

THE PALESTINIAN NAKBA 1948

The Palestinian people have a rich history and ancient links to the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. A history that stretches back thousands of years. Every year on the 15th of May, Palestinians around the world mark the 'Nakba', or 'Catastrophe', referring to the ethnic cleansing that occurred in 1948 and resulted in the loss of the Palestinian homeland. It was a traumatic experience as 80% of the Palestinians were made refugees and the remaining 20% became internally displaced people in their own land.

The Nakba events are rooted in political Zionism, a Jewish European settler colonial movement that sought to establish a home in Palestine for Jewish people. The Jewish migration and settlement in Palestine began in 1882.



THE EVENTS OF THE NAKBA 1947-1949: ETHNIC CLEANSING, MASSACRES AND LOOTING

- Violent take over of Palestinian land by Jewish **Zionist militia** such as Irgun and the Stern gang. These paramilitary organisations that later formed the Israeli army, perpetuated **crimes against humanity** in Palestine, including ethnic cleansing, massacres, rape, looting and bombings, in the lead up to the announcement of the establishment of the Israeli state.
- Over 530 Palestinian towns and villages were completely destroyed by Zionist militia. Some of these depopulated towns were taken over by Jewish immigrants and renamed, others lay in ruins as Israel has prevented Palestinians from rebuilding their hometowns and denied them their internationally recognised right to return, including those who are internally displaced.
- **About 15,000** Palestinians were killed in a series of mass atrocities, including dozens of massacres, such as the **Deir Yassin massacre** on the western outskirts of Jerusalem, and the **Tantura massacre** where over 200 Palestinian women, men and children were killed by Zionist militia. Today this mass burial site is a car park, with no acknowledgement of the heinous crime committed.
- **Over 800,000** were expelled from their homes in the Galilee. Palestinians were loaded on trucks, boats and pushed out of their hometowns at gunpoint. **The overwhelming majority became refugees** and settled in refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan and the West Bank. Those who attempted to return were shot and killed.
- On the 15th of May, the state of Israel was officially proclaimed and received International recognition. Having demographically engineered a Jewish majority in a land with a Jewish minority by ethnically cleansing the indigenous population, the following years would see Zionists consolidate control of the land. The State of Israel would also develop and implement **discriminatory ethnocratic laws** and policies that would institutionalise **Jewish supremacy** in Palestine.

THE ONGOING NATURE OF THE NAKBA

- The ethnic cleansing of Palestine **would not stop even after the establishment of Israel**. Palestinians in the Naqab, as well as those close to the ceasefire lines, would continue to face mass expulsions into the 1950s. In the same year, Israel issued the infamous **Absentee's Property Law**. This law was instrumental in systematically seizing the property of all the refugees, including homes, farms, land and even the contents of their bank accounts. This has allowed the state to take control of everything remaining behind, and if not “contested” or “claimed”, they would then become the property of the state, free to be utilised in any way it saw fit.
- The **Land Acquisitions Law** allowed for the mass transfer of the entire Palestinian economy to the Israeli state. Practically overnight, Israel gained control of over 739,750 agricultural acres, the vast majority of which were of excellent quality as well as 73,000 houses, 7800 workshops and 6 million pounds. This action subsidised the cost of settling a Zionist family in Palestine from approximately \$8000 to \$1500 and gave an immediate **kickstart to the Israeli economy**.
- **The state of Israel has no official border, nor does it have a constitution**. This is because Zionism, an **expansionist settler colonial movement**, seeks to seize control of all of Palestine. This was demonstrated in 1967 when Israel invaded and occupied the Golan Heights, Jerusalem, East Palestine (the West Bank), Gaza and Sinai peninsula. Following this invasion Israel continued with its land theft and settlement expansion.

PALESTINIANS TODAY

As a result of the Nakba, the Palestinian people live scattered all over the world, all of whom are directly impacted by the apartheid regime that Israel has established:

- **6 million** refugees reside outside of the historical Palestine and are denied their inalienable right to return home
- **3.2 million** Palestinians live in the West Bank denied the right to vote for the regime that rules over every aspect of their lives
- **2.2 million** Palestinians live under an illegal and inhumane Israeli siege in the Gaza strip, also denied the right to vote for the regime that rules over every aspect of their lives
- **1.9 million** inside the historical Palestine who have the “right to vote” but live as 5th class citizens inside Israel.

THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE AND RETURN

Despite the loss and pain of the Nakba, Palestinians have not given up hope. They continue to struggle for justice and their right to return home to Palestine. They will continue to resist the Zionist settler colonial project on a daily basis as they share their truth and fight for liberation.

