

Palestine

A STORY OF REMOVAL, REPLACEMENT, REFUSAL, & REPARATION

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INTRODUCTION

On 16 May¹ 2021, within the occupied city of Gaza in Occupied Palestine, Israeli airstrikes employed precision-guided bombs against a densely-populated residential area which was believed to stand above an underground tunnel. Forty-four Palestinians were killed, many of them being women and children. Nearly a century after David Ben-Gurion, Chairman of the non-governmental organization known as the World Zionist Organization, declared² the new existence of an independent State of Israel, Palestinians continue to experience circumstances like these, absent a well-funded Iron Dome to repel Israeli missiles. Ben-Gurion's declaration, endorsed by both the United Kingdom and the United States³ under President Harry S. Truman's administration, allowed for the declared state of Israel to officially become an independent country—the first and only Jewish state in the modern world.

While this may seem like an ordinary and natural result of a colonial power's withdrawal from a particular region, another issue immediately arose as a result of this declaration of independence—the continuing existence of the very natives of that region suddenly without a homeland or self-governing state, otherwise known as the Palestinian people.

Originally known as Canaan⁴, Israel, Judea, and eventually as Palestine⁵ to the historian Josephus after the First Century⁶, what is now known as Palestine has been a land rife with conflict⁷ throughout the millennia. Defined as “an indigenous people who either live in, or originate from, historical Palestine,”⁸ Palestinians have continuously inhabited this land since Arabs began

¹ Hill, E., Triebert, C., Tiefenthäler, A., Ismay, J., Hijji, S., Robibero, P., Jordan, D., Al-Hlou, Y., Kingsley, P. and Koettl, C., 2021. Video: Gaza's Deadly Night: How Israeli Airstrikes Killed 44 People. [online] Nytimes.com. Available at: <<https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/100000007787471/israel-airstrikes-gaza.html>> [Accessed 5 December 2021].

² Staff, N. (2016, March 29). Declaring the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.newsweek.com/declaring-state-israel-may-14-1948-332152>.

³ President Donald J. Trump Keeps His Promise To Open U.S. Embassy In Jerusalem, Israel. (2018, May 14). Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-keeps-promise-open-u-s-embassy-jerusalem-israel/>.

⁴ Jarus, O. (2016, September 8). Who Were the Canaanites? Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.livescience.com/56016-canaanites.html>.

⁵ Masalha, N. (2016). The Concept of Palestine: The Conception Of Palestine from the Late Bronze Age to the Modern Period. *Journal of Holy Land and Palestine Studies*, 15(2), 143–202. doi: 10.3366/hpls.2016.0140

⁶ Ancient Jewish History: The Bar-Kokhba Revolt. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-bar-kokhba-revolt-132-135-ce>.

⁷ Paley, N., Jones, Q., Williams, A., & Boone, P. (2017, January 13). This Land Is Mine: Revised. Retrieved December 1, 2017, from <https://vimeo.com/199418954>.

⁸ Abu-Libdeh, B., Turnpenny, P. D., & Teebi, A. (2012). Genetic Disease in Palestine and Palestinians. *Genomics and Health in the Developing World*, 700–711. doi: 10.1093/med/9780195374759.003.0056

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migrating *en masse* to the region during the expansion of Islam⁹ in the 600s. As such, the Palestinian people are in a rather unique—and dire—situation as things currently stand, and there are four major elements as to why.

In this text, we will discuss and analyze why the Palestinian people are a unique people for four reasons—their expulsion from their homeland; the replacement of their homeland's original inhabitants by a foreign, occupying, colonizing force; the establishment of a substantial refugee population that—even today—is unable to return to their homeland, even now; the international community's complicity in this continued farce, and a proposed objective designed to repair these many past harms for the sake of sustained peace in the future.

PART I: REMOVAL

We begin again with a similar date, though a different year: 14 May 2019, the seventieth anniversary of the day the man that would eventually become the State of Israel's first prime minister—David Ben-Gurion—declared the new existence of an independent and Jewish state. On this day, the United States of America, being led at the time by Donald Trump, would make the controversial¹⁰ declaration that the “United States would begin recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and officially open [its] Embassy there.”¹¹ As a result of this act, Palestinians still living in the Gaza Strip, who were already planning a Great March of Return¹² to commemorate their assertion of rights to the land upon which Israel now lies, intensified their protests.

