

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. Goods can't get in or out – food, medicines and other necessities are restricted. The health system is crumbling from damage to hospitals by the Israeli military and a lack of drugs and equipment. Severe electricity shortages impact on all aspects of life. Sewage is untreated, 90% of water is unsafe to drink, more than half the population is unemployed - all as a direct result of the blockade imposed by Israel and Egypt.

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.

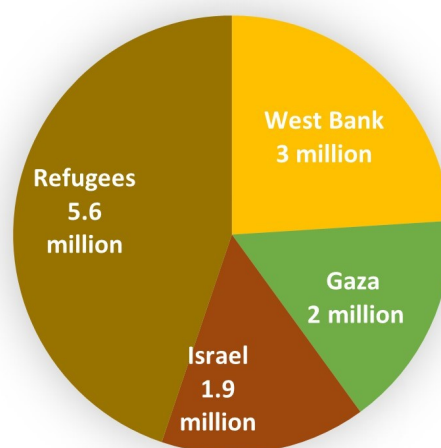
To this day they and their families live under the UN refugee charter and resolutions and have the right to return to their homes.

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 (as of 12/18).

Palestinians living with unequal rights in Israel

In 1948 some Palestinians remained in what became Israel. However Palestinians are second class citizens with 65 basic laws discriminating against them and in favour of Israeli Jews. The Netanyahu government recently passed the Nation State Law 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 - 10/3/2019

Recent timeline

- 1948: Nakba 700,000+ Palestinians become refugees
- 1967: Occupation of East Jerusalem, West Bank & Gaza Strip
- 1968: Beginning of Illegal settlement building in occupied land
- 1988: First Intifada- popular uprising protesting the occupation
- 1993: Oslo peace accord signed— 5 year interim plan towards final settlement. At this time 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: Trump unveils 'deal of the Century' which undermined Palestinian sovereignty. Israel and USA begin threatening annexation of the West Bank
- 2020: Netanyahu announces plans for Annexation of the West Bank, but international outcry halts these plans. UAE and Bahrain break with Arab League to grant normalisation to Israel without any justice for Palestine

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
- Support Australian aid to Palestine
- Stand against anti-Semitism and Islamophobia while defending the legitimate rights of Palestinians to non-violent protest and resistance to the occupation