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Stop the lie: Israel never ethnically cleansed 700,000 Palestinians from the new Jewish state

Dear Friend of Israel, Dear Friend of FLAME:

While the Arab-Palestinians are determined to memorialize and perpetuate their displacement as a national emblem of victimhood, tens of millions of people who were displaced in other modern wars have bravely moved on to create new lives in new lands.

Now 75 years on, the Palestinians repeatedly make the false claim that Israel expelled 700,000 of them *en masse*—and stole their homeland. The truth is that most Palestinians who left their homes in Israel during the country’s War of Independence in 1948-49 did so *voluntarily* .

Furthermore, Palestinian Arab communities who negotiated peace with Israel or remained neutral prior to or during the conflict were untouched by Israeli forces and retained possession of their homes.

Likewise, the Palestinians' assertion that Israel ethnically cleansed them from their land is equally false, since today the Jewish state hosts more than two million Arab-Israeli citizens.

Meanwhile, Palestinian leaders and their allies among the Arab states and the United Nations perpetuate the misery of the Palestinian people. Arab-Palestinians are prevented from integrating into the societies of other countries, clinging to the pipe dream that one day they'll return to their (mostly deceased) ancestors' former homes in present-day Israel.

In contrast to the hapless Palestinians, tens of millions of displaced refugees from other armed conflicts have moved on to build new lives in new countries.

Central to the Palestinian narrative is their myth of victimhood—that Israel forcibly expelled them from their lands in 1948.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, for example, recently gave a

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speech at the UN as part of the organization's first-ever commemoration of the "Nakba"—the Arabic word for catastrophe, which is how the Palestinians define the creation of Israel.

In his speech, Abbas called for the suspension of Israel from the UN until it implements resolutions calling for the establishment of a Palestinian state and allows the return of Palestinian refugees to the former homes of their ancestors.

Abbas neglected to mention the fact that Arabs flatly rejected the UN's original resolution, passed in 1947, that called for the establishment of separate Jewish and Arab states in the British Mandate of Palestine. Instead, five Arab armies started a war against the nascent Jewish state.

Abbas also repeated the lie that Israel illegally occupies Palestinian land, even though the Palestinians never had public ownership or sovereignty over any of it.

Even more important, Palestinians steadfastly ignore the fact that most of their forebears abandoned their private lands inside the newborn Jewish state of their own free will.

In many instances, Arab leaders ordered residents to leave, under the assumption that they could return once the Arab armies annihilated the Jewish population. For example, Arab leaders told Arab residents in Haifa to leave even though the Jewish mayor of Haifa begged them to stay.

Moreover, according to a research report by the Institute for Palestine Studies, an Arab-sponsored research institute, the majority of the Palestinian Arab population was not forcibly expelled and 68% of the Palestinians left without even seeing an Israel soldier.

Israeli-British historian Efraim Karsh concurs, saying Palestinians who were expelled represent just a "small fraction" of the total exodus. In fact, there was never a blanket policy by the Israeli government to ethnically cleanse the new Jewish state of its Arab population.

Any forcible expulsions of Arabs from the new state perpetrated by Israeli forces were carried out *only* if Arab towns or villages engaged in hostilities against them.

When Israeli forces were attempting to secure the route between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, for example, they were forced to clear out several hostile towns and villages that prevented access to Jerusalem, whose Jewish population was besieged by Arab forces and threatened with starvation.

Today's Palestinian leaders virtually never acknowledge that Arab communities in 1947-48 who negotiated peace with Israel in advance of the war—and those who remained neutral—were not touched.

Abu Ghosh, a town just west of Jerusalem, for instance, reached an agreement with Israeli authorities not to get involved in the fighting. Nazareth, the boyhood home of Jesus, also negotiated its neutrality, leaving the city relatively unscathed.

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Today, these non-combatant cities are part of Israel's thriving Arab community of more than two million—20% of Israel's population. These facts completely disprove the accusation that Israel ethnically cleansed its land of Arabs.

Tragically, Palestinian leaders, leaders of other Arab countries and the UN continue to perpetuate the misery of the Palestinian people by discouraging them from integrating into the societies of other countries and building new lives. This is exemplified by the fact that every Arab country except Jordan has refused to give its Palestinian refugees citizenship.

Today, more than 1.5 million Palestinians still live in squalid refugee camps, where they are fed the false promise that one day, they will be able to return to their “homes.” Millions more Palestinians the world over still consider themselves refugees, though their displaced parents and grandparents have long passed away.

This promise of return is unrealistic, because Israel will never allow millions of descendants of deceased Palestinian refugees into its territory, since doing so would mean the end of the Jewish state. The Palestinian leadership know this, yet one of their primary conditions of peace with Israel is this so-called—and non-existent—“right of return.”

Meanwhile, tens of millions of people displaced in other wars have gone on to build new lives in new countries. This includes 800,000 Jews who fled or were expelled from Arab countries after Israel's birth—most resettled in Israel.

In addition, history gives us countless other examples of war-time refugees building new lives in new countries. Germans from Sudetenland, Hindus from Pakistan, Greeks from Turkey—all experienced displacement, but did not obsess or resort to terrorism over ejection from their former homes. Instead, they chose to rebuild and thrive elsewhere.

In fact, the most successful peoples in the world—even the stateless—are those who seek freedom and prosperity and work diligently to achieve it.

Please make the point when speaking with family, friends, colleagues—or in letters to the editor—that it's time the Palestinians shift from their narrative of victimhood and look to a future in which they can thrive by building lives in new countries or by finally saying yes to peaceful coexistence with Israel and building a country of their own.

I hope you'll also take a minute, while you have this material front and center, to forward this message to friends, visit FLAME's lively [Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below. It describes FLAME's new *hasbarah* campaign —“[Demand Justice for Jewish Students](#)”—which exposes rising attacks on Jewish college students' identity and how these acts of antisemitism can be defeated.

Best regards,
Jason Shvili, Contributing Editor
Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)

P.S. You've surely seen headlines describing increasing attacks on Jewish students—in the classroom and in the public square—by radical anti-Zionist students, as well as faculty members. So far, university administrators have failed to prevent this kind of antisemitism on campus. At the heart of this discrimination, Israel's enemies outrageously claim that Zionism is not part of being Jewish. No wonder more and more Jewish students are hiding their Jewish identities on campus. I think you'll agree that we supporters of Israel need to speak out. FLAME's new hasbarah—explanatory message—“[Demand Justice for Jewish Students](#)”—tells how recent law suits based on Title VI anti-discrimination laws are putting pressure on college administrators to protect Jewish students from such attacks. I hope you'll review this convincing, fact-based editorial, which FLAME recently published in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *New York Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Star Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Newsmax*. This piece will also be sent to all members of Congress, Vice President Harris and President Biden. If you agree that this kind of public relations effort on Israel's behalf is critical, I urge you to [support us](#).

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Facts and Logic
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