Violence ensued, as the Israeli Defense Force responded to Palestinian protests with death¹³ and carnage, wounding more than 30,000¹⁴ Palestinians and killing hundreds. This disproportionate act of violence would incur the wrath of Amnesty International, who would

⁹ Religions - Islam: Early rise of Islam (632-700). (2009, September 3). Retrieved November 27, 2021, from https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/history/earlyrise_1.shtml.

¹⁰ Liebermann, O. (2017, December 7). Why declaring Jerusalem the capital of Israel is so controversial. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.cnn.com/2017/12/05/middleeast/trump-jerusalem-explainer-intl/index.html>.

¹¹ Trump, 2018.

¹² Humaid, M. (2018, March 30). 'We want to return to our lands without bloodshed or bombs'. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/return-lands-bloodshed-bombs-180330170242175.html>.

¹³ Holmes, O., & Balousha, H. (2019, May 15). Israeli forces shoot 16 Palestinian protesters at Gaza frontier. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/15/israeli-forces-shoot-16-palestinian-protesters-at-gaza-frontier>.

¹⁴ Fayyad, H. (2019, March 30). Gaza's Great March of Return protests explained. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/03/gaza-great-march-return-protests-explained-190330074116079.html>.

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immediately condemn¹⁵ the Israeli state's actions, decrying them as a violation of international law. But why did this take place?

Returning to the age of Ben-Gurion, Palestinians are able to discover the source of their current struggles. As early as two weeks prior to the Israeli declaration of independence, communications with the U.S. Secretary of State would uncover this planned takeover. As this 03 May 1948 telegram from Thomas C. Wasson, Consul General for the U.S. in Jerusalem to U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall stated: "Palestinian Government has generally ceased to function and central public services no longer exist. In Jewish areas Jews have taken effective control and are maintaining public services within those areas. Preparations for establishment Jewish state after termination mandate are well advanced."¹⁶ Violence was everywhere, as the telegram would then establish: "In Samaria food and gasoline are in very short supply. Morale following Jewish military successes low with thousands [of] Arabs fleeing [the] country."¹⁷

As Jacobin Magazine's Greg Shupak¹⁸ would recount, the very next day after Ben-Gurion's declaration of Israeli independence, 15 May 1948, would be remembered as *Nakba Day*, "when Palestinians mark the ethnic cleansing of their people entailed by the creation of Israel." From that day onwards, terror would follow the Palestinian people.

"To create the state in 1948, Zionist forces expelled 750,000 Palestinians from their homes. In the process, they carried out roughly ten large-scale massacres, each with at least fifty victims, along with around one hundred smaller massacres."¹⁹ As a result of these expulsions, nearly one million Palestinians would be forced to leave not just their homes, but the land that their families had known for generations. At least 500 Palestinians would be killed during these expulsions.

But this is not the first time that whole groups of people have been forcibly removed and driven from their homes. Throughout history, native populations have been faced with colonial forces either directly or indirectly participating in atrocious acts such as this. A prime example of this is the forced relocation of the Cherokee Amerindian tribe during the 1830s. Now known as

¹⁵ Israel/OPT: Use of excessive force in Gaza an abhorrent violation of international law. (2018, May 14). Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/05/israelopt-use-of-excessive-force-in-gaza-an-abhorrent-violation-of-international-law/>.

¹⁶ Wasson, T. C., & Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute, United States Department of State, T. C. (1948, May 3). Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, The Near East, South Asia, and Africa, Volume V, Part 2: The Consul at Jerusalem (Wasson) to the Secretary of State. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v05p2/d206>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Shupak, 2018.

¹⁹ Ibid.

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the *Trail of Tears*, this was “the forced and brutal relocation of approximately 100,000 indigenous people (belonging to Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Seminole, among other nations) living between Michigan, Louisiana, and Florida to land west of the Mississippi River.”²⁰

While the Amerindian Genocide is relatively well-known²¹, it appears that not enough attention is paid to the Palestinian cause. “The fate of the Palestinians, 750,000 of whom became refugees around 1948, was sealed by subsequent Israeli laws and policies that prevented their return to their original homes and made them stateless as they – unlike the Palestinians who remained in what became Israel – were not offered the possibility to become Israeli citizens.”²² More on that later. Nevertheless, it was not enough that any Palestinians that were able to survive the first *Nakba* essentially lost their initial homes during the Israeli independence campaign, an additional insult would be required—a complete replacement and building upon of what was once thousands of years of Palestinian heritage, homes, and livelihoods to build the Israeli state.

