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[Home](#) > Statement on the Occasion of Nakba Day and Events in Gaza

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16 May 2018

It is with a heavy heart that we write this Nakba day statement. After the events of 14 May 2018, all words of condemnation seem insufficient and calls for action seem empty. The fact that this has been ongoing, cyclically, for 70 years is an outrage.

From our perspective as a prisoner support organization, 70 years of Nakba represents 70 years of control and domination. This manifests throughout every system used to prop up and perpetuate the occupation. From permit regime, to land confiscation, to annexation, to housing demolitions, and massacres, the intent of all these activities is the same. It is to completely bend the Palestinian people, their lives and dreams, to the will of the occupying force.

It means the violation of the basic tenets of humanitarian law. 50 years of official occupation is in no way temporary, and no longer abides by the internationally accepted definition. Thus, we have moved into a new reality through the simple passage of time and assertion of the will of the occupier. The military law system is the dominant legal paradigm of the land, the occupied population is continually transferred out with every imprisonment, and the occupier takes persistent steps towards indefinite annexation.

The Nakba means 70 years of displacement, domination, and deference to an external power. It means subdued spirits, and narrowed possibilities. It means the slow disintegration of hope, manifesting in inaction from those who have the privilege to disengage and desperation from those who do not.

Over the past four days, we have seen around 100 arrests throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. In an attempt to subdue the legitimate outrage that follows a massacre of the magnitude that has just been perpetrated in Gaza, the occupation has returned to its more 'modest' modes of control.

The international community has shown itself to lack the moral courage to stand up to Israel. It has made statements, and urged restraint while war crimes and violations of human rights have continued unabated. It has condemned the occupation on one hand, but has continued supplying the perpetrator on the other hand. It has held peace talks, while trading in the tools of war. If there was ever a time to change this pattern, it would be now. 70 years of continuing catastrophe is 70 years too long. The international community has a distinct responsibility to ensure that international norms and laws are upheld. Those who do not abide have no place in the community of nations.

To those who have stood with the Palestinian struggle on a personal level, your action and

commitment is needed now more than ever. If we are to ever find a just solution, it is the people of the world, not the big institutions, who will be the primary movers of such change. It will be slow, and take many baby steps, but we move towards justice with every protests, every new understanding of the situation, and every BDS resolution. Every time a BDS proposition is brought forward, whether at universities, trade unions, or local governments, people will ask "why?". It is your role as civil society to give them the answer. That 70 years of displacement and oppression is ongoing; that Israel does not abide by international law or respect the basic human rights of the Palestinian people; that self-determination is all that is desired by a people who have been struggling for 70 years. That all human beings simply want the chance to dictate the parameters of their own life is an eternal truth.

To those who died in Gaza, we honor your memory. To those who were displaced in 1948, we carry your burden; and to those who remain locked away in occupation jails, we struggle for your freedom.

70 years is 70 years too long.
