



## In Commemoration of Nakba Day

*May, 2021*

The year 2008 marked the first wave of ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah in Jerusalem (al-Quds), when Israeli settler organizations, backed by the Israeli state's "legal system" and security forces, violently evicted 60 Palestinians from their homes. That year commemorated 60 years of the Nakba, the original ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from their homeland. Now 73 years old, the Nakba is very much ongoing.

Another 500 Palestinians continue to face the same fate in Sheikh Jarrah. Refugees of the original Nakba, their struggle to simply remain in their homes and homeland, to resist their community's erasure, has rallied Palestinians across the colonial barriers that Israel erected to fragment and divide Palestinians among Gaza, inside the "Green line," the West Bank, Jerusalem, and across exile communities and diasporas. The cause of Sheikh Jarrah encapsulates for Palestinians everywhere their shared history of settler colonial eviction and erasure and its violent continuation in the present.

As anthropologists, many of us have struggled to bring into view the multiple forms of usually hidden Israeli colonial violence, their devastating ongoing impact on Palestinian lives, and the unseen and overlooked ways in which Palestinians continue to resist and persist. Israeli colonial violence in its infinite gradated varieties is an everyday constant in Palestinian lives. We thus do not regard the visible Israeli state and state-sanctioned violence being perpetrated today as a sudden "eruption of violence" or a breakdown of a "normal" state of "calm." Instead we recognize it as a horrific intensification and breaking to the surface of the deep and underlying system of violence involved in Israel's everyday work of enforcing an apartheid system on behalf of its expanding settler colonialism.

In Jerusalem, this system of underlying everyday violence operates primarily through the mechanism of Israeli colonial bureaucracy and municipal planning that condemns Palestinians to live in constant fear of losing their right to inhabit their city and relegates them to build "illegal homes" vulnerable to demolition at any moment. It divides families, making it impossible to cohabit when the Israeli residency regime places loved ones on the other side of the Apartheid wall. And it operates through blocking the entry of West Bank and Gaza Palestinians to Jerusalem and its holy sites, while flooding Jerusalem's streets and Palestinian public spaces with settlers and security forces. That Palestinians from the Galilee, the Triangle, Lydd, Jaffa, and the Naqab rushed to defend families in Sheikh Jarrah and resist the onslaught by settlers and the Israeli military on the Old City, the Haram al-Sharif, and al-Aqsa Mosque, this time during the holy month of Ramadan, is no surprise. As ostensible "citizens" within Israel's gradated apartheid system, the state-sanctioned settler mob and police attacks on them in their towns and villages is yet

another surfacing of the underlying structure of settler colonial violence visited on their communities every day.

Today, Israel is again inflicting its most vicious lethal violence on Gaza. In eleven days of Israeli bombardment, more than 200 Palestinians have lost their lives while tens of thousands remain trapped in the world's largest open-air prison with no safe haven in a terrifying reliving of the continual one-sided-Israeli "wars on Gaza" of 2006, 2008, 2012, and 2014. Palestinians in Gaza continue to bear the greatest extremes of Israel's violence; the normal mechanisms of siege, mass destitution, and slow death that dominate life in Gaza during times of "calm" are now accompanied by the force of massive military destruction and murderous death.

The struggles that we see today across Palestine's fractured geographies build on Palestinians' long history and traditions of resistance in the face of settler colonial dispossession and erasure. Brave struggles for dignity and freedom—individual and collective acts of defiance—build on and link with each other through time and space, reiterating Palestinian peoplehood and reaffirming Palestinians' refusal of dispossession. The recent memory of Gazans' heroic Great March of Return is echoed in the current defiance and resistance from Jerusalem to Haifa, from al-Khalil to the Naqab, which in turn build on long traditions of struggle from Nabi Saleh to Yarmouk Refugee Camp, al-Araqib to Susiya, Kafr Bir'im to Shatila, in a web growing ever wider and stronger through time and space.

**We call for immediate international action to end the mass killing in Gaza, stop the ethnic cleansing of East Jerusalem and the Naqab, cease the criminalizing of Palestinian "citizens" of Israel, and terminate the military oppression and dispossession of the West Bank.**

We call on all who support justice to protest state complicity with Israel's current murderous violence and its ongoing system of apartheid and ethnic cleansing. We encourage all people to join protests in their home communities to amplify the voices rejecting Israeli violence in all its forms. We encourage educators and academics to educate themselves and their students, to read widely and teach courses on Palestinians and their struggles, and to situate the discourse on Palestine among broader struggles for racial and economic justice and colonial resistance the world over. We call on people to reach out to besieged Palestinians wherever they may be. And we call on all individuals of conscience to exercise whatever political resources they have to end the current killings and contribute to securing the Palestinian homeland on its decolonial course, after over a century of Zionist destruction, so that its native peoples can attain emancipation. We welcome all forms of solidarity from other academic associations and oppose the Israeli criminalization of legitimate forms of nonviolent protest.

