



Press Release
30 January 2017

Solidarity Day for Palestinians in Israel

Today, the 30th of January 2017, marks the second annual Solidarity Day for Palestinians in Israel. The observance of this day began in 2016 in response to increased incitement by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's against Israel's minority Palestinian population, as well as the longer history of institutionalised racism and discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel.

The approximately 1.7 million Palestinian people living in Israel are the descendants of those Palestinians who were not killed or expelled from their homeland during the "Nakba" (catastrophe) in 1948—land on which the State of Israel was established.

Of these Palestinians in Israel, the majority are Muslims, with significant minorities of Christians (approximately 10%) and Druze (approximately 10%). The definition of Israel as a Jewish state makes inequality a practical, political and ideological reality for Palestinians in Israel, who are marginalised and discriminated against based on their national and religious identities.

The inequalities between Palestinian and Jewish citizens of Israel span all fields of public life and have been deliberately created and perpetuated through a system of Israeli government policy—with more than 50 Israeli laws directly and indirectly discriminating against Palestinians in Israel.

One such law makes it possible to strip Palestinians of their Israeli citizenship should they demonstrate "disloyalty" or a "breach of trust"—ill-defined terms which have proven to encompass the exercise of basic political rights, such as the right to protest.

Poverty and unemployment rates for Palestinian citizens of Israel remain significantly higher than their Jewish counterparts, particularly for women. This results from the inadequate implementation of equal-opportunity legislation (for example, public expenditure per child in Arab local authorities is 52.1% lower than in Jewish local authorities) and structural barriers that exclude Palestinians from the workforce (such as military service as a necessary condition for employment).

These poor socio-economic conditions are also strongly tied to the unequal access to land for Palestinians in Israel. Since 1948, the Israeli Government has established approximately 600 Jewish municipalities, as opposed to zero new Palestinian villages, towns or cities.

Constituting around 20% of the total population, Palestinians in Israel own just 3-3.5% of the total land, as compared to 48% in 1948. As much as 93% of all land in Israel is now under direct control of the state or the Jewish National Fund, barring Palestinians from purchase.

Not only do they prevent the expansion of Palestinian villages by almost never granting building permits to Palestinians, the Israeli Government regularly orders the demolition of Palestinian homes and entire villages. This was recently demonstrated with the demolition of the Bedouin village Um Al Hiran, where a Palestinian protestor was killed and many were injured.

Such unrecognised Palestinian villages, home to approximately 90,000 people, are provided with few-to-no basic state services such as water and electricity. The Israeli Government also provides three times as much funding to Jewish school students than to Palestinian students in Israel, serving to entrench the structural inequality for generations to come.

This pervasive discrimination violates the fundamental human rights of Palestinians living in Israel, international law and a number of international conventions, and it should therefore be strongly condemned.

