live under the UN refugee charter and resolutions and have the right to return to their homes.

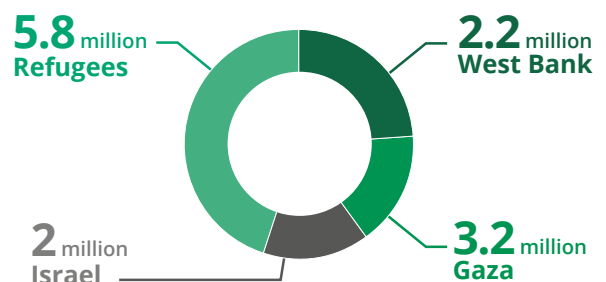
Many of these refugees are in the West Bank and Gaza, are stateless in neighbouring countries or spread throughout the world as the Palestinian diaspora. **Palestinians make up 21% of the global refugee population.**

Palestinians living with unequal rights in Israel

20% of the population of Israel are Palestinians. Most of these people were internally displaced in 1948, and have been unable to return to their homes. Palestinians in Israel live as second class citizens with over 65 basic laws discriminating against them and in favour of Israeli Jews.

Israel passed the Nation State Law in 2018 which legalises apartheid inside Israel.

Palestinians around the world



“ The settlements I saw here [in the West Bank] reminded me of what we had suffered in South Africa because we also were surrounded by many settlements and were not allowed to move from one place to another freely. Palestinians are being subjected to the worst version of apartheid. ”

— Mandla Mandela

“ Israel is not a state of all its citizens. According to the basic nationality law we passed, Israel is the nation state of the Jewish people – and only it. ”

— Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu



Checkpoint 300 in Bethlehem by Andrew Larsen, CC BY-ND 2.0

Recent timeline (1948–2022)

1948	75% of Palestinians become refugees, known as the Nakba
1967	Occupation of East Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza Strip
1968	Beginning of Illegal settlement building in the West Bank
1988	First Intifada - popular uprising protesting the occupation
1993	Oslo peace accord signed – 5 year interim plan towards final settlement. Less than 120,000 illegal Jewish settlers in the West Bank
2000	Second Intifada – protesting the lack of progress with the peace process
2002	Israel starts construction of the separation wall zigzagging through the West Bank and East Jerusalem, annexing more land from the Palestinians, dividing villages and separating farmers from their land
2005	Israel leaves the Gaza Strip, but maintains control over borders and links to the outside world
2007	Israel and Egypt begin siege on the Gaza Strip
2008–2014	Three Israeli military operations in Gaza, killing 3774 Palestinians and 93 Israelis
2018	Trump Administration moves US Embassy to Jerusalem
2019	Israel begins threatening to annex all of the West Bank
2020/1	UAE and Bahrain grant normalisation to Israel without any justice for Palestine, others follow without any justice for Palestine
2021	International Criminal Court opened an investigation into war crimes committed in Palestine. Israel's threatened mass force expulsions in Jerusalem spark protests around the world in what was called Unity Intifada. Israel attacked Gaza, killing over 256 Palestinians
2021/2	Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Harvard Law School, a UN Special Rapporteur all conclude Israel is committing apartheid against Palestinians
2022	Israel escalates attacks on civil society organisations, and kills Palestinian veteran journalist Shireen Abu Akleh

What can the Australian Government do?

- Call on Israel to immediately halt all settlement expansion in the West Bank and East Jerusalem
- Demand an immediate end to the siege of the Gaza Strip
- Call on Israel to end its occupation of Palestine
- Formally Recognise the State of Palestine
- Speak out about Israeli human rights abuses of Palestinians at the UN and in international forums
- Oppose any annexation of Palestinian land by the Israeli government

What can you do?

- Learn more by joining the Parliamentary Friends of Palestine group
- When you visit the region spend equal time in Palestine and Israel