

Reading the *Nakba* Booklet:

I. Read your section of the book and answer the questions. Be prepared to report to the class on your findings. Also, fill out what you can of the timeline.

A. Palestine & Palestinians p. 1-2

1. What factors would make Palestine a popular and diverse place to live/travel through?

2. Is there an ancient conflict in the area with Jews?

B. Zionism p. 3-4

3. Why was calling Palestine “a land without a people for a people without a land” untrue?

4. Why do some people argue that Zionism is racism?

C. British Mandate and the Partition of Palestine p. 5-6

5. What did UN Resolution 181 call for?

6. Why would the UN Partition Plan seem unfair to Palestinians?

7. What is “self-determination”?

D. Ethnic Cleansing 1947-49 p. 7-9

8. What had weakened Palestinians in 1936-39?

9. What was Plan Dalet?

10. What happened at Deir Yassin?

E. Refugees p. 11-12

11. Why did Palestinians leave?

- What was the “Transfer Committee”?

- What was the “Absentee Law”?

12. Where did they go?

13. Have they returned?

14. What two things does UN Security Council Resolution 194 call for?

F. 1967 War p. 13-14

15. Why did Israel attack Egypt?

16. What happened in the 1967 War?

17. What reasons did Israel have for attacking the USS *Liberty*?

G. Occupation p. 15-17

18. How do the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip live?

19. What laws are they subject to?

20. Who is the highest authority?

21. What are “closures”?

22. Why do Palestinians not want to pay taxes?

23. Why do people say that Israel is still in “effective control” of Gaza despite its “disengagement” and removal of settlers?

Historical Timeline: Add information and details to the section you are reading:

A. Palestine & Palestinians

3000 BCE -- Canaanites living in Palestine region found _____ &

1500 BCE -- Khabiru AKA _____ also live in area

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. .

1800s CE-- Palestinian society has professionals, political organizations, industry including: _____

1850 CE --500,000 Palestinians in area include: 80% _____, 15% _____, 5 % _____.

B. Zionism

late 1800s -- Zionism develops in Europe where Jews are persecuted. Zionism is

-- Palestinian national liberation movement forms to end occupation by _____ & _____

1897 -- Basel Conference of Zionists calls for _____
Theodor Herzl is _____

C. British Mandate & Partition

World War I (1914-1918):

McMahon-Hussein Understanding promised Palestinians

Balfour Declaration promised Jews _____

1918 Ottoman Empire falls

1922 Palestine becomes a mandate territory of _____

Population:

Over the next 30 years, Jewish settlers increase by _____.

Palestinian Arabs resist with nonviolent civil disobedience and with armed revolt; so do Jewish settlers.

1936-39 British suppression of Arab revolt leaves Palestinians

1946 Irgun (Jewish terrorist group) bombs King David Hotel, killing 100

1947 -- Resolution 181 calls for _____

Population: _____ Palestinian Arabs, _____ Palestinian Jews

Jews constitute _____% total population; own _____% land, but get _____% land in UN Partition Plan. Fighting started after this Partition Plan.

D. Ethnic Cleansing

Dec. 18, 1947: _____

March, April 1947: Plan Dalet was a plan to _____

Zionist terrorist groups kill many Palestinians.

April 9, 1948 -- Irgun and _____ Gangs attack Deir Yassin, kill civilians.

May, 1948 -- Zionists were already capturing land outside the UN Partition Plan-designated Jewish state and _____ Palestinians already expelled.

May 14, 1948 -- _____ withdraws; State of _____ declared

May 15, 1948 -- Jordan, _____, _____ enter war

Aug., 1948 -- Israeli Transfer Committee

Sept., 1948 -- UN mediator, Count Bernadotte, assassinated by Stern Gang

Dec., 1948 -- Israel's Absentee Law

Dec., 1948 -- UN Resolution 194 declares that refugees should be allowed to return to their homes or receive compensation; Israel's entry into UN is conditioned on compliance with this.

January, 1949 -- armistice agreement signed: Israel had taken _____% of Palestine.

_____ controlled the West Bank; Egypt controlled _____.

E. Refugees

1949 -- almost _____ Palestinian refugees driven from homes
_____ villages destroyed

United Nations establishes refugee camps in _____,
_____, _____, West Bank, and Gaza.

1953 -- Palestinian refugees began infiltrating Israel and committing acts of violent resistance.

F. 1967 War

1956 Israel invades _____, while _____ & _____ attack the Suez Canal. U. S. forces them to withdraw

1964 Palestine Liberation Organization formed

1966 Martial law is finally lifted on _____ who remain inside Israel.

1967 -- June 5 _____ attacks Egypt

June 8 Israel attacks _____, killing 34 US sailors

June 10 Israel occupies _____ & _____

(and the Sinai Peninsula, later given back to Egypt) (and the Syrian Golan Heights)

300,000 more Palestinian refugees

Khartoum Resolution: _____

G. Occupation

1967 -- Israel annexes _____

Palestinians in West Bank and Gaza are not annexed; instead they remain under martial law. Most practice “sumoud”, steadfastly remaining on their land.

1987-1993 First Intifada/Uprising: Palestinian resistance to occupation using mostly nonviolent means.

1993 Oslo Accords between Israel and Palestinians form the Palestine National Authority which has some local control, but Israeli military governor maintains highest authority.

Feb. 1994 -- massacre by Israeli settler of Palestinians at prayer

April 1994 -- first Palestinian suicide bomber

2000 Camp David

Sept. 29, 2000:--Al-Aqsa Intifada/Uprising -- Palestinian resistance to occupation, more violent than the First Intifada

2001 International Solidarity Movement to End the Occupation (ISM), nonviolent resistance to occupation, forms -- one of many such groups

2003 Road Map

March, 2003 -- American Rachel Corrie killed by Caterpillar bulldozer driven by Israeli soldier. She was volunteering with the ISM

2005 _____ Israeli settlers are moved out of Gaza, Israeli military moves to the border of Gaza, but maintains effective control of air, water, borders, and can enter at any time.

2006 Palestinians hold free and fair elections and elect Hamas.

2007 Hamas prevents Fatah coup and Hamas takes over Gaza.

2009 Operation Cast Lead: attack on Gaza by Israel -- killed about 1400 Palestinians, 13 Israelis. UN investigation by Goldstone found that Israel had committed many war crimes, Palestinians had committed a few.

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. .

Now

There are more than 4.5 million Palestinian refugees (including descendants of the original refugees). The Gaza Strip and West Bank are still occupied by Israel.

Reading the *Nakba* Booklet II:

II. Now read the second section that your teacher assigns from the *Nakba* booklet and answer the questions. Be prepared to report to the class on your findings. You will notice that some points mentioned in your reading are already mentioned on the timeline.

