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# The Palestinian Catastrophe

**Palestinians mourn Israel's birth with Nakba Day, but the real catastrophe then, as now, is their failure to share the land—and seize the chance to form a state.**

*Ultra-left U.S. Representatives have proposed legislation to make Palestinian Nakba (“Catastrophe”) Day a national observance, yet the event memorializes the refusal of Palestinians to accept a Jewish state and share the Holy Land as two states for two peoples. Unfortunately, that refusal continues.*

## What are the facts?

The annual Nakba Day purports to lament Israel's statehood in 1948. But actually, Nakba Day reinforces a mythical history of victimhood in which “Palestinian Arab land” was stolen by colonizing Jews. In fact, the catastrophe was of the Palestinians' own making, specifically their refusal to accept a Jewish state or any of many Israeli offers of land—and a nation—for peace.

Not only does Nakba Day promote hateful vengeance against Israel and Jews, but it also condemns the Palestinians to a victim identity. This leaves them with little to show for the last 74 years—since Israel's birth—except bitterness and even less opportunity to create a state today.

Nakba Day's fundamental premise is fiction. It blames Israel for Palestinians' losing their chance to acquire land and nationhood, which was in fact caused by Arab states' rejection of the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan, dividing the territory into two states—one Arab, one Jewish. Unlike the Palestinians, Israel's founders grudgingly, but firmly, embraced the UN offer.

Thus, Palestinians' casting of blame for their stateless dispersion should not rest on Israel, but on their allies—the defiant Arab armies—and on Palestinians' own rejectionism.

Despite the misleading Palestinian narrative, Israel's War of Independence was not to seize Arab land. After all, no Arab state ever existed in Palestine, and Israel had purchased and negotiated possession of most of the land in its future country. Rather, its War of Independence was defensive—against armies of five Arab invading nations and the fifth column of local Palestinian Arab resistance.

In fact, the Palestinian state could have been established on the original date of the “Nakba.” But Jordan, Egypt, Syria and other Arab states invaded Israel. Instead of a bloody war, if the Arab League and Palestinian Arabs had just said “Yes” to the UN plan, Palestinians would soon be celebrating the 75th anniversary of their State of Palestine.

But their answer was “No!” Palestinian Arabs launched a bloody guerrilla campaign against Jewish communities. Palestinian Arabs were reassured by the Arab invaders that Israel's death would follow soon, and many fled. Hostile Palestinians were also displaced by the Israeli army.

When Arab armies lost the war to destroy Israel, they drove out or killed all Jews residing in areas they captured—now known as “the West Bank” and “Gaza Strip.” Later, Arab states

expelled some 800,000 of *their* own Jewish citizens.

Once the UN's post-war armistice lines were drawn, the true Palestinian Nakba—the catastrophic betrayal—began. Kings Abdullah of Trans-Jordan and Farouk of Egypt and their armies swallowed up what *could* have been the world's first-ever “Palestinian State.” What Palestinians lost in 1948/49 was not *Israel's* doing: It was stolen by Jordanian and Egyptian monarchs.

The catastrophe soon became long-term, because the Arab League pushed hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arab exiles into squalid refugee camps, adding zealotry for Israel's destruction and bitter suffering to the Nakba-myth. No other World War II-era refugees suffered such despair.

The UN established UNRWA to serve Palestinian Arab camps *temporarily* in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Gaza, yet it still exists. Other than Jordan, *no* Arab state has offered citizenship and resettlement to the Palestinian refugees. Equally ironic, no national movement of Palestinians ever arose against their Arab oppressors—only against the Jews.

Arabs remaining in Israel, however, were given Israeli citizenship, and today enjoy democratic liberties, professional access and prosperity unmatched in the Middle East.

Yasser Arafat, the master terrorist who headed the PLO and the Palestinian Authority until his 2004 death, declared the first “official” Nakba Day in 1998. Arafat wasn't honoring the *real* 1948: He created a hate-fest to support his futile vision of destroying Israel.

Instead of affirming the truth of Israel's founding and the betrayal of the Palestinian Arabs by their brethren, world governments, the UN and the media seem cruelly committed to reinforcing the self-destructive myths of the Palestinians and their weebegone leadership.

*Tragically Nakba Day tells Israelis that no peace with Palestinians is possible via a land-for-peace treaty. As long as hate-filled Nakba Day is central to Palestinians, Israel knows that its 1967 capture of the West Bank and its borders are not the key issues. Rather, the problem is Israel's existence.*

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## FLAME

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