

Historic Palestine

A Land of the Levant

Nestled at the crossroads of ancient trade routes, Palestine plays a critical geopolitical role due to its fertile land and sacredness to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. While ruled by changing political powers through the years, the people were a reflection of natural migration patterns of the larger Levant. The primary language was Arabic and the land was home to Druze, Muslim, Christian, and Jewish Palestinians along with Palestinians of other faiths. In the early 1900s, Palestine flourished as a thriving hub of commerce, culture, and scholarship.

The Nakba

In 1948, Zionist militia (backed by British forces) expel at least 750,000 Palestinians from their homes, depopulate villages, and rename historical cities in order to shift the demographics of the region and declare Israeli statehood. This event is called the “Nakba” (or catastrophe in Arabic) and marks the first phase of ethnic cleansing of non-Jewish Palestinians from the land.



Keys of Hope

Many Palestinians still hold on to the keys of their original homes they were forced to expel. The key is a symbol of hope they can one day return to their home - a right recognized by the UN and international law. Palestinians continue to appeal to the international community to uphold justice and equality under the law.



Displaced Palestinians, November 1948 © Jim Pringle, AP

Determined to Stay

Millions of displaced Palestinians live as refugees inside West Bank and Gaza, as refugees in neighboring Arab countries, or part of the larger global diaspora. While there is a longing to return, there is a more pressing determination to stay and resist expulsion. Daily acts of dispossession and violence are designed to make life unlivable so Palestinians leave. Through poetry, music, and dance, the determination to stay and find joy despite a life of erasure is now ingrained in the culture.