

No Time to Celebrate

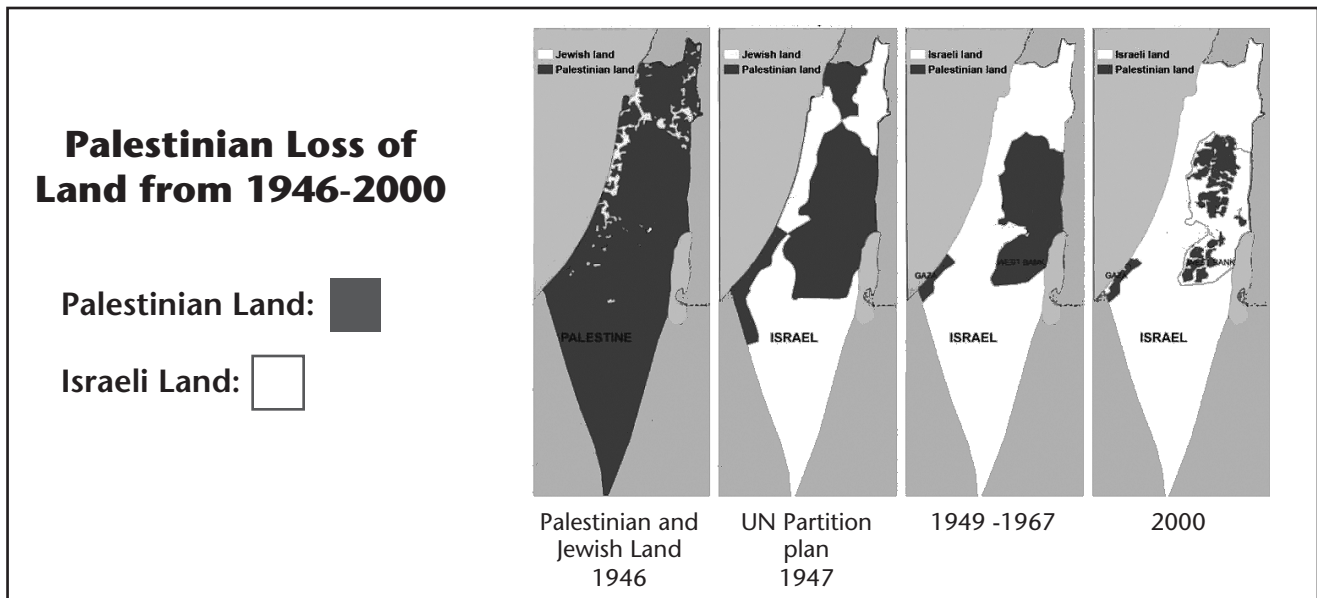
This May, Israel marks 60 years of statehood. The Israeli government and major national and international Jewish organizations are sponsoring elaborate celebrations of "Israeli Independence Day." Meanwhile, Palestinians around the world mourn 60 years since the Nakba - Arabic for "catastrophe" - of 1948. Sixty years ago, Zionist militias overran and destroyed hundreds of Palestinian villages, committing many massacres in the process. More than 750,000 Palestinian people were ethnically cleansed in order to create a Jewish state in a land where the large majority was not Jewish. This marked the beginning of the "Middle East conflict" and remains at the heart of the region's crisis today. This does not deserve to be celebrated.

Would you celebrate:

- The establishment of South African Apartheid?
- The triumph of racial segregation in the U.S.?
- The decimation and conquest of Native Americans?

Then why would you celebrate:

- The expulsion of more than 750,000 people - 2/3 of the Palestinian population - from their homeland?
- The expropriation of Palestinian lands, farms, industry, homes and worldly possessions?
- The erasure of over 400 Palestinian towns & villages?
- The establishment of a state in which 20 percent of the citizens live under a "Jim Crow" type of discrimination, fighting constant attempts to force them from the country?
- The creation of the world's fourth-largest military machine armed with the only nuclear weapons in the Middle East?
- The maintenance of a forty-one-year-long brutal military occupation?
(This is what "100 years in Iraq" would look like.)
- The expansion of illegal, Jewish-only settlements in violation of international law?
- The consolidation of a permanent system of ethnic inequality which Bishop Desmond Tutu has labeled worse than South African Apartheid?



There is nothing here to celebrate. Join us in supporting the international call to boycott all Israel 60th anniversary events.

The injustices of 1948 continue. Numbering in the millions, Palestinian refugees are not allowed to return to their land in violation of international law. Meanwhile, Israel gives automatic citizenship to any Jewish person from anywhere in the world, while denying full civil and property rights to its non-Jewish citizens. Outside of Israel proper -- in Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem -- Palestinians live under harsh military occupation and are often denied access to work, healthcare, education and other basic human needs. Israel continues to seize land, without compensation or due process, for the construction of Jewish settlements and the erection of a 730-kilometer "separation wall." In Gaza, Israel is waging a lop-sided "dirty war" against 1.5 million people trapped in the world's largest open-air prison. The siege of Gaza has cut off access to fuel, food, medical care, clean water or even sewage treatment and driven at least 80 percent of the population into deep poverty.

Celebrating Israel at 60 effectively ignores the history of Palestinian dispossession and occupation. The Nakba continues today.

What You Can Do:

Educate yourself about 1948.

Read: *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* by Israeli historian Ilan Pappé

Stay Informed about the ongoing Nakba. Visit: www.haaretz.com, www.electronicintifada.net, <http://english.aljazeera.net>, www.palestinechronicle.com/

Take Action.

- Support work on the ground in Palestine: www.mecaforpeace.com, www.zochrot.org, www.playgroundsforpalestine.org, www.madisonrafah.org.
- Join Jewish Voice for Peace and the Palestine Fair Trade Association in replanting olive trees in Palestine: www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org
- Support the call from Palestinian civil society to Boycott and Divest! Check Out: www.pacbi.org
- Let your Senators and Congressional Representatives know that you support peace and justice for Palestine; for more information contact rafahpolicy@yahoo.com

And if you are looking for something good to celebrate, come to:

Sixty Years of Palestinian Resilience: A Benefit for the People of Gaza

Sunday, June 1st, 1-5 pm

at Bunky's Cafe, 2827 Atwood Ave

Enjoy a program of art, music, and poetry

Middle Eastern appetizers will be served.

For more information call 608.358.7126

Playgrounds for Palestine: Madison Benefit Dinner for the Jenin Refugee Camp Playground Project

Sunday, May 18th, 6 - 8 pm

at King of Falafel restaurant

\$20 for adults, \$10 kids aged 6 - 10.

**Email pfpmadison@gmail.com to reserve
your place today.**

For more information go to:

<http://pfpmadison.blgospot.com>

Endorsed by: Madison Chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace, Madison Rafah Sister City Project, Madison Chapter of Playgrounds for Palestine, University of Wisconsin Students for Justice in Palestine, and Madison Area Peace Coalition