PART II: REPLACEMENT

Today, the year 1948 possesses a different meaning to the two major population groups living in Palestine. To most Israelis, it’s a year of independence, much like the way many United States citizens might view 1776 or 1865, the latter being the year that Juneteenth²³ traces its commemoration of the liberation of enslaved Africans in America, back to. “Approximately 13,000 Palestinians were killed in 1948, with more than 750,000 expelled from their homes and becoming refugees – the climax of the Zionist movement’s ethnic cleansing of Palestine.”²⁴

As these atrocities took place during the birth of the Israeli state, there must have been a reasoning, a purpose for this forced displacement. As we’ve seen since and continue to witness

²⁰ Cherokee Historical Association. (2014, April 28). What was the Trail of Tears? Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.cherokeehistorical.org/unto-these-hills/trail-of-tears/>.

²¹ Lewy, G. (2004, September). Were American Indians the Victims of Genocide? Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://hnn.us/articles/7302.html>.

²² Albanese, F. P., & Lilly, D. (2019, October). The Palestinian refugee question: root causes and breaking the impasse. Retrieved December 6, 2019, from https://www.fmreview.org/return/albanese-lilly#_edn2.

²³ “Juneteenth -- a blending of the words June and nineteenth -- is the oldest known US celebration of the end of slavery. It commemorates June 19, 1865. That’s the day that Union Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas, and told slaves of their emancipation from slavery.” See Criss, D. (2019, June 19). All but four US states celebrate Juneteenth as a holiday. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.cnn.com/2019/06/19/us/juneteenth-state-holidays-trnd/index.html>.

²⁴ Al Jazeera. (2015). Maps and data visualisations about Palestine. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/palestineremix/maps-and-data-visualisations.html>.

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today, the Israeli government has undertaken a deliberate effort to expand its control of Palestinian land. Long ago, before even World War II saw one of the worst examples of extermination and extremism in known history with the Nazi Holocaust, Europe, ironically acting under the premise of its own longstanding antisemitism, began facilitating the movement of phenotypically European Jews out of Europe. There is a unique sense of irony in what would happen next.

“As European Jews began to colonise Palestine - many pushed by anti-Semitic persecution in Europe - the balance of land control between Palestinians and immigrant Jews shifted significantly.”²⁵ Over time, more and more European Jewish colonists would settle on land, happening before, during, and after World War II and the *Nakba*. This would continue for many years, well into the 1960s and after the 1967 Six-Day War between Israel and Egypt. “When the guns fell silent in 1967, the Israeli state began building colonies, or settlements, for its Jewish Israeli citizens on Palestinian land it had just occupied.”²⁶

With nearly a million Palestinians displaced, the Israeli government would simply choose to build on top of former Palestinian villages, even going so far as to legislate their justification for taking these lands. But before building, the Israeli government would employ the practice of bulldozing over vacated lands, in order to complete the process of ethnic cleansing.

According to Israeli activist group B’Tselem, “238 Palestinians have lost their homes [in 2019], including 127 minors. The second highest number of demolitions on record was in 2016, when 92 homes were demolished.”²⁷ From there, the Israeli government would encourage the development and establishment of brand new settlements, employing a policy known as *Aliyah*—the encouragement of members of the Jewish diaspora around the world to “move back home” to Israel—to replace the depopulated Palestinian zones; the Israeli government would even demonstrate that it would not be above deception and fraud²⁸ in order to promote this replacement of Palestinians within Israeli borders.

²⁵ Tahhan, Z. (2017, November 21). Israel's settlements: 50 years of land theft explained. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2017/50-years-illegal-settlements/index.html>.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Associated Press. (2019, October 24). Rights Group: Israel Demolished Record Number of Palestinian Homes in Jerusalem. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/rights-group-israel-demolished-record-number-palestinian-homes-jerusalem>.

²⁸ Israel uses fake people, stories to promote Jewish immigration. (2019, November 1). Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20191101-israel-uses-fake-people-stories-to-promote-jewish-immigration/>.

