

The Palestinian Refugee Myth

THE LIE

The Palestinian refugee issue is an ongoing humanitarian crisis caused by Israel forcibly expelling Arabs from their homes in 1948.

THE TRUTH

“Palestinian refugees” are neither Palestinian nor refugees. They are a privileged class manufactured by a UN agency.

BACKGROUND

- Every May 14, pro-Palestinians observe "Nakba Day" — marking what they call the “catastrophic” displacement of “Palestinian refugees” when Israel declared independence in 1948. ([UN](#))
- When Israel won its War of Independence in 1948, roughly 700,000–750,000 Arabs left their homes. Most did so not because Jewish forces drove them out, but because Arab leaders urged them to leave, promising a triumphant return after the Jews were defeated. That defeat never came.
- The UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is a UN agency dedicated exclusively to “Palestinian refugees.” It has an annual budget of approximately \$1 billion and serves as a front for Palestinian terror groups. ([UNRWA](#)), ([ITN](#))
- The number of “Palestinian refugees” in 1948 was 700,000-750,000. Today, it is 5.9 million. ([UNRWA](#))

TRUTH EXPLAINED

- The Palestinian refugee population did not grow from roughly 750,000 in 1948 to 5.9 million because millions fled Israel. It grew because Palestinians are the only refugee population in history granted hereditary refugee status in perpetuity, passed down generation after generation regardless of citizenship, birthplace, or whether their descendants ever lived in Israel. ([Middle East Forum](#)), ([AJC](#)), ([Human Rights Voices](#))
- Under the 1951 Refugee Convention, every other refugee population loses their refugee status once people gain citizenship elsewhere, permanently resettle, or the original conflict no longer applies. Not the Palestinians. ([UNHCR](#))
- Every refugee group in the world falls under the UNHCR, whose mission is to solve refugee crises through resettlement and integration. Palestinians alone are handled by UNRWA, which has no mandate to end refugee status. Instead, UNRWA continually registers descendants, expands eligibility, and grows the refugee rolls. ([UNHCR](#))
- UNRWA defines a Palestinian refugee as any descendant — through the male line — of someone who lived in Mandatory Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948, regardless of current nationality, residence, or personal circumstances. That means someone born in Europe or America, holding foreign citizenship and never having lived in Israel or the territories, can still inherit refugee status generations later. ([UNRWA](#))
- More than 2 million registered Palestinian “refugees” in Jordan already possess full Jordanian citizenship, including passports and voting rights. Hundreds of thousands hold citizenships in the United States, European, and South America. ([UNRWA](#)), ([Wikipedia](#))
- The 20th century saw countless massive population displacements — from postwar Europe to India-Pakistan, Korea, Greece, Turkey, and Vietnam — yet none produced endless hereditary refugee populations. Around 800,000 Jews were expelled from Arab countries during the same era, and no UN agency today counts millions of their descendants as refugees. ([Middle East Forum](#)), ([AJC](#))
- Of the roughly 525,000 Muslims living in British Mandate Palestine in 1918, historians estimate that about half were recent immigrants from surrounding Arab countries. The Arab population then grew rapidly alongside the Jewish migration boom, as Arabs from neighboring countries flocked to the area for the jobs, commerce, and economic opportunities created by Jewish development.

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- An estimated two-thirds of the “Palestinian refugees” in 1948, therefore, were not native inhabitants with ancient ties to the land, but recent immigrants from surrounding Arab countries. They were not, by any means, indigenous inhabitants who were driven out of their homeland — and yet they and their descendants are forever considered “refugees.”
- The Palestinian refugee issue persists because it serves the political aim of bringing millions of Arab descendants into Israel and effectively ending it as a Jewish-majority state through demographic change. ([JNS](#))

QUOTES

“How can you be refugees for 70 years? By definition, you’re not a refugee after two generations. You’re not fleeing anything.” — Charlie Kirk

“My grandfather got an order to evacuate and get out of his village. Not by the Jews. By the Arab leaders from Syria and Lebanon. My grandfather rejected that demand...And when the IDF came, no one took his land. He said, ‘I stayed in my village,’ which is Jish. It’s a village in the north of Israel. So he stayed there, and that’s exactly how I became who I am today, which is an Arab Israeli. And you know what? I’m very happy about that.” — Yoseph Haddad

TAKEAWAY

The word “refugee” has a meaning, and it has limits. When 740,000 Arabs left their homes in 1948, many at the urging of Arab leaders who promised a victorious return, they were resettled in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel. That should have ended the story.

Instead, through a unique UN agency called UNRWA — created exclusively for Palestinians with 110 times the budget of the agency serving every other refugee on earth — their status was made hereditary, permanent, and immune to the legal standards that govern every other displaced population in the world.

Jewish refugees from Arab countries, post-WWII Europeans, displaced South Asians — all rebuilt, all moved on, none of their descendants counted as refugees today. The 5.9 million figure is a political weapon that aims to demographically end Israel as a Jewish state.