

Who stands for the oppressed?

Palestinians have been denied recognition as a people, as a nation, or being recognized as having their own representative leadership. Despite many UN resolutions urging Israel to stop its harsh discriminatory policies, the international community has failed to deliver justice to the Palestinians, and their plight has been largely ignored. This oppression, which has been propagating for the last 100 years, is now increasingly visible to the World. Justice is on the side of the oppressed. The question is:

which side are you on?

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**ICNA COUNCIL FOR
SOCIAL JUSTICE**
ADVOCATING JUSTICE FOR ALL

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“It is in your hands to create a better world *for all* who live in it.”

**Nelson Mandela –
Anti-apartheid activist,
Former President of South Africa.**

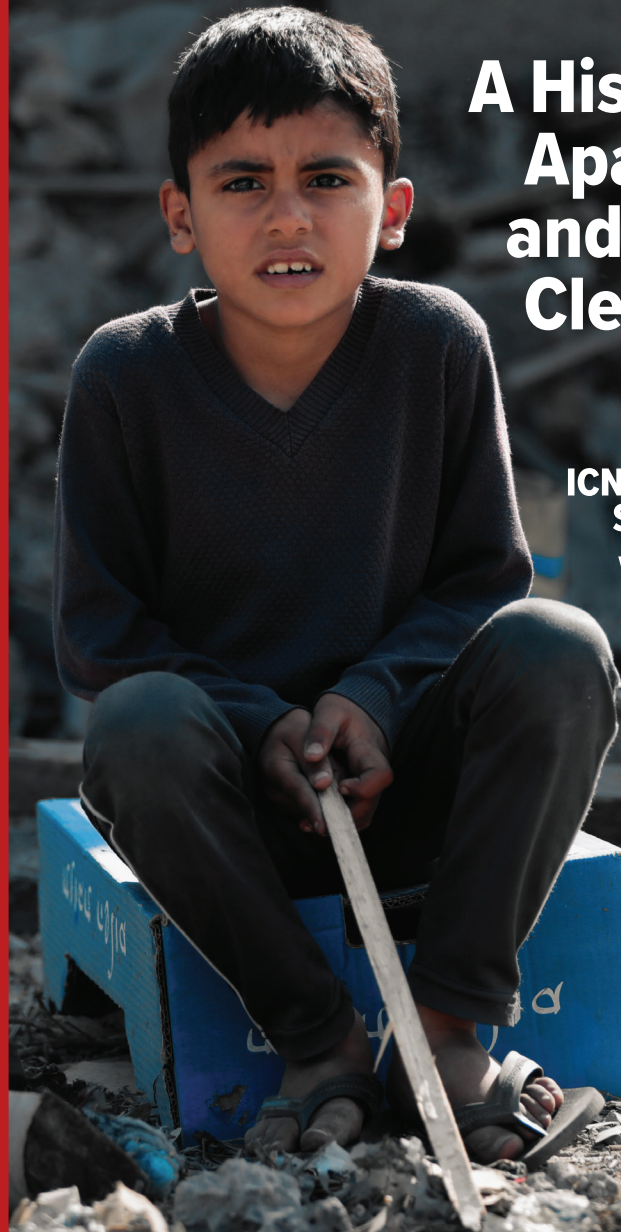
Steps I can take to make a difference

1. Support Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) on Israel
2. Attend protests
3. Hold politicians and local elected officials accountable. Question how our government is using our tax dollars to pursue a policy that is facilitating genocide in Gaza
4. Put pressure on companies that support the apartheid
5. Learn about Palestinian history
6. Learn more at www.icnacsj.org

PALESTINE

A History of Apartheid and Ethnic Cleansing

**ICNA Council for
Social Justice**
www.icnacsj.org



75 years after Zionist militias killed ~15,000 Palestinians and violently expelled hundreds of thousands from their lands (known as the Nakba, or Catastrophe, in Arabic), 2023 marked the worst massacre in Palestinian history. The number of Palestinian civilians killed just in the first 3 months of the 2023 Israel-Gaza war (>22,000) surpassed the 1947-49 Nakba; and the record number of children killed exceeds that of any other conflict in modern times. The UN secretary general, Antonio Guterres, described Gaza as “becoming a graveyard for children”. 80% of Gaza’s population has been bombarded, hundreds of thousands injured, and the many missing are presumably dead. 1.8 million have been forcibly displaced (half of them children) and, with hospitals and UNRWA shelters hit, there is no safe place in Gaza. **The UN described the crisis to have “reached a breaking point” and a “high risk of the total collapse of the humanitarian support system, with devastating consequences.”**