1. Settlements, Checkpoints and the Wall

- a. What are some incentives for the settlers to settle in the Occupied Territories?
- b. How does the Israeli government get land for settlements?
- c. Though they may live in neighboring communities, what is different about the laws that Palestinians and Israeli settlers live under? How do their rights differ?
- d. What does international law (Geneva Conventions, etc.) say about settlers?
- e. Compare Palestinian and settlers' access to water.
- f. What and where are checkpoints? What problems do Palestinians have with them?
- g. Where is the Wall being built (find a map that corroborates this if you can)? What are the problems with the Wall?
- h. What does the International Court of Justice say about the Wall?

2. Jerusalem

- a. What happened to Jerusalem in 1947? 1948? 1949? 1967? 1980?
- b. What policies push Palestinians out of Jerusalem?
- c. What did the UN Security Council Resolution say about Israel's activities in Jerusalem?

3. The "Peace Process"

- a. For each peace plan listed below, explain what it was, and what happened:
 - 1993 Oslo
 - 2000 Camp David
 - 2003 US Road Map
- b. What is Israel's unilateral policy while the peace talks are going on?
- c. What is the Palestinians' offer?
- d. Explain Hamas and Fatah and what happened in 2006 and 2007.
- e. When would Hamas be willing to recognize Israel's right to exist?

4. Palestinian Resistance

As you read this section, keep three lists and note details for each:

- a. Israeli violence
- b. Palestinian nonviolent resistance
- c. Pal. violent resistance (soldiers & settlers)

- d. Explain: PLO, sumoud, First Intifada, Al-Aqsa Intifada, ISM, Rachel Corrie, Baruch Goldstein's attack, Palestinian suicide bombing (use the other side of the page)
- e. What does international law say is legitimate armed struggle to resist occupation?

5. Right of Return

- a. What is it?
- b. List 3 international documents that affirm it in general (for any refugees).
- c. What does UNGA Res. 194 say?
- d. Why might Palestinians not want to settle in other Arab countries?
- e. Would Palestinians have the right to take back their original homes if someone else was living in it?
- f. What would change in Israel if Palestinian refugees returned? (discuss several options, giving opinions supported by evidence)
- g. What is the Israeli Law of Return?

Nakba
The Ongoing Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine
A concise guide to history and issues
By: Haithem al-Zabri & Edward Mast

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1. Palestine & Palestinians

The West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Israel are all part of what was once called Palestine, where Palestinians have lived for thousands of years.

Palestinians claim descent from the Kena'anu or Canaanites, a loose collection of peoples who lived in the region as long ago as 3000 BCE, founding the cities of Jericho and Jerusalem, among others.

Though a small number were nomads or Bedouins, Palestinians have primarily been agricultural, village and city people, sustaining and improving the millennia-old dry-climate agriculture native to the land, as well as nurturing the orchards of ancient olive trees, some of them thousands of years old.

By the nineteenth century, the people of Palestine had a well-established society and culture that was recognized as uniquely Palestinian, with respected intellectual and professional classes, political organizations, and the beginnings of modern industry. Palestine was renowned for its olive oil industry and its citrus exports, most notably the Jaffa Orange. According to Refaat Loubani's research, in 1912-13 Palestinians exported 1,608,570 cases of oranges to Europe. In addition to abundant agriculture, the country boasted commercial, banking, and fishing industries. Factories specialized in cigarette making, tile production, iron casting, cotton processing, leather products, textile, and publications, among other products.

Ahad Ha'am, a leading Eastern European Jewish essayist who visited Palestine in 1891, tried to relay this to other Jews in Europe, by stating that *"We abroad are used to believing that Eretz Yisrael is now almost totally desolate, a desert that is not sowed But in truth that is not the case. Throughout the country it is difficult to find fields that are not planted."*

Palestine was also a strategic crossroads for merchants from Asia, Africa, and Europe, and was home to ports in Jaffa and Haifa. Various cities, including Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Haifa, Jaffa, Acre, Nablus, Al-Khalil [Hebron], and Gaza, were known as centers of pilgrimage, commerce, and education.

The Jewish people also have a long history in the region, claiming descent from the Khabiru or Hebrews who appeared about 1500 BCE and were rulers for some hundreds of years.

For most of the last two thousand years, Palestinian Jews were a small and accepted minority. In 1850, the population of Palestine was estimated at 500,000, of whom approximately 80% were Muslim, 15% Christian, and 5% Jewish. The current conflict is not ancient, but began in the late nineteenth century when the Zionist movement in Europe decided to create a Jewish state in Palestine.

2. Zionism

Zionism began in the late 1800's as a nationalist movement among European Jews who hoped to escape from centuries of persecution, pogroms and expulsions in Europe. At the Basel Conference, in 1897, Zionists decided to create a Jewish national state in Palestine. Since Jews constituted a small minority in Palestine, implanting a Jewish majority state would by definition require the displacement of the non-Jewish majority population. Even though a Jewish delegation to Palestine from Vienna reported back that "*the bride is beautiful, but she is married to another man,*" the Zionist movement preferred to claim that Palestine was "*a land without a people for a people without a land.*" This slogan was openly racist in denying the significance, rights, or even existence of the Palestinian people.

In Palestine, a national liberation movement was already underway. Palestinians were seeking independence from occupation by the Ottoman Turks and then by the British. Though Zionism was also conceived as a national liberation movement, Zionists pursued their plan by allying themselves with the colonial occupying powers. Zionists were essentially asking to take over the occupation from the Turks and then the British, presenting Zionism as a new European occupier, "a rampart of Europe against Asia" as founder Theodore Herzl put it. Neither Palestinian Arabs nor the majority of Palestinian Jews favored the Zionist plan.

The colonialism and racism implicit from the start in the Zionist movement, leading to the ongoing attempts to displace the Palestinian Arab population, have been the primary sources of conflict in the region.

Palestinians have been pressured for decades to accept the validity and primacy of a Jewish state, even though a Jewish state would - again, by definition - devalue the rights, needs and aspirations of Palestinians and all other non-Jews.

In 1975, the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution 3379 which "determined that Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination." The resolution was revoked 16 years later, due to heavy U.S. pressure.

During the early years of Zionism, some Jews rejected the plan for a national state on religious grounds. Since the founding of Israel, an increasing number of Jews have objected to the racist and oppressive actions being committed in their name.

Zionist Terror Groups

More than 57 massacres and 5,000 lives were claimed by Zionist terrorist groups such as Etzel, Hagannah, Irgun, and Lehi (also known as the Stern Gang). According to Irgun, "political violence and terrorism [are] legitimate tools in the Jewish national struggle for the Land of Israel." In 1946, Irgun bombed the King David Hotel, killing approximately 100 Britons, Arabs, and Jews. Etzel and the Stern Gang booby-trapped cars and threw grenades into busy markets in Haifa and other Arab population

centers. The Stern Gang and Irgun jointly committed the Deir Yassin massacre in April 1948. Also in 1948, United Nations peace mediator Count Bernadotte was assassinated by the Stern Gang with the direct participation of Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir, both of whom went on to become Prime Ministers of Israel. Many of Israel's leaders came from these ranks.

