

The Right of Return

56 years of exile - it's time for Palestinian refugees to return home.

During the Zionist colonization of Palestine, culminating in the war of 1947-1948 (Al-Nakba, "the catastrophe") in which 78% of historic Palestine was seized and placed under Zionist colonial control, over 750,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes and lands, forced under threat of death, torture and massacre to seek safety in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon - and around the world.

This was a process of ***ethnic cleansing*** - a fulfillment of the Zionist desire to create a state in Palestine that was a purely "Jewish state"- without the indigenous Palestinian population. This process of ethnic cleansing fell in a long line of genocidal settler-colonial projects - not unlike the United States' colonial origins based on the ethnic cleansing of Native Americans from their land, or Afrikaaner South Africa's commitment to containing and controlling the indigenous Africans of South Africa.

Since that time, these refugees have not been permitted to return to their homes. Their right to return is an individual, national, collective and human right, recognized by the United Nations specifically in UN Resolution 194 (passed in 1948 and renewed annually.) Nevertheless, there are today five million Palestinian refugees-those exiled and dispossessed in 1948 and their descendants, ***the world's largest refugee population.***

Palestinian refugees are not permitted to return to their homes because they are Palestinians - they will upset the "demographic balance" that allows the Zionist state to remain a "Jewish state" in ethnic and religious minority. In short, Palestinian refugees are prohibited from returning home because of racism and the desire to maintain an ethnic/religious exclusionary state - ***on Palestinians' stolen land.***

Palestinian refugees' land was confiscated by the Zionist government in 1950 and today, may be leased and used only by Jews. The land was confiscated while labeling the Palestinian refugees - exiled and not permitted to return to their homes - "absentee owners" not entitled to their property. Their land was stolen - and the process of colonization has only continued and intensified since.

Palestinian refugees have the right and the desire to return to their homes, their lands and their communities. Ethnic cleansing should not be legitimized. Palestinians have the right to return to all of historic Palestine - for they are the indigenous inhabitants of their own land. This is not an extreme demand - it is a basic standard of justice. The process of return is one of liberation - it is a process of reclaiming the land of Palestine, with full sovereignty for all Palestinians. The Right of Return is basic justice and the promise of liberation.

***Stand up for Palestinians' right to return. Find out more:
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