The loss of innocent human life and the involvement of civilians as hostages has been condemned worldwide. Many have taken the October 7th Hamas attack as the catalyst to this most recent conflict. There is also a widespread belief that the conflict between Palestine and Israel is a religious one- neither could be further from the truth. In fact, it was Muslim lands that provided a safe-haven of prosperity for the Jewish people, especially at a time when Jews were massacred during the holocaust. As the UN secretary general explained, “The attacks by Hamas did not happen in a vacuum, he noted, with the Palestinian people being subjected to 56 years of suffocating occupation.”¹ **This conflict has always been about the illegal occupation of the land of Palestine from its indigenous people (Muslims, Christians and Jews) and the formation of a system of apartheid, which started under British rule.** Here we seek to convey the historical events leading to today’s situation as a means to contextualize it.

The Colonialization of Palestine

Palestine was occupied over a series of successive wars as outlined in the graphic. Each war perpetuated what was previously conquered, expanded into new territories, and established a new baseline for the next phase. With British, and later American, support, each phase built on further subjugating the indigenous Palestinian population to a system of apartheid that continued to escalate in its cruelty. **These concepts are not new to Americans - the slaughtering of native Americans in the name of civilization are horrific**

reminders of racial genocide from our own history. We should never allow this to be repeated.

Creating an awareness of the colonial nature of the Zionist project is morally unsettling and politically provocative. These perspectives are especially pertinent given that the Zionist-American mainline narrative suppresses the colonial substance of Israel and promotes Zionism as a liberal nationalist ideology and movement. This brochure will allow the reader to decide for themselves.

Palestinians continue to live under a cruel system of apartheid

Major Israeli, Palestinian and other international human rights groups^{2,3,4} determined that Israeli authorities have imposed apartheid on Palestinians, as has the UN special rapporteur for the occupied Palestinian territory. Hagai El-Ad, former director of the Israeli human rights group B’Tselem, wrote, “There is not a single square inch in the territory Israel controls where a Palestinian and a Jew are equal.”²

While many systematic abuses come together to amount to apartheid, a Human Rights Watch report³ emphasized five:

- 1 **“sweeping restrictions on movement** in the form of the Gaza closure and a permit regime in the West Bank;
- 2 **confiscation of more than a third of the land in the West Bank;**
- 3 **harsh conditions** in parts of the West Bank that have forced thousands of Palestinians out of their homes, which amounts to forcible transfer;
- 4 **denial of residency rights** to hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and their relatives;
- 5 **and the suspension of basic civil rights** to millions of Palestinians living under military rule.”

Attitudes towards Palestinians are strikingly polarized across Israel’s Jewish population. A 2016 survey⁵ found that half of Israeli Jews endorse ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. That public opinion continues to intensify, as seen for instance by an increase in Israeli settler violence towards Palestinian civilians in the occupied West Bank^{6,7}. On the other hand, organizations like the Jewish Voice for Peace, the largest progressive Jewish anti-Zionist organization in the world, stand out against apartheid and advocate for racial equality and collective liberation.

America’s role

These issues, thousands of miles away, are ever-relevant to Americans because the Zionist settler-colonial project receives staunch support from the US. **Billions of US tax-dollars each year fund the Israeli military, money that could have been used to tackle US societal issues—homelessness, hunger, even the student debt crisis, just to name a few** – rather than the mass destruction of the homeland of 2.2 million people in Gaza. On Dec 5th 2023, the secretary general of Amnesty International said “US-made weapons facilitated the mass killing of extended families.” UN experts have strongly criticized the Israel-US war policy: “Such egregious violations cannot be justified in the name of self-defense”. “Israel remains the occupying power in the occupied Palestinian territory, which also includes the Gaza strip, and therefore cannot wage a war against the population under its belligerent occupation”.⁸

PALESTINE: A 100 YEAR HISTORY OF OCCUPATION AND RESISTANCE TO APARTHEID

1917

1917-1948

British rule– the foundation for colonization of Palestine

Britain colonized Palestine after WW1 – 1917

End of ~400 year Ottoman rule.

Balfour Declaration 1917 Britain promised to establish a Jewish home within Palestine, ignoring 94% Arab majority existing in Palestine while recognizing only the 6% European immigrant Jews as the “Jewish people” in need of help to create “their” Jewish state.

British mandate created in 1923 facilitating mass Jewish immigration – many of the new residents were fleeing Nazism in Europe. The Jewish population of Palestine increased from 6 to 33% from 1917-1947

Palestinian revolt (1936-39)

Palestinians were alarmed by their country’s changing demographics and British confiscating their lands and transferring to Jewish settlers.