"We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border... both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discretely and circumspectly."

Theodore Herzl, 1895 - considered the father of political Zionism

"After we become a strong force, as a result of the creation of a state, we shall abolish partition and expand to the whole of Palestine."

David Ben-Gurion, 1938 - Israel's first prime minister

"It must be clear that there is no room in the country for both people... the only solution is a Land of Israel... without Arabs. There is no room here for compromise... there is no way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries... not one village must be left, not one tribe."

Yosef Weitz, director of the Jewish National Fund's Land Department and founder of the Transfer Committee - "a body which would direct the Yishuv's war with the aim of evicting as many Arabs as possible" -1940

"It is not as though there was a Palestinian people... and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them, they did not exist."

Golda Meir, 1969 - Israel's fourth prime minister

3. The British Mandate and the Partition of Palestine

When the Ottoman Empire fell after World War I, the victorious European powers created new artificial boundaries and Palestine became a mandate territory of Britain in 1922. At that time, there were about 600,000 Palestinians and 60,000 Jews in the territory, half of the latter figure being Jewish settlers from Europe. Tensions had increased in November 1917 when the British Foreign Office Secretary, Lord Arthur Balfour, announced his government's support for the establishment of "a Jewish national home in Palestine." At the same time, however, the McMahon-Hussein Understanding promised Palestinian Arabs statehood if they assisted Great Britain in fighting against the Turks.

Regardless of competing promises, the number of Jewish settlers in Palestine grew ten-fold during the three decades of British rule. Palestinian Arabs resisted both with non-violent civil disobedience and with armed revolt, and they were forcibly suppressed by the British military and by increasingly well-armed Jewish militias. On November 29, 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations - under heavy pressure from the United States government - adopted Resolution 181, which recommended dividing Palestine into two states: one Palestinian and one Jewish. At that time, there were approximately 1,230,000 Arabs and 608,000 Jews in Palestine. Jews constituted 33 percent of the total population, and owned 6.59 percent of the land, yet the U.N. Resolution allocated 54% of the territory for a Jewish state. It had become common practice in Europe after World War I to determine borders under the international principle of "self-determination", which required asking the consent of the local population. No such consent was asked of the Palestinian people.

Following the General Assembly's resolution, the Arab states proposed asking the International Court of Justice to question the legitimacy of partitioning a country against the wishes of the majority of its inhabitants. The proposal was narrowly defeated.

For all these reasons, Palestinians did not accept the partition of their homeland. They continued to demand independence, as they had done even prior to British and French promises. Zionist leaders were also unsatisfied with partition, though they accepted the Resolution as a first step toward conquering all of historic Palestine. *"The Partition of Palestine is illegal. It will never be recognized Jerusalem was and will for ever be our capital. Eretz Israel will be restored to the people of Israel. All of it. And forever."*

Menachem Begin - Nov. 30, 1947

4. Ethnic Cleansing, 1947-49

Fighting broke out between Zionist Jews and Palestinian Arabs immediately after UN Resolution 181 was announced. One of the first major assaults by Zionist/Jewish forces came on December 18, 1947, when Palmach units (the shock troops of the Zionist underground army) attacked the Palestinian village of Khissas in northern Galilee. Men, women and children were killed and wounded in the night raid. Israeli legend has it that the Zionist forces were outnumbered and outgunned. In fact, Zionist forces always had superior numbers of troops, and by the summer of 1948 they had greater numbers of weapons and armored vehicles. British suppression of the Arab revolt in 1936-39 had left Palestinian Arabs largely unarmed and leaderless. A U.S.-European arms embargo on both sides maintained this imbalance.

By May 1948, Zionist forces had already captured substantial portions of Palestine outside the U.N.-defined Jewish state, and at least 200,000 Palestinians had been expelled from their homes in what became Israel.

On May 14, 1948, Great Britain officially declared the end of British Mandate rule in Palestine. That same day, Zionist leaders declared the State of Israel, and the U.S. government recognized it within hours. On May 15, Jordan, Syria and Egypt entered the war. These Arab governments had territorial ambitions of their own -- Jordan had made a secret agreement with the Zionists to divide up historic Palestine between them-- but they were also taking military action to stop the refugee crisis and to prevent the new state of Israel from conquering more land and driving out more Palestinians. The Arab Legion from Jordan, the only Arab force with battle experience, did not approach the area designated for a Jewish state.

Fighting continued until armistice agreements were signed in January 1949. The new state of Israel had conquered 78% of Palestine, with Jordan taking control of the West Bank and Egypt taking control of Gaza. Historic Palestine disappeared from the map of the world.

Plan Dalet

In March and April 1948, well before the Arab nations entered the conflict, the Zionist forces launched Plan Dalet, a systematic plan for the expulsion of Palestinians from vast areas of Palestine. The Plan was dispatched to units of the Jewish underground forces with a detailed description of the methods for the forcible eviction of Palestinian civilians. Section 3b4 of Plan Dalet details offensive operations to be carried out in the name of "defense", including:

- Destruction of villages (setting fire to, blowing up, and planting mines in the debris), especially those population centers which are difficult to control continuously.
- Mounting search and control operations according to the following guidelines: encirclement of the village and conducting a search inside it. In the event of resistance, the armed force must be destroyed and the population must be expelled outside the borders of the state.

Each unit was issued its own list of villages and neighborhoods to target in keeping with the master plan. In executing the plan, the mass expulsion was accompanied by imprisonment, and massacres and rape.

Deir Yassin

At dawn on April 9, 1948, the Irgun and Stern Gangs, led by Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir, attacked the village of Deir Yassin. They blew up houses with their inhabitants inside, executed men, women and children at close range, and dumped many of the bodies into wells and into the nearby quarry. There were also reports of rapes and mutilations. Some of the villagers were able to fight back and wound some of the attackers, but the Zionist Palmach shock troops came to the aid of the Irgun and Stern Gangs. The Zionist forces then loaded some of the captured villagers onto trucks to be paraded through the streets of Jerusalem in a victory procession before returning and executing them. The Irgun and Haganah used mobile loudspeakers to broadcast news of the massacre at Deir Yassin into the Arab areas of the major cities. Similar scenarios were enacted in other parts of Palestine. Most of these operations were marked by atrocities - a fact which led Aharon Zisling, the Minister of Agriculture, to tell the Israeli cabinet in November 1948: *"I couldn't sleep all night. I felt that things that were going on were hurting my soul, the soul of my family and all of us here... Now Jews too have behaved like Nazis and my entire being has been shaken."*

"We created terror among the Arabs and all the villages around. In one blow, we changed the strategic situation."

Menachem Begin, shortly after the Deir Yassin massacre

"The cleansing of Palestine remains the prime objective of Plan Dalet."

David Ben Gurion, May 1948

5. Refugees

By 1949, close to 800,000 Palestinians had been driven out of their homes. Israeli historian Ilan Pappé has tabulated 531 villages that were destroyed. New Israeli towns were founded on many of the sites.

