



75 years of Nakba: Time for the UK to stand up for Palestinian dignity, respect and justice

Today, as a group of UK-based humanitarian, development, human rights and faith charities working for Palestinian human rights, wellbeing and dignity, we commemorate the [75th anniversary](#) of what is known by Palestinians as the *Nakba* (the “catastrophe”) – and rededicate ourselves to bringing this relentless process to an end.

This year, we are reminded of the daily reality of violence and dispossession that Palestinians continue to face. Under Israel’s new extreme government coalition, land confiscation from Palestinians has accelerated and the violence and control of Israel’s military authorities has intensified. Already, at least [150 Palestinians have been killed](#) by Israeli forces and settlers across the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) since the start of 2023, according to the Ministry of Health. At least 17 Israelis have also been [killed](#). In the first three months alone, 413 Palestinians [have been displaced](#) in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem – a 78% increase compared with 2022, which already saw the highest number of demolitions recorded since 2016. Palestinians in Gaza are living under the 16th year of illegal closure and blockade, depriving them of their fundamental rights, and access to crucial services including healthcare and education. Across the oPt, Palestinian civil society, from human rights defenders, to educational institutions and essential service-providers, face [continued repression](#) for their work serving a people under military occupation.

For Palestinians, these are not isolated incidents but form part of a systematic process of fragmentation and dispossession dating back to 1948, when more than 750,000 Palestinians were displaced or fled from their homes and a majority of the Palestinian people became refugees. For 75 years they have been denied their right of return, a fundamental right in international law, leaving 5.7 million Palestinian refugees reliant on services provided by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). Although established in recognition of the international community’s responsibility for the plight of Palestine refugees, chronic underfunding means UNRWA continues to face an existential crisis. Despite the urgent and growing needs of Palestinian refugees today and its unique historic role in the creation of the Palestine refugee problem, the UK government has severely cut funding to the Agency.

Today, demands for Palestinians’ fundamental rights, accountability and justice for violations of international law are met only with statements of concern, and clear [double standards](#). While the UK [Government extends its support to international mechanisms](#) in other areas of the world, it continues to block Palestinian efforts at every turn: in the [International Criminal Court](#), the [International Court of Justice](#), and the [UN Human Rights Council](#). Where else may victims turn, if not

to those mechanisms created to provide justice? How else may Palestinians realise their dignity, if those responsible for their protection abdicate their responsibilities?

We recommit to working for an end to 75 years of Nakba in Palestine and the realisation of Palestinians' rights. We stand firmly with the Palestinian people in their struggle for dignity and freedom from occupation, and a just future for all people living between the river Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. We call upon the UK Government to do the same, and to uphold its legal, moral, and historic obligations to the Palestinian people. We urge the Government to demand an immediate end to violations of international law, including excessive use of force against Palestinians across the occupied territory; the ongoing displacement and dispossession of Palestinian families; and the illegal blockade and closure of Gaza, and to demonstrate its support and full respect of international mechanisms for accountability and justice. Finally, we call on the UK Government to extend robust and sustainable assistance to local Palestinian and international actors, including UNRWA, to ensure their ability to meet the urgent needs of the Palestinian people.

Statement endorsed by the following 14 agencies:

- ABCD Bethlehem
- Amos Trust
- Council for Arab-British Understanding (Caabu)
- Christian Aid
- Embrace the Middle East
- Friends of Birzeit University (Fobzu)
- Friends of Nablus and Surrounding Areas (FONSA)
- Interpal
- Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights (LPHR)
- Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP)
- Quakers in Britain
- Sabeel-Kairos UK
- War on Want
- Welfare Association