By 1939, Britain had massed 30,000 troops in Palestine. Villages were bombed by air, curfews imposed, homes demolished, and administrative detentions and summary killings were widespread.

In tandem, the British collaborated with the Jewish settler community and formed armed groups and a British-led “counterinsurgency force” of Jewish fighters named the Special Night Squads.

Arms secretly imported to Jewish pre-settler communities and weapons factories established to expand the Haganah, the Jewish paramilitary that later became the core of the Israeli army.

During the revolt, 5,000 Palestinians were killed, 15,000 to 20,000 were wounded and 5,600 were imprisoned.

UN partition plan (1947) As tensions increased, Britain referred the issue to the newly formed United Nations. UN resolution 181 called for the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states, handing over ~55% of the land to Jews and 45% to Arabs. Jerusalem was to be declared a separate internationalized territory. At the time, Palestinians owned 94% of historic Palestine and comprised 67% of its population. The Palestinians rejected the plan because it allotted most of Palestine to the Jewish state, including most of the fertile coastal region.

The Resolution was never implemented.

1948 End of British Mandate in Palestine

1948

1948

The *Nakba* (Catastrophe)– the ethnic cleansing of Palestine

***Al-Nakba*, or the catastrophe**

From 1947 to 1949, more than 500 Palestinian villages, towns and cities were destroyed. Village wells were poisoned in a biological warfare program. Properties were looted to prevent Palestinian refugees from returning. ~15,000 Palestinians were killed, including those killed in dozens of massacres. 700,000 Palestinians (~80% of the population) were expelled from what is now referred to as Israel – they fled to what is now the occupied West bank, the besieged Gaza strip, and neighboring countries.

The Zionist movement captured 78% of historic Palestine. The remaining 22% was divided into what are now the occupied West Bank and the besieged Gaza Strip.

Israel announced its establishment (May 15, 1948)

Palestine was divided into Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The surrounding Arab states did not recognize the state of Israel and the following day, the first Arab-Israeli war began. Fighting ended in Jan 1949 after an armistice between Israel and Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria.

In Dec 1948, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 194, which calls for the right of return for Palestinian refugees.

The years after the *Nakba*

At least 150,000 Palestinians remained in the newly created state of Israel and lived under a tightly controlled military occupation for almost 20 years before they were eventually granted Israeli citizenship.

Egypt took over the Gaza Strip, and in 1950, Jordan began its administrative rule over the West Bank. In 1964, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was formed, and a year later, the Fatah political party was established.

1967

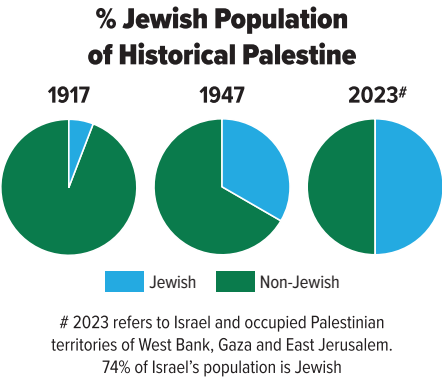
1967

“Six-day war” – further colonization & construction of settlements

Following the “Six-day war” with Arab states, Israel occupied the rest of historic Palestine (Gaza, West Bank, East Jerusalem), the Sinai Peninsula and most of the Syrian Golan Heights. 300,000 Palestinians were displaced from their homes. These captured territories were not recognized by the International community, with UN resolution 242, adopted unanimously, calling for Israel’s withdrawal from the occupied territories.

1982. Egypt recognized the state of Israel as a condition for Israel withdrawing from the Sinai peninsula.

Settlement construction began in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. A two-tier system was created with Jewish settlers afforded all the rights and privileges of being Israeli citizens whereas Palestinians had to live under a military occupation that discriminated against them and barred them from any form of political or civic expression.



1987

1987-1993

First *Intifada* (uprising)

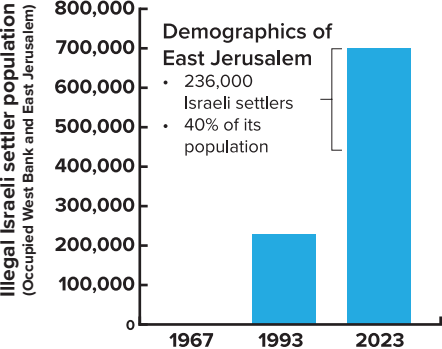
The *Intifada* (or Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation) was characterized by popular mobilizations, mass protests, civil disobedience, well-organized strikes and communal cooperatives.