According to Israeli propaganda, the Palestinians had left of their own accord, or under orders from Arab leaders. The propaganda cited "Arab broadcasts" instructing people to move away so that Arab armies could "operate without interference." In fact, both U.S. and British intelligence services were monitoring all broadcasts during this period. Examination of those records demonstrates that Arab broadcasts were instructing the population to stay put, not asking people to leave. Israeli forces, meanwhile, were using threats, violence, and murder to force many Palestinians to leave their homes.

Before the war was over, the Israeli government took steps to prevent Palestinians from returning to their homes. In August 1948, a "Transfer Committee" was created to supervise the destruction of the emptied Arab villages and/or their repopulation with recent Jewish immigrants. In December 1948, Israel passed the "Absentee Law," giving legal cover to the confiscation of Palestinian properties whose owners had been expelled.

Some of the Palestinian refugees were forced elsewhere in Palestine. Most were forced out of the country altogether. The United Nations set up refugee camps in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and inside the Palestinian areas administered by Jordan and Egypt.

When refugees tried to cross the border back into Israel, mostly to tend their farmlands or homes, Israel treated them as criminal infiltrators and launched violent reprisals against locations in Jordan, Syria, and Egyptian-controlled Gaza. Several Israeli historians and others have concluded that not until 1953, after several years of being violently excluded and attacked by Israel, did Palestinian refugees begin infiltrating Israel to engage in violent resistance.

It is sometimes claimed that Israel absorbed Jewish refugees from Arab countries "in exchange" for Palestinian refugees. However, Palestinians were driven out starting in 1947, whereas the movement of Jewish populations from Arab countries did not begin until after the founding of Israel in 1948, with most of the movement happening in 1949 and later. Israel solicited Jews from Arab countries, even arranging for their transport and promising opportunities that were later not available. Both the inviting of Jews from Arab countries and the expulsion of Palestinians from Palestine served the Zionist goal of establishing a Jewish majority in the new nation of Israel.

U.N. Security Council Resolution 194 declared that "refugees wishing to return to their homes should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date and that

those choosing not to return should be compensated for their property.” The acceptance of Israel into the United Nations was conditional on Israel's compliance with this resolution. Israel has never complied. Since 1949, both the General Assembly and Security Council of the United Nations have passed many resolutions criticizing Israel. Many of these have called for the return of Palestinian refugees, and for the end of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. The Israeli government, while using Resolutions 181 and 194 as a legal basis for founding its state, has rejected all other U.N. resolutions as non-binding.

Palestinians are one of the largest and longest suffering groups of refugees in the world. Over 4.5 million Palestinian refugees are registered with the UN, and many more are unregistered. Many of them still carry keys to the homes from which they were expelled in 1948.

6. The 1967 War

Border skirmishes and instability increased after Israel refused to allow Palestinian refugees to return to their homes. In 1956, Israel invaded Egypt in tandem with a French-British attack on the Suez Canal, only to be forced to retreat by US President Eisenhower. Palestinians who had managed to remain inside Israel lived under harsh martial law until 1966. Israel became increasingly militarized and Arab governments continued making threats that were not supported by any serious military capability or plans. The Israeli military created provocations in what was designated by the U.N. as a demilitarized zone between Israel and Syria.

In 1967, violent rhetoric on both sides had escalated to the point where both the Arab countries and Israel had reason to fear invasion by the other. Egypt, though participating in diplomatic initiatives with the U.S., also moved troops into defensive position in the Sinai Peninsula.

On June 5, Israel launched a surprise attack on Egypt. Israel called it a preemptive strike, though Israeli military and government leaders have since admitted that they knew there was no military necessity for the attack. Five days later, Israel had achieved all its territorial objectives, including the West Bank and Gaza.

300,000 more Palestinians were driven out of Palestine to become refugees. Israel immediately began demolishing Palestinian homes for Israeli settlements. Some Israeli government officials spoke of returning part but not all of the conquered territories, but others insisted that the conquered territories would remain part of Israel forever. In response, eight Arab countries issued the Khartoum Resolution, refusing to negotiate with Israel.

USS Liberty

On June 8, 1967, Israeli air and naval forces attacked the U.S. Navy intelligence ship, USS *Liberty*, on the Mediterranean Sea. The USS *Liberty* was identified as a U.S. naval ship nine hours before the attack by Israeli reconnaissance aircraft and continuously tracked by Israeli radar and aircraft thereafter. The ship was sailing in international waters at less than five knots, with no offensive armament. Israeli forces attacked without warning and without attempting contact, killing 34 U.S. sailors and wounding 174 more. Though the U.S. government has never formally accepted the Israeli story that it was an accident, no investigation was mounted, and survivors were prohibited from telling their story.

"Message intercepts by the USS Liberty made it clear that Israel had never intended to limit its attack to Egypt. Furthermore, we learned that the Israelis were themselves intercepting communications among Arab leaders. The Israelis then retransmitted 'doctored' texts to encourage Jordan and Syria to commit their armies in the erroneous belief that Nasser's army had repelled the Israeli invaders. To destroy this incriminating evidence, Moshe Dayan [Israeli Minister of Defense] ordered his jets and torpedo boats to destroy the Liberty immediately."

--Wilbur Crane Eveland, CIA operative in the Middle East during 1967

" . . . the entire story [about] the danger of extermination [was] invented of whole cloth and exaggerated after the fact to justify the annexation of new Arab territories."

Mordecai Bentov, Israeli Cabinet Minister

"In June 1967, we again had a choice. The Egyptian Army concentrations in the Sinai approaches do not prove that Nasser was really about to attack us. We must be honest with ourselves. We decided to attack him"

Menachem Begin, Israeli Cabinet Minister (later Prime Minister) - August 1982

"I do not believe that Nasser wanted war. The two divisions he sent into Sinai on May 14 would not have been enough to unleash an offensive against Israel. He knew it and we knew it."

Yitzhak Rabin, Chief of Staff (later Prime Minister) - February 1968

7. Occupation

After the victory of 1967, Israel illegally annexed East Jerusalem to become a part of the State of Israel. The other conquered areas -- the West Bank and the Gaza Strip -- have never been formally annexed and so the 3.5 million Palestinians who remain there are not citizens of any country but have remained subjects of an illegal military occupation.

Under military occupation, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are subject to Israeli military laws. These laws closely resemble --and in some cases are exactly the same as-- the apartheid laws of old South Africa. Under military occupation:

- Palestinians have no right of free speech.
- They can be arrested without warrant or charge
- They can be held in jail indefinitely without charge or trial
- They are routinely tortured during interrogation
- They have no freedom of movement between towns
- They can be expelled from the country with no due process
- Palestinian homes can be entered and searched without warrants.

Despite the creation of the Palestinian National Authority, the Israeli military governor remains the highest authority in the Occupied Territories.

By suppressing Palestinian industry inside the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Israel kept Palestinians as a cheap labor force for Israeli industry and construction, before finally closing borders and removing even that source of income.

