

Figures

Forced Eviction

During the first Arab-Israeli war (1948), ca. 770,000 Palestinians fled to Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank, Gaza or Egypt. Some 80,000 others became internally displaced within what became Israel. Many Palestinians living in Israel have been forcibly displaced since then, and notably, today, the inhabitants of the “unrecognized villages” are the target of Israel’s aggressive dispossession and demographic engineering policies.

Israel expelled 300,000 Palestinians from their homes during the 1967 war, making some refugees *twice*. From 1967 to 1977, Israel expelled at least 1,180 Palestinians from the occupied West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip. Since then, house destructions leading to forced eviction have dramatically intensified during the two *Intifadas*, (1987–93, and 2000–today). The Segregation Wall across the West Bank is causing new displacement.

Implantation of Settlers

Inside the “Green Line” (Israel’s 1948 Armistice borders), Israel established 370 new Jewish-only settler colonies in 1948–53, 350 of which are on confiscated Palestinian property.

For its 250,000 settlers in the West Bank, and 200,000 in East Jerusalem, Israel maintains 121 settler colonies in the West Bank, plus 16 in occupied Jerusalem and 8 major industrial zones. Also, Israel permits numerous settler “outposts”) in the West Bank.

Forced Eviction

More than half of today’s Palestinian population are refugees (5.5 million) and internally displaced persons (200,000). During the first Arab-Israeli war, many fled to escape massacres, some naively expected the new Arab States to ensure their return. Most all of them were prevented from returning, whereas the Israelis destroyed and/or occupied their homes and villages.

Since its creation, Israel’s the most common methods to eliminate the indigenous people’s presence have been by confiscating lands and destroying homes. Mainly three official reasons are given: (1) “illegality” of the dwelling, (2) security and (3) development, while they mostly aim at taking as much land as possible from the Palestinians. Illegality has been especially used inside the “Green Line” to destroy historic villages that were never acknowledged on any Israeli map. These villages escaped destruction since 1948, and since 1985 are the target of a policy to complete the dispossession of remaining Palestinians, who also are citizens of Israel. 140,000 such citizens live in the Naqab/Negev (south of Israel). In April 2003, the Israeli Cabinet approved Ariel Sharon’s 5-year, \$250-million plan to evict 70,000 of them from their “unrecognized villages” to zero-growth “concentrations” (*rekuzim*).

Applying the same laws and measures, Israel added military orders to its dispossession system in the occupied Palestinian territories (OPTs). Israeli police and military regularly evict and dispossess Palestinians living near settler colonies and “security zones.”

The vocabulary developed for the “war against terrorism” has long been the official Israeli

justification to increase repression and maintain a cycle of violence and deprivation. The current Wall exemplifies this pattern.

Settler colonies, in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, with their sprawling infrastructure of roads and installations house Jewish settlers and military forces denying indigenous Palestinians’ land and water resources, deepening their impoverishment.

Implantation of Settlers

The implantation of Jewish immigrants inside what has become Israel and the OPTs is the object of Zionist ideology and the *raison d’être* of the State of Israel. Through its Law of Return, Israel has declared all Jews all over the world to be “Jewish nationals” eligible for automatic citizenship in Israel. Israel is the only country where nationality status (and rights derived from it) is based on religion. There is no “Israeli nationality” in law, only a “Jewish” one.

The parastatal World Zionist Organization/Jewish Agency and Jewish National Fund are registered in many countries as tax-exempt “charities,” while representing a foreign State (Israel). They promote and facilitate population transfer to Israel, recruiting new Jewish settlers to complete the colonization and dispossession of Palestinians. Israel and its parastatals provide settlers all kinds of financial and social incentives.

The implantation of settlers creates Israel’s “facts-on-the-ground” policy to control Palestinian territory and establish demographic realities through internationally prohibited activities, whose consequences further impede resolution.

Population Transfer in International Law

The UN Committee on Economic, social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), in its General Comment No 7, has defined “forced eviction” as “the permanent or temporary removal against their will of individuals, families and/or communities from their homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms CESCR and the UN Commission on Human Rights have determined forced eviction as a grave violation of human rights, particularly the human right to adequate housing.

The UN Special Rapporteurs have defined population transfer as resulting from economic or political processes that are massive or incremental, direct (military operations, deportations, evictions or implantations) or indirect (administrative measures, impoverishment or economic incitements). They are discriminatory, systematic and coercive, and imply a political will.

Population transfer has been declared illegal in most international treaties and laws since the *Allied Declaration on German War Crimes* in 1942. The latest and its strongest condemnation is found in the 1998 *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court* that defined deportation, forcible transfer of population and implantation of settlers as war crimes.

