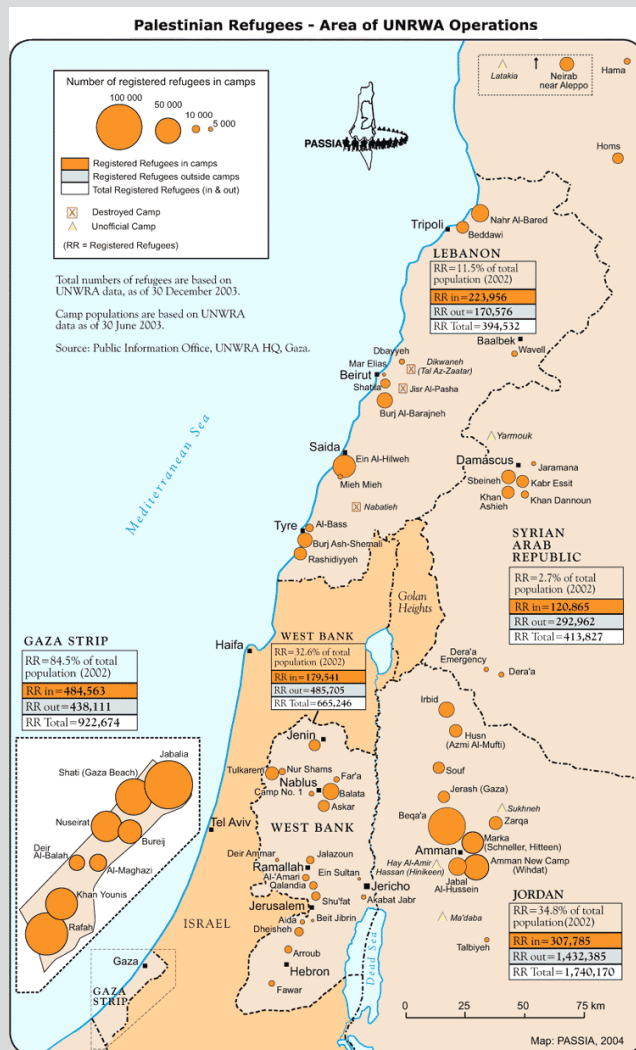


In 1948, 78% of historic Palestinian land was seized for the establishment of the state of Israel. During the war which began in 1947, 530 Palestinian villages were ethnically cleansed, thousands were killed, and 75% of the Palestinian population fled.

Approximately 750,000 Palestinians lost their homes in the war and became refugees. Evidence from Israeli military archives reveals that the policy of the Zionist forces was to deliberately expel the Palestinians from their homes. This is classified as ethnic cleansing under International Law.



Many massacres were committed by the Zionist forces, including the massacre at Deir Yassin where approximately 250 women, children and men were killed in what began as a dawn raid and lasted two days.

Eliyahu Arbel, from the Zionist Haganah gang, spoke about Deir Yassin saying "I have seen a great deal of war... but I never saw a site like Deir Yassin."

The Nakba (catastrophe) for the Palestinians marked the birth of the state of Israel. The Palestinian refugee crisis was born in this war, and to this day, the majority of the Palestinians remain refugees.

The Six-Day War creates another 350,000 refugees

In 1967, following the war between Israel and its neighbours, a further 350,000 Palestinians became refugees, some for the second or third time.

Despite the wars that have broken out across the world since 1948, Palestinians still account for one-third of the world's refugees. The total number of Palestinian refugees now stands at 4,660,191.

Palestinians living in refugee camps suffer the worst forms of social deprivation. In the Gaza Strip, prior to the December 2008 /



January 2009 war, 20% of the refugees living in refugee camps were not connected to sewage or water systems. Thus, raw sewage and waste was passing in open channels in the streets. This situation has become considerably worse since Israel's embargo against Gaza and its military onslaught.

COUNTRY	No. OF REFUGEES
Jordan	1,827,877
Gaza	986,034
West Bank	699,817
Syria	432,048
Lebanon	404,170
Saudi Arabia	240,000
Egypt	70,245
TOTAL	4,660,191

The history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict tells the story of how one people's land was promised to another people, by a third party who had no sovereignty over it. This created division, hatred, anger, sorrow, war and tragedy. These feelings still subsist and make the way to peace all the more difficult.



During the last 60 years, wars have been fought and peace initiatives initiated. However, the occupation persists and with each passing year, Palestinians lose more land, more freedom and face even greater persecution.

The Right of Return

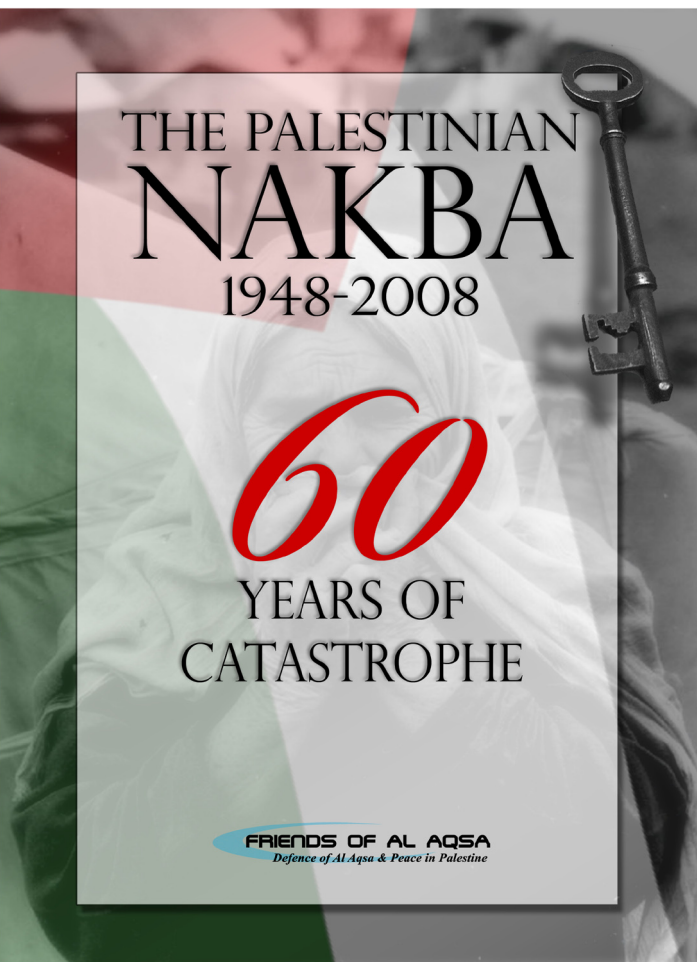


Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that "Everyone has the right to leave any country including his own, and to return to his country." Palestinian refugees are invoking this 'Right of Return', but the state of Israel has consistently denied this right; even in 1948, Palestinians attempting to return home after the war were either turned away or shot.

The Nakba began in 1948, but for many Palestinians, it still represents the catastrophe they live with every day of their lives. New generations have little hope of living in peace and prospering, as Israel continues to encroach upon the little land the Palestinians still have.

The Israeli Military occupation which began in 1967 shows no sign of ending.

Each and every person concerned with this issue needs to take action and lobby their politicians so that international governments will be compelled to bring pressure on the Israeli government to abide by international law and enter unconditional and meaningful peace negotiations with the Palestinians.



For a full report on the Palestinian Nakba visit the Friends of Al-Aqsa website (Resources)

To order a hard copy please send us an e-mail



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THE PALESTINIAN NAKBA

1948 - 2009

61 YEARS OF CATASTROPHE