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To add insult to injury, these Palestinians who ended up being evicted from their homes would be labeled as *infiltrators* by the Israeli government, adding to the erroneous perception that Palestinians were no longer entitled to the land upon which they lived. This would be perpetuated through the adoption of the *Prevention of Infiltration Law of 1954*, as retired Israeli Brigadier General Dov Shefi, former General Counsel of the Israeli Ministry of Defense, would explain in a 1999 lecture: “We in Israel have been facing this phenomenon in our region for many years. The Arab terrorists have been crossing the border of Israel since November 29, 1947 (The U.N. resolution of Partition of Palestine), causing death and damage to civilians and civilian property.”²⁹

Palestinians expelled from their land would be called *terrorists*, not people. Words have consequences. He continues: “Therefore the Israel Knesset adopted the Prevention of Infiltration Law, 1954, which defines offenses of armed and non-Armed infiltration to Israel and from Israel to hostile neighboring countries and authorizes the Minister of Defense to order the deportation of an infiltrator before or after its conviction.”³⁰ This is a blatant reference to Palestinians.

So, by this point, Palestinians would be violently expelled from their homes, have their own villages depopulated, and their homeland essentially razed to the ground in their absence. Israel would then take these lands under their control and build over Palestinian ruins, replacing Palestinians with Jewish immigrants from all around the world using the policy of *Aliyah*, a means of further hammering home the concept that all Jews were entitled to live in the State of Israel, regardless of the Palestinian lives that had inhabited the region for centuries prior to European colonization. But this would not stop here. It would not be enough that this injustice would continue under the gaze of a complicit international community—the establishment of Palestinian refugees and a refusal for them to reclaim their stolen lands would essentially be internationally sponsored and accepted.

PART III: REJECTION

As of 01 December 2021, the Palestinian Refugee Crisis is one that appears to have no end. According to the United Nations, A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution

²⁹ Shefi, D. (1999, December 8). Counter Terrorism in Democracies: The Legal Experience of Israel. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.investigativeproject.org/563/counter-terrorism-in-democracies>.

³⁰ Ibid.

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for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.”³¹

As we’ve seen and will continue to see, Palestinians scattered throughout the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and the United States certainly qualify under that criteria. “Since 1948 there have been numerous, significant waves of further displacement of Palestinians, many of whom continue to experience varying degrees of discrimination, poverty and loss of rights, not only under Israeli rule in the West Bank and Gaza (occupied since 1967), but also in some other parts of the Arab world where they found refuge.”³² According to a December 2018 study released by the Palestine Bureau of Statistics, up to 5.4 million of the 13 million Palestinians on record are registered as refugees with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.³³

Palestinians have no land to call their own. As of right now, “approximately 70 percent of Gaza’s 2 million Palestinians are registered refugees from lands in what is now Israel.”³⁴ Palestinian refugees have had a rough go of it since 1948. In response to the *Nakba*, we can see that the United Nations “established that those refugees ‘wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors’ could do so but also that those refugees not willing to return could opt for resettlement and be compensated. Israel’s firm denial of the refugees’ right to return, however, has also limited the options for alternative voluntary solutions.”³⁵

In an ironic act of political hypocrisy, the State of Israel simply refuses to allow Palestinians to return to land lost in 1948, while at the same time encouraging Jewish immigrants and their children with no biological, cultural, or legal connection to Palestine to relocate to the land in order to live and start families. While we’ve already discussed the ethnic cleansing aspects of this policy, we have not yet touched on the fact that this brand of Israeli oppression of Palestinians is one that appears to be state-sponsored by the international community, namely the major countries of the United States, Great Britain, and much of the European Union.

As Israel continues to mount armed offensives against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, an analytical eye must be turned to the role of the United States in this affair. As Glenn

³¹ UNCHR. (n.d.). What is a Refugee? Definition and Meaning: USA for UNHCR. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/>.

³² Albanese & Lilly, 2019.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Elgindy, K. (2018, May 18). Political amnesia in Washington: From the Nakba to the occupation. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/05/18/political-amnesia-in-washington-from-the-nakba-to-the-occupation/>.

³⁵ Albanese & Lilly, 2019.

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Greenwald, a founding editor of The Intercept, would write in 2014, reporting that “Israeli aggression would be impossible without the constant, lavish support and protection of the U.S. government,”³⁶ something that has been well documented over the years.

It is no secret that since the *Nakba*, the United States has been an unabashed supporter of the Israeli state, in more than just finances. As an example: on 10 November 1975, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 3379, formally establishing that Zionism, the Jewish nationalist movement “emerging in 19th Century Europe...to create a Jewish state in the Middle East, roughly corresponding to the historical land of Israel, and thus support for the modern state of Israel,”³⁷ is “a form of racism and racial discrimination.”³⁸ A look at the historical context of European immigrants migrating to Palestine and then receiving the economic and military tools from Europe needed to oppress, massacre, and displace native Palestinians in the name of Zionism would add weight to this.