According to the Israeli human rights organization B’Tselem, 1,070 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces during the Intifada, including 237 children. More than 175,000 Palestinians were arrested.

The Intifada prompted the international community to search for a solution to the conflict.



Israeli settlements are illegal according to UN, yet Settler population continues to grow.⁹



1993

1993-1995

Oslo accords – towards a two state solution

The first Intifada ended with the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 and the formation of the Palestinian Authority (PA), an interim government that was granted limited self-rule in pockets of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The PLO recognized Israel on the basis of a two-state solution and effectively signed agreements that gave Israel control of 60 percent of the West Bank, and much of the territory’s land and water resources.

The Occupied West Bank was divided into 3 parts.

- Part A (22%) under newly Palestinian control,
- Part B (18%) under joint control,
- Part C (60%) under Israeli control.

The newly formed Palestinian authority controlled Gaza.

The PA was supposed to make way for the first elected Palestinian government running an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with its capital in East Jerusalem, but that has never happened.

Critics of the PA view it as a corrupt subcontractor to the Israeli occupation that collaborates closely with the Israeli military in clamping down on dissent and political activism against Israel.

In 1995, Israel built an electronic fence and concrete wall around the Gaza Strip, snapping interactions between the split Palestinian territories.

2000

2000 - 2005

Second *Intifada* (uprising)

Israel reoccupied areas governed by the Palestinian Authority and began construction of a separation wall that, along with rampant settlement construction, destroyed Palestinian livelihoods and communities.

Settlements are illegal under international law, but over the years, hundreds of thousands of Jewish settlers have moved to colonies built on stolen Palestinian land. The space for Palestinians is shrinking as settler-only roads and infrastructure slice up the occupied West Bank, forcing Palestinian cities and towns into isolated enclaves.

At the time the Oslo Accords were signed, just over 110,000 Jewish settlers lived in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Today, the figure is more than 700,000 living on more than 100,000 hectares (390sq miles) of land expropriated from the Palestinians.

2007

2007

Palestinian division & Gaza blockade

2004 - PLO leader Yasser Arafat died.

2005 – the second Intifada ended as Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip were dismantled, and Israeli soldiers and 9,000 settlers left Gaza.

2006, Palestinians voted in a general election for the first time. Hamas won a majority. However, a Fatah-Hamas civil war broke out, lasting for months, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of Palestinians.

Hamas expelled Fatah from the Gaza Strip, and Fatah – the main party of the Palestinian Authority – resumed control of parts of the West Bank.

2007 to present- Israel imposed a land, air and naval blockade on the Gaza Strip, accusing Hamas of “terrorism”.

ONGOING

2007 - Ongoing

Wars on the Gaza Strip

War

2008-2009	23-day assault
2012	8-day assault
2014	50-day assault
2021	11-day assault
2023	Oct 7 → ongoing assault

Living under blockade

Israel’s 16-year land, air and sea blockade of Gaza has trapped over 2 million people in what is described as the World’s largest open-air prison. Israel has tight control over everything entering the territory, including fuel, building materials, agricultural goods and water. The blockade, together with the destruction from repeated wars, has devastated Gaza’s economy and led to what the UN

has called the “de-development” of the territory, a process by which development is not merely hindered but reversed.

The blockade contravenes Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits collective punishment that prevents the realization of a broad range of human rights.

The bombardment of Gaza from October 7th 2023 has further escalated these issues to a breaking point.

UN experts have said about the bombardment from October 7th 2003: “The reality in Gaza, with its unbearable pain and trauma on the survivors, is a catastrophe of enormous proportions”.

GAZA IN 2023

Before the war

- 2.2 Million** Population living under blockade
- 63% Youth** Unemployment Rate
- >60% Refugees** Relying on UN aid
- 56% Suffering** from poverty

First 3 months of the war

- >22,000 Civilians killed** (highest recorded in any conflict)
- 9,000 Children killed** (highest of any modern-day conflict)
- 300 Medical staff killed**
- 77 Journalists killed** (more than any other conflict reported by International Federation of Journalists)
- 136 UNRWA** colleagues killed (highest recorded in any conflict)
- >50,000** Wounded
- >1.8 million** Forcibly displaced (~80% of Gaza’s population)
- 355,000 Housing** units demolished
- 104 Ambulances** damaged
- 23 (out of 36) Hospitals** taken out of service
- >22,000** Bombs dropped
- >25,000** Metric tonnes of explosive dropped. (More explosive power than nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima).