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## PALESTINE – IN CONTEXT

Our hearts bleed at the unfolding tragedy in Gaza.

*Nabi Sallallāhu ‘Alayhi wa Sallam said regarding the believers: “The example of the Mu’minīn in their mutual love, mercy, and softness is like the body – if one limb pains, the entire body experiences sleeplessness and fever...” (Muslim, 2586)*

Looking at the Palestinian issue from a historical perspective is necessary to understand it correctly. Through this, it will be apparent why the solution can never be in a “two-state resolution” or normalization with Israel. We will also understand why Western politicians hypocritically and deviously continue to support Israel and why the reclaiming of Masjid Al-Aqsā and Palestine should remain the goal and duty of Muslims at large.

### JEWIS IN PREVIOUS TIMES

Jews have always believed themselves a superior people and viewed “Gentiles” (non-Jews) as little more than animals. Their actions reflected this, and coupled with their disloyalty, disbelief, and the murder of many Ambiyā’ Alayhim as-Salām, they were accursed and became a distrusted and persecuted nation. They held a reputation as being untrustworthy and treacherous. The Christians viewed them as the rejectors and “killers” of Īsā ‘Alayhis Salām, and as such, they were persecuted in Christian societies. Mass expulsions of Jews occurred in England, France, and Spain in the period between 1250 and 1500. Later, in Russia and other countries, Jews were massacred in large numbers. Some historians hold that there have been 1030 mass expulsions of Jews in recorded history, dating back more than 2000 years.

They were generally on the fringes of society and, therefore, found niches in the market to gain prominence. They became famous as tax collectors and moneylenders, dealing in interest despite its prohibition. Through this, they gained influence and wealth and became valuable tools for the powerful.

## **ZIONISM AND ITS PURPOSE**

The Jews felt that to reflect “Jewish supremacy”, escape antisemitism, and protect their culture, they needed to establish their own state. For this purpose, the “Zionism” movement was founded. When the Jewish Baron Maurice op Hirsch died, he bequeathed two hundred and fifty million francs for the establishment of a Jewish homeland. At the time, Jews were being persecuted all over Eastern Europe and in Russia. Hirsch pictured Argentina as this homeland. At that time, Argentina was accepting immigrants from all over the world.

An association was formed to carry out Hirsch's will, but the association did not see Argentina as a suitable location for this purpose. And when Theodor Herzl intervened in the issue of the Jewish homeland, Argentina was no longer part of the equation and was completely excluded. And thus, the issue no longer became about a homeland for the persecuted Jews of Eastern Europe but a homeland for all Jews. Palestine was proposed as the location of that homeland. Based on this proposition, the Jews decided to approach Sultan Abdul Hamid: Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire that governed it and they demanded that the Jews be allowed to establish a homeland for themselves in Jerusalem. Sultan Abdul Hamid rejected their proposal and famously said: “If we hand over Palestine, we will have signed the death sentences for our religious brothers (in Palestine) and if the Jews are allowed to settle in Palestine, in a very short time they will be able to obtain a path to power in the place where they have settled.” Seeing this resolute response, they decided to change their strategy.

## **ENTRY INTO PALESTINE**

The Jews understood that they would need the support of a powerful nation for their cause. Around the time of the First World War, they approached the British. They built up a relationship with the Prime Minister, explaining to him that it would be to Britain’s advantage that they would be protectors of British imperialism and values in the Middle East. He lent his support, understanding that this would bring many benefits. Together with limiting Jewish migration to Britain and giving

them an upper hand in the war, it would also serve British interests in the “Islāmic” East.

During the war, in 1917, the “Balfour Declaration” was issued by the British, declaring the intent of the British to assist the Zionists in the establishment of “A national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine if they defeat the Ottomans. Due to widespread opposition, they later clarified that their vision did not mean that Arabs would be subordinate to Jews or that Palestine itself should be converted into a new state. They said that the Jewish home would just be within Palestine.

Interestingly, the British also promised Arab nationalists that Palestine would be theirs after the war. They broke this promise.

## **INFLUX OF JEWS**

At this time, there was already a tiny minority of Jews residing in Palestine. They made up roughly 10% of the population. Mass immigration of Jews then took place, and they began purchasing and taking large areas of land. By 1935, the Jewish population had grown to 350,000 under British auspices and protection.

Fed up with the large-scale immigration and Jewish acquisition of Palestinian land, the “Arab Revolt” began in 1936. A general strike was called countrywide, leading to a brutal crackdown by the British. An estimated 5000 Palestinians were martyred, and the revolt was crushed by 1939.

To attempt to appease the Palestinians, the British released a white paper proposing a reduction in Jewish immigration to Palestine.

## **ZIONISTS ON THE OFFENSIVE**

The Zionists, not happy at this, went crazy. They began killing Palestinian and British people, blowing up bridges, etc. Supported by the USA, Jews continued to arrive in Palestine. They became too much to handle for even the British, and after World War 2, they also announced their departure from Palestine.

In an extremely bloody period until 1948, multiple massacres (such as the Haifa and Deir Yassin massacres) of innocent Palestinians were carried out

by the Jews. Zionists butchered hundreds of Palestinians, and hundreds of villages were ethnically cleansed.

In the meantime, in 1947, the UN, at the lobbying of the Zionists and the backing of the USA, proposed a partition of Palestine into two states. The proposal gave the Jews 55% of the land, even though they constituted only about a third of the population. The Arabs, not consulted and wronged, disagreed with this proposal.

The Deir Yassin massacre had far-reaching effects. Many Palestinians fled their homes, fearing a similar onslaught of the settler Jews. The neighbouring Arab leaders were also shaken into very belated action.

## **THE ARAB-ISRAELI WAR AND THE NAKBA**

Following consistent killing and stealing, and the support of the US, the Israelis were bold enough to declare their independence as a state on 14 May 1948. The US President, Truman, was the first world leader to recognize Israel, only 11 minutes after this declaration.

Public outrage increased, and a joint Arab force was eventually mobilized to take on the Zionists. The Zionists, more significant in number, better equipped and trained by the British military, gained the advantage. They took this opportunity to steal even more land than the originally proposed 55%. Only the West Bank (which includes Jerusalem) and the tiny Gaza Strip remained under Palestinian control. Due to this, around 700,000 Palestinians were forced from their homes and made Refugees. The barbaric Jews got what they wanted. This event is famously known as the Nakba (Great Catastrophe).

## **AFTERMATH OF THE NAKBA**

The UN passed a resolution declaring that the refugees who wish to return to their homes should be permitted to do so. Israel did not comply and continued to build settlements for incoming Jews. Massacres and ethnic cleansing still took place, and restrictions were placed on Palestinians' day-to-day lives and movements. Their laws and regulations are widely considered "Apartheid Laws". Many more villages were invaded, and many Palestinians were martyred.

As a result, there were further offensives by Arab states. The “Suez Crisis” and the 1967 “Six-Day War” occurred. Here, Israel defeated Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, and the only remnants of the Palestinian state (the West Bank and Gaza) were taken over by Israel. Muslim casualties were massive, with around 11,000 martyred.

The UN passed a resolution ordering Israel to return the stolen land (the West Bank and Gaza), which they, again, did not comply with. Frustrated at this, the Yom Kippur War took place, in which Egypt and the Muslims sustained heavy losses. Israel did as well. Around 15,000 Muslims were martyred, with 2000 Israelis killed. In 1982, the Lebanon War occurred after Israel invaded Lebanon. Around 30,000 Arabs were martyred.

In 1987, the “First Intifada” began, with Palestinians fed up with Israeli occupation and conditions in the West Bank and Gaza. Mass protests took place, and Hamas was founded - primarily as a liberation movement. The intifada ended in 1993 with the signing of the “Oslo Accords” which granted Palestine self-governance of the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

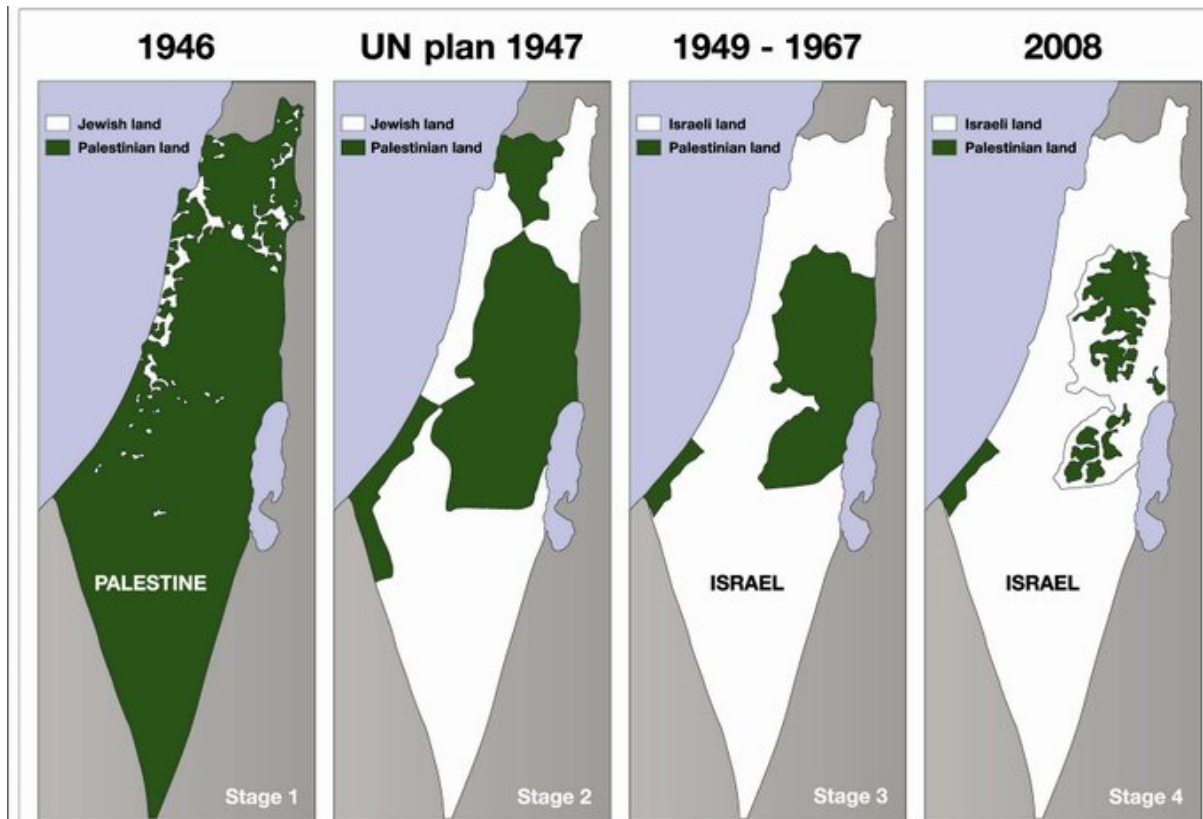
Palestinians were hopeful of peace, but killing and repression continued, and new settlements continued to be built. In an alarming incident, a Jewish settler entered a Masjid at Fajr and massacred 69 Muslims. The “Oslo Accords 2” was later signed, but all of these were exposed as not even worth the paper they were written on. Israel had no intention of granting freedom to the Palestinians, and they were determined to continue building settlements on Palestinian land. Entry into Masjid Al-Aqsa was restricted, with Jews entering and desecrating the sacred Masjid as they wished.

## **THE RESULT**

The result of their stubbornness is that now and again, Palestinians rise up, and will continue to do so. The official numbers of martyrs are well over 100,000. Hundreds of thousands have been wounded and even more displaced.



Simplified map showing how Palestinian land was usurped over the years:



As an Ummah, we need to take lessons from the Muslims of Palestine. Their fortitude, readiness to face death in the path of Allāh and sacrifice for the protection of Al-Masjid Al-Aqsā are indeed great qualities!

By remaining in total obedience to Allah Ta'āla, desisting from sin and inculcating the qualities that draw the help of Allāh Ta'āla, we can make a positive difference in alleviating the difficulties facing them.

Muslims are not weak, nor are we cowardly. Due to our weaknesses and sins, Allāh Ta'ālā allowed these Mubārak Lands to be taken from us. With true Īmān and A'māl, it is never impossible that Masjid Al-Aqsā and Palestine be reclaimed. Our sincere Du'ās and efforts should be with our fellow Muslims there and in all parts of the world where they are oppressed.

May Allāh Ta'ālā guide and assist the Muslims the world over, Āmīn!