

Ongoing Nakba

BRIEFING CARD

- **530+ Palestinian towns and villages destroyed by Israel in 1948, the first year of the Nakba**
- **7+ million Palestinian refugees as a result of Israel's ongoing Nakba**
- **131,000+ Palestinian homes destroyed by Israel since 1948**
- **70+ massacres committed by Israel in 1948**



1948: Palestinians made refugees [Wikimedia Commons]

The events which culminated in the Nakba and the birth of Israel in 1948 were decades in the making.

In the 1880s, Zionism was born. Zionism morphed into a political movement seeking a Jewish nation state in Palestine. From the very start, the problem was that people already lived in Palestine – the Palestinians! (Note: Zionism should not be confused with Judaism)

In 1917 the leader of the Zionist movement, Chaim Weizmann, asked British politicians for assistance. This led to the **Balfour Declaration** with British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour promising Palestine as a homeland for Jews.

Initially, very few European Jews supported the Zionist movement but this changed after Nazi Germany and the Holocaust.

- Nakba is Arabic for ‘catastrophe’ and describes Israel’s ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948.
- Because of Israel’s **continued human rights abuses and ongoing violations** of international law, Palestinians now speak of the ‘ongoing Nakba’.

1948 Palestinians expelled

- Palestinian
- Israeli
- Armistice “Green” Line (Created in 1949)

Zionist military forces expelled at least **750,000 Palestinians and captured 78 percent of historic Palestine.**

The remaining 22 percent was divided into the West Bank and Gaza Strip.



Palestinians expelled [AJLabs]



@AJLabs ALJAZEERA

After World War Two in 1947 the **United Nations voted to partition Palestine**: Israel was to have 55% of the land and 45% was to be given to Palestinians. At this time Jews only owned 5.6% of the land in Palestine and made up 37% of the population.

The UN did not consult the Palestinians and unsurprisingly Palestinians opposed giving away over half of their country to refugees from Europe.

The day after the UN resolution passed, the **Zionists attacked Palestinians.**

This was the **Nakba – the ethnic cleansing of Palestine.**

Israel’s expulsion of Palestinians in 1948 was deliberate and organised. Records show that Israeli forces were under strict orders to empty Palestinian towns and villages of their inhabitants.

For example:

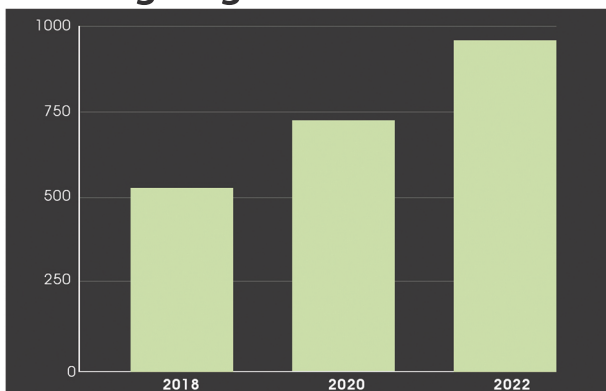
■ **Deir Yassin**, a village outside Jerusalem, had signed a “non-aggression” pact that it would not get involved with the fighting. But on 9th April 1948 Zionist forces attacked the village and massacred over 100 people. There were mutilations, rape, and survivors were paraded through Jewish neighbourhoods before being executed.

■ **Lydda and Ramle**, on 12th and 13th July 1948 Israeli forces expelled around 60,000 Palestinians from these towns.

■ **Tantura**, on 22nd May 1948 Israeli forces attacked the coastal village. The villagers surrendered but 200 Palestinian men were still shot dead on the beach.

■ **Dawaymeh**, on 29th October 1948 Israeli forces entered the village in 20 armored cars and opened fire on the villagers, killing up to 100 people. Eyewitness accounts report babies whose skulls were cracked open, women raped or burnt alive in their houses and men stabbed to death.

The ongoing Nakba



Number of Palestinian buildings destroyed by Israel

Israel’s destruction of Palestinian homes and the deportation of Palestinians has continued ever since. In the West Bank Israel has **destroyed over 131,000 Palestinian homes** to make way for illegal Israeli settlements.

As a result of Israeli home demolitions and deportations, there are now **more than 7 million Palestinian refugees** worldwide. More Palestinians live outside their homeland than within it. Israel does not allow most Palestinian refugees to return, despite having the Right of Return under international law.

The Israeli government oppresses Palestinians through a system of **apartheid** according to Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Palestinians and Israelis are subject to different legal systems based on race, even if they live in the same area. There are over 65 discriminatory laws against those who are not Jewish in Israel and Palestine.

Every aspect of Palestinian life is affected by Israeli apartheid. In the illegally occupied West Bank there are more than 70km of ‘Israeli-only’ roads and 155km of roads that are free for Israelis to use but access is restricted for Palestinians.

Since 2007 Israel has imposed an inhumane air, land and sea **siege on Gaza**. Israel’s brutal siege means that food, water, medicine and fuel are scarce. 80% of Palestinians in Gaza need humanitarian aid and over 50% of Palestinian children in Gaza reported suicidal thoughts between June 2021 and June 2022.

References:

- 1) ‘Nakba Day: What Happened in Palestine in 1948?’ Al-Jazeera, May 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/15/nakba-mapping-palestinian-villages-destroyed-by-israel-in-1948>
- 2) Amnesty International’s report on Israeli apartheid, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/israels-system-of-apartheid/#:~:text=This%20is%20apartheid.,order%20to%20benefit%20Jewish%20Israelis>
- 3) Human Rights Watch report on Israeli apartheid, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>

Information accurate (April 2023)