Since 1993, Israel has regularly implemented massive closures within the West Bank, preventing Palestinians from going to their own cities for work, as well as depriving them of access to hospitals, social services, and cultural and religious centers in Jerusalem.

Taxation Without Representation

Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza, though not allowed to vote in Israeli elections, are forced to pay taxes to the Israeli government. Their tax revenues are primarily spent inside Israel, not in the West Bank or Gaza. During the first Intifada, 1987-1993, many Palestinians refused to pay taxes to Israel as a form of nonviolent resistance to the Occupation.

"Why do we not pay our taxes? First, the military authority does not represent us, and we did not invite them to come on our land. Second, the collected taxes are used to increase the harsh measures against our people. Must we pay for the bullets that kill our children?"

- Statement by residents of Beit Sahour, 1987

Gaza

In 2005, the Israeli government moved approximately 8,000 Israeli settlers out of Gaza (many of whom relocated to settlements in the West Bank) and redeployed Israeli military forces to the border. The government of Israel tried to present this as an end to the Israeli occupation of Gaza. However:

- Israel still controls Gaza's airspace, sea shore, borders and border crossings, including Gaza's border with Egypt. It has used its ability to restrict products entering or leaving Gaza, causing shortages of critically needed items, including medical and hospital supplies.
- Israeli soldiers still enter Gaza at any time and for any reason. Over 400 Palestinians were killed by Israeli soldiers in the second half of 2006 in Gaza alone.
- Israel still controls Gaza's electricity and water, and has used the ability to shut them off as a punitive measure.
- Israel still has veto power over any legislation passed by the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and the West Bank.

As defined by the Hague Regulations of 1907 and the Nuremberg Tribunal of 1948, this “effective control” of the territory still constitutes occupation, and Palestinians have continued to resist. Israel has reduced Gaza to little more than a large open-air prison under constant siege, and the Israeli military continues to invade Gaza, bombard civilian neighborhoods and infrastructure, and carry out targeted assassinations, all the while strengthening the military occupation of the West Bank with an ever-increasing network of checkpoints, walls and illegal settlements.

Dov Weisglass, Ariel Sharon's chief advisor, stated publicly [date] that *“the significance of the [Gaza] disengagement plan is the freezing of the peace process... Effectively, this whole package called the Palestinian state, with all that it entails, has been removed indefinitely from our agenda.”*

8. Settlements, Checkpoints and the Wall

4th Geneva Convention, Article 49:

"The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies."

Settlements

Beginning in 1967 and accelerating to the present day, the Israeli government has given financial incentives to Israeli Jewish citizens, as well as Jews living elsewhere, to move to "settlements" in the West Bank. Palestinian farmland and homes are routinely confiscated and demolished to make room for these Israeli-only settlements, along with Israeli-only highways to connect settlements to each other and to Israel proper.

Israeli settlers live under a separate set of laws from their Palestinian neighbors. Since the settlers are citizens of Israel, they possess the civil and human rights that are denied to Palestinians under the Israeli occupation.

Though settlements are illegal under the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Israeli government continues to subsidize the building of these settlements, which are placed strategically to divide, scatter, and even abolish areas of Palestinian residence.

There is wide agreement that the settlements are a major obstacle to peace.

Water

The western hills of the West Bank contain one of the major aquifers in the region, but Palestinians under Israeli occupation are allowed to consume only 11% of their natural water resources, while Israel consumes 89% of the West Bank's water. In the West Bank and Gaza Strip, per capita consumption is estimated at 60 liters per day, while in Israel it is approximately 280 liters per day.

Travel restrictions imposed across the West Bank and Gaza also severely affect Palestinians' access to fresh water. A number of settlements were deliberately constructed over key water resources, which are then confiscated for Israel by the Annexation Wall.

Checkpoints

In early 1993, even before the Oslo Accords created so-called Palestinian zones, the Israeli army began placing checkpoints throughout the West Bank and Gaza. There are now more than 600, according to the U.N.. Some of these checkpoints are like international borders, except that Israelis pass through freely and Palestinians are detained. Only 29 of these are on the Green Line (the pre-1967 border between the Occupied Territories and Israel), with the rest scattered throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territories themselves, making it impossible for Palestinians to travel from one village or city to another without passing through a security zone manned by a

hostile Israeli army. The system of checkpoints strangles the West Bank's economy, leading to increasing levels of unemployment and poverty.

The Annexation Wall

In the spring of 2002, the Israeli military began constructing a physical barrier to separate the West Bank from Israel. However, most of this barrier, often called the Annexation Wall, is not being built on the Green Line, but deep inside the West Bank. Its snaking route fences Palestinians away from major water sources and large tracts of their most fertile farmland, dividing villages, separating people from hospitals and schools, and leaving over 200,000 Palestinians on the Israeli side of the Wall but still without the rights of Israeli citizens. The International Court of Justice ruled in June 2004 that the route of the Wall is illegal and must be changed or dismantled. The Israeli Supreme Court has also ruled in more than one case that parts of the Wall are placed illegally and must be moved or dismantled. However, no enforcement has been provided for these decisions.

A recent traveler from the United States reports that "the 8 mile trip from Ramallah to Jerusalem took two and a half hours. In Ramallah, the Wall is 25 feet high, and the Israeli checkpoint is like an airport security station, though far less efficient. We lined up for a long time with Palestinians at a remote-controlled 8-foot turnstile where people had to crowd like cattle and wait for a green light to get as many through as possible before the light turned red. Once past x-ray security and more turnstiles, we boarded shared taxis for what should have been a short ride to Jerusalem. However, the Israeli military had set up an additional temporary "flying checkpoint" some 500 meters down the road, forcing several lanes of traffic down to a single lane for stopping and searching. That 500 meters took almost an hour. How do people get anywhere? How does anyone do business?"

"You know, it's not by accident that the settlements are located where they are...Come what may, we have to hold the western security area, which is adjacent to the Green Line, and the eastern security area along the Jordan River and the roads linking the two. And Jerusalem, of course. And the hill aquifer."

- Ariel Sharon - 12 April, 2001

9. Jerusalem

Under the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan, Jerusalem was declared a 'corpus separatum' to be placed under a special international regime administered by the U.N.. Israeli forces captured 85% of the city, mainly in the west, during the 1948 war while the Jordanian army took control of 11% of the city, in the east, and 4% was considered a 'no-man's land'. Over 60,000 Palestinians were forcibly expelled from their homes in West Jerusalem and 40 of the surrounding villages, which were destroyed by Israeli forces to prevent the return of their inhabitants. Israel declared West Jerusalem its capital in 1949, in contravention of U.N. General Assembly Resolutions 181 and 303.

East Jerusalem was occupied by Israel during the 1967 war, and Israel immediately expanded the boundaries of Jerusalem by annexing another large section of the West Bank into the municipal boundaries of West Jerusalem. In 1980, in contravention of international law, the Israeli government officially annexed East Jerusalem by amending Israel's "Basic Law" to extend Israeli jurisdiction to the occupied area of the city.

