



Press Release

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Canberra, Australia

72 Years of Ongoing Nakba

15 May 2020, marks the 72nd anniversary of the Nakba (Catastrophe) in Palestine. In 1948, Zionist militants destroyed 531 Palestinian towns and villages and took control of an additional 774. More than 800,000 Palestinians were ethnic cleansed and forced to become refugees in the neighboring countries. Yet, the Nakba did not end in 1948 and represents much more than the exile from Palestinian land and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians by Israel. It represents an ongoing reality and struggle for Palestinians, that, at the expense of their human rights, seeks to fulfil the creation of a greater Israeli state. The Nakba is the ongoing story and plight of the Palestinian people, and is likewise a motivation to continue the steadfastness and resistance of the Palestinian people.

Today, the descendants of those expelled from their homes in 1948 continue to live as refugees, with many still in neighboring countries, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria as well as West Bank and Gaza. The Nakba resulted in the need for serious humanitarian intervention and resulted in the establishment of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which is mandated specifically to meeting the needs of Palestinians in providing them with financial support, education, healthcare, shelter and more within the West Bank and Gaza as well as Lebanon, Jordan and Syria.

The Nakba is often symbolized by the key to the homes that Palestinians were driven from, often passed down through family members, it is representative of the right and will to return to their homeland. The Nakba is a day for Palestinians to mourn the deaths of family members, the loss and appropriation of Palestinian lands and homes, and the reality that Palestinians have never been given what is their natural right: the right to return to their homeland.

The Nakba is a time to reflect on the continuing plight of the Palestinian people. Particularly its continuation and prolongation with the 1967 war and Israeli occupation. Further exacerbated by Israel's unrelenting and blatant illegal establishment of Israeli settlements in West Bank including Jerusalem. There is a dire need for the recognition of not only the catastrophes during the 1948 Nakba but also for the cessation of the continuous blatant and remorseless attacks Palestinians endure every day under occupation.

The deeply regrettable news of Israeli and US plans for the annexation of West Bank settlements, Jordan Valley and North of the Dead Sea, subsequent to Trump's so-called Peace Plan, is not only in flagrant violation of international law and United Nations Security Council Resolutions, yet, it is also in order to complete the Israeli colonization process. Actions which are extremely dehumanizing to Palestinian





people and in flagrant violations of their human rights. It is an attempt at the absolute theft of Palestinian land, history, identity and culture.

In the face of such continuous and inexcusable actions, the Palestinian people have demonstrated the upmost resilience, courage, persistence and steadfastness against these circumstances. Palestinians everyday continue their struggle for self-determination and right to return. The steadfast and resilience shown by the Palestinian people is unparalleled and demonstrates the upmost courage. Palestinians refuse to be forgotten.

This determination of the Palestinian people for their self-determination in their homeland has been demonstrated in the following four main responses:

1. The strengthening of the Palestinian cause within the international scene and community, including the 139 countries which show full recognition of the State of Palestine.
2. The strengthening of national unity in order to achieve self-determination.
3. The processes of state building in order to build and provide resilient services to Palestinian people and steadfastness to establishing a homeland.
4. The continuation of their non-violent struggle against the Israeli occupation.

The General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific calls on the international community, in particular the Australian and New Zealand governments, to interfere in the illegal Israeli annexation plans, on the grounds that it is in flagrant violation of international law, United Nations Security Council resolutions and is a blatant attempt at the expansion of Israel's colonization plans. We also call on the international community to work in supporting Palestinian rights for self-determination and a just and sustainable solution to the Palestine-Israel conflict. It is time to allow Palestinians their most basic political and human rights.