But the United States, eventually shifting to overtly right-wing leadership from 1981 through 1993 under presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, would not allow this to stand. On 16 December 1991, while Bush was still President of the United States, the United Nations adopted Resolution 46/86, effectively revoking³⁹ Resolution 3379, led by a United States *yea* vote. It is no secret that, in addition to being a founding member of the U.N. Security Council, the United States, arguably the world’s foremost military, cultural, and economic superpower⁴⁰ and remains a very influential country as a result, and this moment serves as one of many examples.

Ultimately, the oppression of Palestinians exists under the watchful—and at times, complicit—eye of the international world. The United States is, as Israel’s foremost foreign

³⁶ Greenwald, G. (2014, August 4). Cash, Weapons and Surveillance: the U.S. is a Key Party to Every Israeli Attack. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://theintercept.com/2014/08/04/cash-weapons-surveillance/>.

³⁷ What's the difference between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism? (2016, April 29). Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-36160928>.

³⁸ United Nations General Assembly. (1975, November 10). UN General Assembly Resolution 3379, Racial Discrimination. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/761C1063530766A7052566A2005B74D1>.

³⁹ Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (1991, December 16). United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/86. Retrieved December 1, 1991, from <https://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/mfadocuments/yearbook8/pages/260-general-assembly-resolution-46-86-revocation.aspx>.

⁴⁰ BBC Bitesize. (n.d.). The USA's international influence - Revision 2 - Higher Modern Studies - BBC Bitesize. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z6frqp3/revision/2>.

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military aid contributor⁴¹, and as long as the U.S. continues to enable Israel's oppressive behavior, the Palestinian Refugee Crisis will continue to persist throughout the world.

PART IV: REPARATION

There are many solutions that can potentially rectify the ongoing occupation crisis in Palestine. The most difficult aspect of these solutions is that they would involve the cessation of lands long since annexed and taken from Palestinians more than a generation ago, and with Zionism no longer limited to the State of Israel, various different political entities are unwilling to partake in the promulgation of these solutions. But if we could snap our fingers and sneak past the bureaucratic obstacles to Palestinian reparative justice, what options would we have? For the sake of time and space, we will discuss a potential American-styled model of land allotment akin to Native American reservations.

The first option, modeled after the Native American reservation, is an interesting one. According to the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, a federally recognized Native American tribe is “an American Indian or Alaska Native tribal entity that is recognized as having a government-to-government relationship with the United States, with the responsibilities, powers, limitations, and obligations attached to that designation, and is eligible for funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.”⁴²

The land upon which many Native Americans still live within U.S. borders are known as reservations, which are known as areas of “land reserved for a tribe or tribes under treaty or other agreement with the United States, executive order, or federal statute or administrative action as permanent tribal homelands, and where the federal government holds title to the land in trust on behalf of the tribe.”⁴³ Native American tribes have a unique relationship, in that the “relationship between federally recognized tribes and the United States is one between sovereigns, i.e., between a government and a government. This “government-to-government” principle, which is grounded

⁴¹ McBride, J. (2018, October 1). How Does the U.S. Spend Its Foreign Aid? Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/how-does-us-spend-its-foreign-aid>.

⁴² Bureau of Indian Affairs. Frequently Asked Questions. Indian Affairs. <https://www.bia.gov/frequently-asked-questions>.

⁴³ Ibid.

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in the United States Constitution, has helped to shape the long history of relations between the federal government and these tribal nations.”⁴⁴

As such, “tribes possess all powers of self-government except those relinquished under treaty with the United States, those that Congress has expressly extinguished, and those that federal courts have ruled are subject to existing federal law or are inconsistent with overriding national policies. Tribes, therefore, possess the right to form their own governments; to make and enforce laws, both civil and criminal; to tax; to establish and determine membership (i.e., tribal citizenship); to license and regulate activities within their jurisdiction; to zone; and to exclude persons from tribal lands.”⁴⁵

American citizenship is secure under this model as well. “As early as 1817, U.S. citizenship had been conferred by special treaty upon specific groups of Indian people. American citizenship was also conveyed by statutes, naturalization proceedings, and by service in the Armed Forces with an honorable discharge in World War I. In 1924, Congress extended American citizenship to all other American Indians born within the territorial limits of the United States.”⁴⁶