Since 1967, Israel has implemented policies attempting to drive out Palestinians and establish exclusive Israeli control of the city. Israeli leaders often refer to Jerusalem as "the eternal and undivided capital of the Jewish state." Policies include the confiscation of Palestinian land, demolishing of Palestinian homes, denial of building permits and residency rights, discriminatory budget allocations, and physical isolation of Jerusalem from the West Bank through the construction of settlements and the Annexation Wall.

To facilitate easy access for the illegal settler communities of East Jerusalem, a ring road is being built, connecting the various settlements to one another and to Jerusalem while encircling Palestinian neighborhoods. Some 230,000 Palestinian Jerusalemites will be severed from social and economic networks in the West Bank if they choose to remain in Jerusalem, or else face permanently losing their Jerusalem identity documents and the right to live in Jerusalem.

The U.N. recognizes East Jerusalem as occupied territory and therefore rejects Israeli sovereignty over it. U.N. Security Council Resolution 476 of 1980 "recommends that all actions taken by Israel, the Occupying Power, which purport to alter the character and status of Jerusalem have no legal validity and constitute a flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and also constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East."

10. The “Peace Process”

Many people hoped that the Oslo Peace Accords, signed in September 1993, would bring justice to Palestine and Israel. Unfortunately, this interim peace plan only created “autonomous zones” - scattered areas of limited Palestinian authority still under Israeli military, political and economic control. The Oslo Accords created a Palestinian National Authority (PNA) with no real control over Palestinian affairs, mandated to protect Israelis from Palestinians but with no authority or power to protect Palestinians from Israeli settler or military violence.

Under Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli government immediately violated the agreement by accelerating its confiscation of Palestinian land for Israeli settlements. During the following eight years, the Israeli settler population doubled.

The Camp David talks of summer 2000 were promoted as containing generous new offers by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak. In fact, Barak proposed nothing more than non-contiguous islands of land, surrounded and subdivided by Israeli settlements and settler highways. Instead of any real sharing of Jerusalem, only tiny locations on the outskirts of what Israel considered “Greater Jerusalem” were offered for limited Palestinian control. A token offer of return was made for a few thousand Palestinian refugees. Barak's offers were intended as the final status agreement, but contained neither independence nor self-determination for the Palestinian people. Meanwhile, during Barak's administration, Israeli settlement building accelerated.

The U.S. government has consistently supported Israel and Israeli policy, giving several billions of dollars of aid each year to Israel in the form of direct aid, weapons shipments, loan guarantees, and weapons contracts. The U.S. government has repeatedly vetoed U.N. Security Council resolutions critical of Israel, and has pressured other countries to refrain from reprimanding Israel for its policies or actions. In spite of this clear bias, the U.S. government insists on acting as the primary, and often sole, broker for continued Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

In 2003, the US proposed a vague and contradictory “Road Map to Peace”. This proposal, though calling for a Palestinian state and the dismantling of some Israeli settlements, fails effectively to address Palestinian human rights, Israeli violence, the imbalance of power, the right of return, and other key issues that must be resolved in order to reach a just peace. The government of Israel first refused to accept the plan, and then demanded a long list of revisions, including removing the phrase “Palestinian state” and replacing it with “Palestinian entity”.

The government of Israel is meanwhile pursuing a unilateral policy which would turn the Annexation Wall into the permanent western border between Israel and a Palestinian “entity”, while also annexing the Jordan Valley as a “security zone” on the east side of the West Bank. The plan would remove some 60,000 Israeli settlers from scattered outposts in the West Bank, while consolidating and annexing the rest of the

Israeli settlements with the total population of 370,000. This would leave Palestinians imprisoned on something less than 40% of the West Bank, divided into two or more non-contiguous reservations.

The Palestinian Generous Offer: 78% of Historic Palestine

In the 1970s, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) began offering an historic compromise: Israeli sovereignty on 78% of historic Palestine, and a Palestinian state on the remaining 22% , comprising the West Bank and Gaza, as called for by U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, with the right of return or compensation for Palestinian refugees recognized and implemented according to U.N. Resolution 194. This offer became a formal part of the PLO platform in 1988. Israel responded by calling this a dangerous “peace offensive” and began encouraging Hamas and other groups to undermine the PLO. Nonetheless, both the PLO and the Palestinian National Authority have stood by this offer for decades.

Though most Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have supported this proposal for years, many are becoming dissatisfied with it. The Annexation Wall, the permanent structures of many of the checkpoints, and the ever-expanding network of Israeli settlements, along with the ongoing battering and dismantling of Palestinian infrastructure, have made it difficult to see how a viable Palestinian state can be developed in the remains of the occupation.

Hamas

In the internationally-monitored Palestinian election of 2006, a majority of seats in the Palestinian Authority were won by Hamas, a political militant organization whose charter calls for an Islamic state in all of historic Palestine. In the early days of Hamas, the government of Israel encouraged the growth of the organization, hoping to create internal conflict and undermine secular resistance movements such as the PLO. Hamas' rise to power in the Palestinian Authority has nonetheless created grave concerns in Israel.

However, even before the election Hamas had been moderating its platform. For years Hamas officials have stated that Hamas would negotiate a two-state peace solution if Israel will end the occupation and withdraw fully to pre-1967 borders. The militant wing of Hamas declared a unilateral cease-fire early in 2005, which lasted well into 2006, despite continued Israeli assassinations and murders of Palestinian civilians. More recently, Hamas has stated its willingness to recognize the right of Israel to exist once Israel recognizes the right of a Palestinian state to exist.

The government of Israel, with U.S. government support, has refused to negotiate with the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority. The governments of Israel, the U.S., and the European Union have initiated an embargo of funding, supplies and fuel to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, accelerating an already-mounting crisis of hunger and lack of medical supplies.

The U.S. and Israeli governments have encouraged anti-Hamas factions -- mainly Fatah, the previous ruling party -- to unseat Hamas, and have supplied weapons for a forceful takeover. In June 2007, Hamas forces in Gaza mounted a surprise attack on a Fatah weapons stockpile and took control of the Gaza Strip. While falsely portrayed by Western media as a coup by Hamas, it was actually an attempt by Hamas to prevent a U.S./Israeli backed coup by Fatah. At the same time, some Palestinians have reported excessive acts of punitive violence by members of Hamas during and following the attack.

Many Palestinians are profoundly discouraged and even contemptuous of the spectacle of factional violence with nothing more at stake than the limited illusory power of the PNA.

11. Palestinian Resistance

For over a century, Palestinians have resisted conquest and occupation by both nonviolent and armed struggle. Early in the 1900's Palestinians used mass demonstrations, general strikes and tax resistance to protest British support for the Zionist movement, along with armed struggle and open revolt.

After the disasters of 1948 and 1967, some Palestinians turned to militant actions which included the targeting of civilians. The majority of Palestinians resisted by practicing *sumoud*, meaning a steadfast refusal to leave their land, even when the oppression was most difficult.

