

118TH CONGRESS
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H. RES. 1231

Recognizing the Nakba and Palestinian refugees' rights.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 15, 2024

Ms. TLAIB (for herself, Ms. OMAR, Ms. BUSH, and Mr. CARSON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the Nakba and Palestinian refugees' rights.

Whereas the United Nations General Assembly recommended on November 29, 1947, to partition Palestine into two states against the wishes of Palestine's majority indigenous inhabitants;

Whereas this partition plan nevertheless provided for the "Full protection for the rights and interests of minorities, including the protection of the linguistic, religious and ethnic rights of the peoples and respect for their cultures, and full equality of all citizens with regard to political, civil and religious matters";

Whereas before the State of Israel declared its independence on May 14, 1948, there were already between 250,000 to 300,000 Palestinian refugees who were expelled or fled

from their homes often after attacks by Zionist militias on major Palestinian cities and villages;

Whereas by the time the war ended with the signing of armistice agreements between Israel and neighboring Arab countries in 1949, establishing Israel's sovereignty over 78 percent of Palestine, and, in the process, conquering an additional 23 percent of Palestine beyond those areas allocated to the Jewish state under the partition plan, there were at least 750,000 Palestinian refugees (roughly 75 percent of the indigenous population that had lived in areas that became Israel);

Whereas, by 1949, Israel had depopulated more than 400 Palestinian villages and cities, often demolishing all structures and planting forests over them;

Whereas Palestinians refer to this experience of uprooting, dispossession, and refugeedom as the Nakba (meaning "catastrophe" in English);

Whereas the United States knew of the scale and magnitude of the Palestine refugee crisis as it unfolded, as is documented in an October 1948 telegram to the President and Secretary of State from the Embassy of the United States to Israel, warning that the "Arab Refugee tragedy is rapidly reaching catastrophic proportions and should be treated as a disaster";

Whereas the United States voted in favor of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 on December 11, 1948, which states that Palestinian "refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or

damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the governments or authorities responsible”;

Whereas Palestinian refugees’ right of return is not only stipulated in a General Assembly resolution, but is also anchored in international law and in Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country”;

Whereas, on December 8, 1949, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 302 establishing the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which the United States has financially supported on an almost continuous basis since its establishment;

Whereas of the more than 7,000,000 Palestinian refugees, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East provides much-needed social services to 5,700,000 Palestine refugees today;

Whereas international law also recognizes that descendants of refugees retain their rights as refugees, and that according to the United Nations, “Palestine refugees are not distinct from other protracted refugee situations such as those from Afghanistan or Somalia, where there are multiple generations of refugees, considered by UNHCR as refugees and supported as such. Protracted refugee situations are the result of the failure to find political solutions to their underlying political crises”;

Whereas the Nakba refers not only to a historical event but to an ongoing process of Israel’s expropriation of Pales-

tinian land and its dispossession of the Palestinian people that continues to this day;

Whereas the apartheid government of Israel is committing a genocide against the Palestinian people which, as of May 14, 2024, has killed at least 35,000 people, including more than 14,500 children, wounded more than 79,000, with 10,000 additional people still missing, displaced over 1,700,000 Palestinians, and created a state of famine across Gaza;

Whereas the establishment and expansion of hundreds of illegal settlements and outposts in the occupied Palestinian West Bank in which approximately 674,000 Israelis reside as of 2020 is another form of ethnic cleaning used to perpetuate the Nakba; and

Whereas a just and lasting resolution requires respect for and the implementation of Palestine refugee rights as enshrined in United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
 2 resentatives that it is the policy of the United States to—
 3 (1) commemorate the Nakba through official
 4 recognition and remembrance;
 5 (2) denounce the ongoing Nakba of the Pales-
 6 tinian people;
 7 (3) reject efforts to enlist, engage, or otherwise
 8 associate the United States Government with denial
 9 of the Nakba;

1 (4) encourage education and public under-
2 standing of the facts of the Nakba, including the
3 United States role in the humanitarian relief effort,
4 and the relevance of the Nakba to modern-day ref-
5 ugee crises;

6 (5) support the resumed provision of social
7 service to Palestinian refugees through the United
8 Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Ref-
9 ugees in the Near East;

10 (6) support the implementation of Palestinian
11 refugees' rights as enshrined in United Nations Gen-
12 eral Assembly Resolution 194 and the Universal
13 Declaration of Human Rights;

14 (7) recognize that Palestinians are a unique
15 people who are every bit as human as everyone else;
16 and

17 (8) reject bigoted efforts to question, dismiss,
18 or otherwise deny the existence of Palestinians and
19 their humanity.

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