So how could this be applied to an Israel-Palestine situation? It’s easier said than done, but here is what must take place: Immediate citizenship—and all rights associated with it—must be granted to all Palestinians currently living within the borders of both Israel and Palestine. All Palestinian refugees living abroad must be allowed to return to Palestine and immediately granted repatriation. All Palestinians living within the Occupied Palestinian Territories will essentially be recognized as ancestral homelands and subject to the same public infrastructure development as the land in Israel, including roads, airports, hospitals, and universities. Cities in Gaza and the West Bank must be rebuilt. Hebrew and Arabic alike will be taught in schools, and all students, be they Palestinian or Israeli, will have equal access to universities. Sports leagues will be unified as one.

The Israeli government will then recognize the Palestinian government as a government-to-government partner in the continuing peace of the region. Palestinians may adopt Palestinian citizenship under these standards, while still enjoying the full force of Israeli civil rights. Liaisons between the respective governments will be established, along with a Ministry of Palestinian Affairs included in the Israeli Cabinet. This will include a recognized Palestinian identification

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

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card, flag, travel passport, and any and all voting rights if they so choose. Palestinians will govern and police themselves within Palestinian borders.

All government documents, signs, and communications will be provided in both Hebrew and Arabic. Palestinians will be able to vote for leaders within Palestinian lands, and there will assuredly be parliamentary representation. This would mean complete enfranchisement, whether they live within Israel or in either Gaza, the West Bank, or the Northern District, where more Palestinians live than anywhere else in Israel. Lastly, Jerusalem will be recognized as the capital of both Palestine and Israel. As a result of this complete Palestinian enfranchisement and identity, it is entirely possible that this would be a step in the right direction to solve this refugee crisis. Palestine can be perfected, and this is one way to do it—with the help of the United States.

CONCLUSION

The Palestinian experience, dating back to the Balfour Declaration⁴⁷ and the arrival of Zionism in the Middle East, has shown itself to be particularly unique compared to other displaced and oppressed populations. “Unlike the rest of the post-war mandates, the main goal of the British Mandate there was to create the conditions for the establishment of a Jewish “national home” - where Jews constituted less than 10 percent of the population at the time.”⁴⁸

This is what would later give rise to what is now known as the *Nakba*⁴⁹—a remembrance of the forced expulsion of nearly one million Palestinians from dozens of villages in Palestine as a result of the Israeli declaration of independence. Upon displacing so many Palestinians, the Israeli government would then raze remaining depopulated villages to the ground and replace them with Israeli settlements, followed by a series of legal measures designed to prevent Palestinian refugees from returning to their homeland.

Peace is both necessary and possible in our lifetimes, but this cannot happen without concessions from Israel’s occupying forces. Palestine cannot be treated as some rogue territory under Israeli control. The Palestinian Right of Return must be respected. Palestinians must be granted voting rights within the territory in a transitional period between sovereignty and

⁴⁷ Tahhan, Z. (2018, November 2). More than a century on: The Balfour Declaration explained. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/10/100-years-balfour-declaration-explained-171028055805843.html>.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

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statehood. Settlements within the occupied Palestinian territories must cease immediately. The constant inflaming of tensions between the Israeli and Palestinian people must cease immediately, and the clear provocations by Israeli Defense Force troops against Palestinians must also cease. Human rights must be respected, and embargos must be removed from Palestinian heads. Travel to and from Palestine must be made significantly easier than they currently are. The list, already long as it is, can go on forever.

The Palestinian struggle is unique in that this has not only spanned decades, but that it is further exacerbated by both the implicit and explicit support of dominant western nations in the name of Zionism (through rhetoric and public policy), an experience that virtually no other ethnic group in the modern world can thankfully lay claim to. While recent political debates in the United States have indicated a possible shift⁵⁰ in Zionist policy, there appears to be no rest for the Palestinian weary for the foreseeable future. Nonetheless, a free Palestine is a major key needed to open the door to a more stable, prosperous, and peaceful Middle East. So let it be done.

⁵⁰ Thier, H. (2019, February 12). The Pro-Israel Consensus on Capitol Hill Is Breaking Up. Retrieved November 27, 2021, from <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2019/12/israel-palestine-capitol-hill-bernie-sanders-ilhan-omar-rashida-tlaib>.