

Does the World Really Care About the Palestinians—or Just Hate Israel?

Does the world really care about the plight of the Palestinians? Or is their suffering simply a convenient weapon with which to batter the Jewish state?

Regardless of how and why roughly 700,000 Arabs living in Palestine left their homes as a result of the 1947–1948 war against the founding of Israel, there is no debate as to the fact that they were largely left without a homeland. That's because they were not absorbed as refugees by the surrounding Arab countries. This is in stark contrast with the roughly 850,000 Jews who were expelled from the Arab and Muslim countries in which they had lived and were largely absorbed by the fledgling state of Israel.

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Instead, quite intentionally, the Palestinian refugee crisis—which is virtually the only multi-generational refugee crisis in the world today—was seen as a potent publicity tool against Israel.

As stated in 1952 by Sir Alexander Galloway, former head of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees, in an address to the Foreign Relations Committee of Congress: “The Arab States do not want to solve the refugee problem. They want to keep it as an open sore, as an affront to the United Nations, and as a weapon against Israel. Arab leaders don't care whether the refugees live or die.”

Similarly, on March 31, 1977, in the Dutch newspaper *Trouw*, PLO leader Zuheir Mohsen said: “The Palestinian people does

not exist. The creation of a Palestinian state is only a means for continuing our struggle against the state of Israel for our Arab unity. In reality today there is no difference between Jordanians, Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese. Only for political and tactical reasons do we speak today about the existence of a Palestinian people, since Arab national interest demand that we posit the existence of a distinct 'Palestinian people' to oppose Zionism."

Lest you think that is a stray, non-representative quote, it was the former Syrian Prime Minister, Khaled al-Azm, who wrote in his posthumously published Memoirs of the Syrian Prime Minister (Arabic: Mudhakkirat Khaled al-Azm): "Since 1948, it is we who demanded that the refugees return to their homes... while it is we who made them leave. We brought disaster upon these refugees, by inviting them and bringing pressure on them to leave... We have rendered them dispossessed... We have accustomed them to begging... We have participated in lowering their moral and social level... Then we exploited them in executing crimes of murder, arson, and throwing bombs upon... men, women and children—all this in the service of political purposes."

Even current Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas stated in 1976 in the official PLO journal Falastin al-Thawra: "The Arab armies entered Palestine to protect the Palestinians from the Zionist tyranny, but instead they abandoned them, forced them to emigrate and to leave their homeland, imposed upon them a political and ideological blockade and threw them into prisons similar to the ghettos in which the Jews used to live in Eastern Europe. The Arab states succeeded in scattering the Palestinian people and in destroying their unity." (I encourage all readers to verify the accuracy of these quotes. They are easily confirmed.)



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Not only that, but to this moment, there are hundreds of thousands of Palestinians living in refugee camps in countries like Lebanon and Syria. In other words, rather than becoming citizens of these neighboring countries—countries that speak the same language, share the same culture, and predominantly practice the same religion—these people have been denied citizenship and equality.

Where is the world outrage over this? Where are the protests?

Worse still, this systemic oppression of the Palestinian people by the larger Arab and Muslim world was part of an intentional strategy outlined in Resolution 462 of the Arab League Political Committee on September 23, 1952.

The resolution stated, in direct opposition to UNRWA's early efforts at refugee resettlement and integration, "The political committee advised Arab governments to postpone efforts to settle Palestinian refugees and called on the United Nations to implement resolutions concerning the return of Palestinian refugees to Palestine and to compensate them for damage and property losses." (This was largely reinforced in the Casablanca Protocol for the Treatment of Palestinians in Arab States, issued on September 11, 1965.)

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Sadly, to this moment, this crisis is exacerbated by the false hope of a so-called right of return in which all descendants of the original Arab refugees of the 1947–1948 war against Israel are deemed refugees. How utterly misleading and how mercilessly cruel. (For a detailed study of this issue by two formerly leftist Israeli authors, see *The War of Return: How Western Indulgence of the Palestinian Dream Has Obstructed the Path to Peace*. For the record, the number of so-called refugees is now nearly 6 million.)

That's why it's no surprise that, when Hamas terrorists execute unarmed Gazan civilians in broad daylight in the aftermath of the Trump-initiated ceasefire, the same world that cried for months "Genocide!" has been largely silent.

This begs the question: "Do Palestinian lives really matter?" (More broadly, in light of the terrible suffering of Arab peoples in countries like Syria and Yemen as a result of brutal civil wars, some would ask, "Do Arab lives really matter?")

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Of course, saying this does not make Israel exempt from criticism, nor does it lessen the very real suffering of the people of Gaza.

But it does raise the question of whether the world really cares about the suffering of the Palestinians or whether they are merely a convenient tool with which to bash the State of Israel, as has been the case now for more than 70 years.

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