In 1987, after decades of *sumoud* and failed hopes that the international community or the Palestinian leadership in exile might right the injustices of occupation and dispossession, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza took matters into their own hands in a widespread popular uprising.

The First *Intifada* ("shaking off" or Uprising) began in December 1987 after an Israeli vehicle ran down and killed four Palestinians in Gaza. Organized through networks of neighborhood committees and unions, including women's organizations, the primarily nonviolent uprising spread throughout the Occupied Territories, challenging the Israeli military occupation with tax revolts, general strikes, boycotts, home education, "victory gardens" and protests. The First Intifada brought positive world attention to the Palestinian plight, and ended with the signing of the Oslo Accords. Many Palestinians hoped that their own nation-state was about to begin, but soon recognized they were mistaken, as settlement expansion continued.

On September 29, 2000, one day after Ariel Sharon's inflammatory visit to the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem --which contains the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque-- Israeli troops fired live ammunition into a crowd of unarmed Palestinian protestors in front of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Four people were killed and many more wounded. A few days later, thirteen Palestinians were killed inside Israel when Israeli troops opened fire on another crowd of unarmed demonstrators.

Palestinians were already frustrated and angry at what they perceived as the lack of Israeli good-faith negotiations toward a just peace, and these killings ignited the Second Intifada, also known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada. The Israeli government responded with disproportionate and lethal force, often shooting demonstrators fatally in the head and attacking villages with American-made helicopters and rockets. The escalating violence of the Second Intifada claimed thousands of Palestinian lives and injured many more. Thousands were rounded up in mass arrests and held without charge.

Israeli military violence against Palestinian civilians escalated sharply in the period 2002-03, and included attacks on Palestinian cities. Palestinian National Authority

(PNA) offices and police headquarters were destroyed, ending the Authority's already limited ability to administer its enclaves as provided under the Oslo Accords. Thousands of homes were damaged or demolished, electricity and water were cut, and access to medical care was severely limited. Several years later, Israeli military vehicles continue to patrol Palestinian cities, restricting the movement of Palestinians by imposing curfews and checkpoints, demolishing homes, and carrying out assassinations and random killings.

Israeli state violence during its occupation of Palestinian land has been responsible for the great majority of deaths and injuries in the conflict. Much of this violence has been directed at unarmed civilians and meets the definition of terrorism, commonly understood as violence against civilians for a political purpose. One clear case of Israeli state terrorism, for example, occurred when an Apache helicopter dropped a one-ton bomb on an apartment building in Gaza City in 2002, killing 15 people including women and children.

The Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem reported in October 2001 that “the IDF continues to employ a policy of 'an easy trigger-finger' and demonstrates a disregard for human life,” and in March 2002 that “In every city and refugee camp that they have entered, IDF soldiers have repeated the same pattern: indiscriminate firing and the killing of innocent civilians, intentional harm to water, electricity and telephone infrastructure, taking over civilian houses, extensive damage to civilian property, shooting at ambulances and prevention of medical care to the injured.”

Israeli state terrorism has extended beyond its army and police actions to protecting the violence perpetrated by settlers. Israeli settlers, though civilians, are allowed to carry weapons in the Occupied Territories. Settlers confiscate homes, build roadblocks, shoot cars and water drums, and carry out brutal and lethal attacks on Palestinians. Though sometimes the Israeli army restrains settler violence, often they just stand by or even impose restrictions on Palestinians in response.

International law also forbids occupying powers from launching armed reprisals against the occupied population. While the right of self-defense is universally supported, Israel's military also violently maintains an illegal occupation, consistently attacks civilians, and participates in acts intended to destroy the means of living for Palestinians.

In 2001, the nonviolent, Palestinian-led International Solidarity Movement to End the Occupation (ISM) called for internationals to join Palestinians in nonviolent resistance to the Israeli occupation. Internationals from all over the world have stood with Palestinians while dismantling roadblocks, harvesting olives, walking through curfews to school, riding on Jewish-only roads, and protecting homes from demolition. It was during such an action that American college student Rachel Corrie was crushed by a Caterpillar bulldozer driven by an Israeli soldier. Since her death in March 2003, several other ISM activists have been shot by Israeli soldiers, and ISM offices have

been ransacked. Israeli officials routinely deny entry into Israel to those suspected of working for the human rights of Palestinians.

Palestinians resisting ethnic cleansing and occupation have employed armed struggle as well as nonviolence. While the Geneva Conventions and other international legal principles support the right to resist military occupation and dictatorship “by any means at hand” including armed struggle, international law also demands that combatants only attack other combatants and take all measures to avoid attacking civilians. Some Palestinians believe that attacks on Israeli civilians are justified as forms of resistance. Other Palestinians are driven to support these attacks because of despair, lack of other means of resistance, and the constantly mounting numbers of Palestinian non-combatant men, women and children being killed by the Israeli military and settlers. Other Palestinian attacks are aimed at Israeli soldiers, in what international law considers “legitimate” armed struggle. The PLO mounted attacks at both soldiers and civilians after its inception in 1964, though formally renouncing armed struggle in 1993. The first Palestinian to kill himself and Israelis with a bomb strapped to his body did so in April 1994, in response to the Israeli terrorist attack committed by Baruch Goldstein forty days earlier. In retaliation for massive Israeli assaults, some Palestinians have resisted the occupation by attacking unarmed civilians inside Israel.

A vast majority of Palestinians have never resorted to any kind of violence to resist the occupation, but continue to use steadfastness and nonviolence to struggle against Israel’s military occupation and ongoing attempts to dispossess the Palestinian people.

12. The Right of Return

The general right of return is affirmed in numerous human rights and international law documents, including:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Art. 13(2): “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.”
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Art. 12 (4): “No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country.” This allows those outside their own country to return for the first time, even if they were born elsewhere and would be entering for the first time, so long as they have maintained a “genuine and effective link” to the country and have not renounced their ties to it.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. (Art. 5 ii)
- The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Art. 1.C), focuses on return as the preferred option for refugees by ending protection of refugees only once the refugees have voluntarily repatriated.
- The right of return is a general principle in international law and has been affirmed by the American and European Human Rights Conventions (Art. 22(5); and 4th Protocol respectively), and by the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights in cases involving Cyprus, Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, Uganda, and East/Central Europe. Palestinians have a specific right of return according to the United Nations:
 - UN General Assembly Resolution 194 III in 1948 provided that Palestinian “refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return...” (Art. 11). Resolution 194 has been reaffirmed more than 100 times by the General Assembly in other resolutions including 513, 2452, 2936, and 3236.