For further education, please consult the following resources:

**The Palestinians and the Struggle of the Dispossessed** [May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021; Samera Esmeir; [Link](#)]

- In this Op-Ed, Esmeir explains the temporal political grammar of the Palestinian struggle against Israeli colonial rule. She writes about the struggle of the dispossessed, about what it means to live in struggle, to refuse defeat, to persist.

**This Isn't a Civil War, It Is Settler-Colonial Violence** [May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021; Lana Tatour; [Link](#)]

- In this Op-Ed, Tatour urges against deploying the “civil war” discourse that has recently been circulating in some Israeli and global media. She shows how such discourse erases the colonial context in which violence against Palestinians takes place.

**What We're Seeing Now is Just the Latest Chapter in Israel's Dispossession of the Palestinians** [May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021; Rashid Khalidi; [Link](#)]

- In this Op-Ed, Khalidi contextualizes the recent Israeli violence and the displacement of the Palestinian people as the latest episode in the hundred-plus year war on Palestine. He explains the process of “Judaization,” as it is based on the inexorable logic of settler colonialism, that has operated through the confiscation of homes and land and the displacement of their Palestinian owners inside Israel since 1948, and since 1967 in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Golan Heights.

**The Exiling of Sheikh Jarrah** [Autumn 2012, Rema Hammami; [Link](#)]

- In this autobiographical essay, anthropologist Rema Hammami offers a detailed and intimate portrait of Sheikh Jarrah, after living there for over 20 years and witnessing escalating Israeli control of the land.

**Writing/Righting Palestine Studies: Settler Colonialism, Indigenous Sovereignty and Resisting the Ghost(s) of History** [2018; Rana Barakat, [Link](#)]

- In this essay, Barakat suggests that Palestine studies should refer to Indigenous studies. She argues that while the settler-colonial analysis is fitting for the study of Zionism as an ideology and its history, frameworks that grew out of Indigenous studies are a more fitting political and academic home for the study of Palestinian history.

**Security Theology: Life, Death and the Everyday in Israel-Palestine** [September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015; Interview with Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian; [Link](#)]

- Interview with Shalhoub-Kevorkian about her book, where her examination of Palestinian experiences of life and death within the context of Israeli settler

colonialism broadens the analytical horizon to include those who “keep on existing” and explores how Israeli theologies and ideologies of security, surveillance and fear can obscure violence and power dynamics while perpetuating existing power structures.

***Murabata: The Politics of Staying in Place*** [2019; Sarah Ihmoud; [Link](#)]

- In this article, Ihmoud seeks to understand the subjectivity and political praxis of the Murabitat al-Haram, a group of young and old Palestinian women – formally outlawed by the Israeli state in 2015 – who travel to the Haram each day to gather, pray, study together, and defend the holy grounds from Israeli incursions and deepening settler control.

***Sheikh Jarrah: The Question Before Us*** [2021; Sarah Ihmoud; [Link](#)]

- In this essay, Ihmoud reflects on her earlier fieldwork in Sheikh Jarrah in 2009 and the ongoing dispossession and destruction today (2021), and explores the concepts of home and belonging in the colonial context.

***To be a grandmother, a mother, and a woman in the Gaza Strip*** [2021; Andaleeb Adwan; [Link](#)]

- In this essay, Andaleeb Adwan, a feminist and community activists living in Gaza, describes how it feels to be a grandmother and a mother in Gaza under siege and shelling.

Visual Resources:

**The Nakba Archive** [[Link](#)]:

- An oral history collective established in Lebanon in 2002, founded and co-directed by Diana Allan and Mahmoud Zeidan. Since its inception, the archive has recorded over 650 video interviews with first generation Palestinian refugees in Lebanon about their recollections of life in Palestine and the events that led to their displacement.

**Searching for the Village of Saris in Jerusalem** [Documentary; [Link](#)]:

- A journey, physical and metaphoric, in search of the legacy of Palestinian dispossession in 1948, and its still unfolding chapters.

**Palestinian Journeys** [[Link](#)]:

- An online portal into the multiple facets of the Palestinian experience, filled with fact-based historical accounts, biographies, events, and undiscovered stories.

Call for Action:

**Palestine & Praxis: Scholars for Palestinian Freedom** [[Link](#)]

- This call – led by a collective of Palestinian scholars spread across Palestine, Turtle Island, and the world – signals the need in our current moment to extend the important work on Palestine within the academy into curricula beyond the field.