

JDI Statement on Nakba Day: 75th Anniversary of The Catastrophe

This year marks the 75th anniversary of *al-Nakba* (The Catastrophe) that commemorates the mass displacement and dispossession of Palestinians from their homes in Palestine.

The establishment of the State of Israel in former British Mandatory Palestine in May 1948 saw an outbreak of hostilities between the Jewish settler population and invading armies from Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq. Simultaneously the Jewish armed forces accelerated a plan to expel as many of the local non-Jewish population as possible. As a result, Palestinians were internally displaced with many more becoming refugees and forced to settled in areas adjacent to the new State of Israel.

Jews commemorate this period as a “War of Independence” while Palestinians view this period as a catastrophe during which over 700,000 people were displaced, losing their homes, possessions and livelihoods as their towns and villages were destroyed by forces acting to create a Jewish State.

The expansion of Israeli control and settlement after the 1967 War - where Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza - has continued the process, with violence, dispossession and repression becoming the daily lived reality for many Palestinians.

Many argue that the Nakba is not merely a historical event, but is an enduring reality for Palestinians living both within and outside Israel-Palestine. As Palestinians often say, “*Al Nakba Mustamirra*” - *The Nakba is ongoing and continues*. Today, The Nakba speaks to the systems of violence and oppression that govern Palestinian existence, and extends to the current realities of dispossession, demolitions, detentions and brutality of daily life under Israeli Occupation.

The Palestinian population remains deeply connected to their ancestral origins and the failure to find a political solution remains at the core of the conflict between the State of Israel and Palestinians to this day.

As Jews deeply connected to Israel – we are obligated to understand this painful history and to support efforts to seek a permanent, just, fair and equitable political solution between The State of Israel and the Palestinian population.

In this sense the Palestinian Nakba is also our catastrophe.

We - as a people – can never be free until we are all free.