It is sometimes argued that Arab countries should assimilate the Palestinian refugees. However, while sharing some basic elements of language, religion and culture with the Arab Countries of the Middle East and North Africa, Palestinians have their own distinct culture, traditions, dialect, and history. Palestinians are as distinct from Egyptians or Saudis as Poles are distinct from Czechs or Bulgarians. Arab countries have resettled and granted rights to many Palestinians, but most Palestinian refugees and most Arab governments have opposed permanent resettlement, assimilation and naturalization, preferring to adopt policies that preserve Palestinian identity and refugee status. Palestinians have received varied treatment in Arab host countries, often unacceptable and inhumane; but the great majority of Palestinian refugees, Arab people, and Arab governments are in agreement that the ultimate responsibility for the Palestinian refugee problem lies with Israel.

The Right of Return does not mean the destruction of the State of Israel. While many people do not believe that any ethnic group has the right to guarantee an ethnic majority in a nation-state, and therefore do not believe that Israeli Jews have the right to demand a perpetual Jewish majority, nonetheless even those who support a

Jewish majority in Israel should be able to accept the Palestinian Right of Return, since acceptance of this right will not necessarily overturn the Jewish majority in Israel.

- While all refugees must be given the right to return, not all will choose to exercise that right.
- The two-state solution, supported by many Palestinians and Israelis, would allow many Palestinian refugees to resettle inside the Palestinian state. Many other refugees would choose to stay where they are.
- Even if two million Palestinians from refugee camps returned to Israel, the total Israeli Palestinian population would still be a minority of some three million, with Israeli Jews a clear majority of over five million.
- The Right of Return does not mean that individual Israelis must give up their homes. In other refugee return situations, the right of return has been interpreted to mean that, if a former home no longer exists or is occupied by an innocent third party, return should be permitted to the vicinity of the former home.

The return of Palestinian refugees to Israel is not an issue of immigration, but rather of undoing an historical injustice. Once the State of Israel acknowledges its primary responsibility for the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem, Palestinians and Israelis can negotiate in good faith to find ways to implement the Right of Return so that self-determination and security for both peoples are not undermined.

The Law of Return

Israel's Law of Return allows Jews anywhere in the world to receive immediate Israeli citizenship with all its privileges, simply by setting foot on Israeli soil. Meanwhile, millions of Palestinians outside Israel are not allowed to return to their home, and Palestinians inside Israel are treated as second-class citizens or worse.

13. International Solidarity / Activist Guide

Activist groups all over the world are doing solidarity work for Palestine, though much more is needed in order to effect tangible change. Everyone can help a little, and here are some suggestions.

1. Education:

Many people, especially in the United States, are simply unaware of the basic facts of conquest, occupation and ethnic cleansing in Palestine. Israel's propaganda machine has effectively controlled public perception of the conflict, and many people believe that Israel is simply "defending itself." It is crucial to understand the realities of the situation and share them with as many people as possible. Recommended sources: ElectronicIntifada.net, PalestineChronicle.com, PalestineInformation.org

2. Media Lobbying:

The media, particularly in the U.S., has taken a decidedly biased position, and is generally enabling Israeli propaganda to continue influencing the public's views. It is important to voice your complaints to the media: write op-eds or letters to the editor, complain to readers representatives, talk to the editors and, if needed, arrange protests or boycotts of the targeted publication. Recommended sites: PMWatch.org, IfAmericansKnew.org

3. Political Lobbying:

Many governments of the world, contrary to their constituents' wishes, support Israel's ongoing violations of human rights. Even European countries, which are seen as having a more balanced position, continue supplying Israel with weapons. It is very important to voice our positions to elected representatives and let them know that there is strong opposition to their support of Israeli criminal policies and actions. Recommended sites: EndTheOccupation.org, ADC.org, Al-Awda.org

4. Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions:

Economic pressure can be a powerful tool. Boycotting Israeli products and academic and cultural institutions; divesting from companies that sell weaponry to Israel for military occupation; sanctions from other governments against Israel; all are urgently needed campaigns to bring Israel in compliance with international law and create the conditions for the requirements for a just peace. Recommended sites: BDS-Palestine.net, PACBI.org

5. Visit Palestine:

Nothing can match the first-hand experience of visiting Palestine to learn about the issue. There are many opportunities for study, internships, activism, witnessing or tourism.

Recommended sites: Palsolidarity.org, ATG.ps, SirajCenter.org, CPT.org, Birzeit.edu

6. Humanitarian Assistance:

With the Israeli economic strangulation of the Occupied Territories, unemployment has reached unprecedented levels. Ongoing home demolitions have made thousands of Palestinians homeless. Agriculture, healthcare, education, and virtually every other aspect of Palestinian life have been attacked, with children especially impacted. There is strong and immediate need for many kinds of humanitarian relief. Recommended sites: KinderUSA.org, PCRF.net.

7. Displaying Solidarity:

Wearing a kuffiya or a t-shirt that reads "Free Palestine", displaying the Palestinian flag at demonstrations, having bumper stickers on our cars: all help relay the message that there is support for Palestinian rights. Clear public signals strengthen our voice, as well as raise the morale of the Palestinian people and of activists working to support these rights.

Recommended site: PalestineOnlineStore.com

14. Calendar of Palestinian History

January 7 - Martyr's Day
February 23 - Hebron massacre (1994)
March 16 - Rachel Corrie murdered (2003)
March 26 - Camp David Accords (1977)
March 30 - Land Day (1976)
April 3 - Jenin Massacre (2002)
April 5 - Child's Day (Palestine)
April 9 - Deir Yassin Massacre (1948)
April 16 - Arab Revolt (1936)
April 16 - Abu Jihad assassinated (1988)
April 17 - Prisoners' Day (Palestine)
April 18 - Qana Massacre (1996)
May 11 - Israel admitted to UN (1949)
May 14 - Israel declares itself an independent state (1948)
May 15 - Nakba Commemoration (1948)
June 2 - PLO founded (1964)
June 5 - Israel occupies West Bank and Gaza (1967)
June 20 - World Refugee Day
June 28 - Israel annexes East Jerusalem (1967)
July 8 - Ghassan Kanafani assassinated (1972)
July 9 - International Court of Justice declares route of Israeli wall illegal (2004)
July 15 - Israel initiates "Law of Return" (1950)
July 22 - Israeli terrorists blow up King David Hotel (1946)
July 29 - UN calls for an independent Palestinian state (1980)
August 12 - Tal Al Za'tar massacre (1976)
August 12 - UN passes Fourth Geneva Convention (1949)
August 27 - Abu Ali Mustafa assassinated (2001)
August 29 - Naji Al-Ali assassinated (1987)
August 31 - Al-Bureij Refugee Camp massacre (1953)
September 13 - Oslo Accords signed (1993)
September 15 - Sabra and Shatilla massacre (1982)
September 17 - Count Bernadotte assassinated (1948)
September 29 - Second Intifada begins (2000)
November 2 - Balfour Declaration (1917)
November 11 - Yasser Arafat dies (2004)
November 29 - UN issues Partition Plan (1947)
November 29 - International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People
December 9 - First Intifada erupts (1987)
December 10 - International Human Rights Day
December 11 - UN Resolution 194 (1948)
For information on each of the dates above, please visit palestinecalendar.org