

Why Palestinians Fled

Benny Morris, the Israeli historian, in *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*, looks at the whole issue from papers released by Israel in 1998. He examined 470 villages and says that the vast majority had left due to Israeli actions or fear of Israeli actions. This contradicts the version that has been promoted by Israel all along, i.e. that the Palestinian villagers left on instructions from the Arab forces in an attempt to wipe out the Jewish population. Morris underlines that Jewish leaders, before Israel was created, wanted as few as possible Palestinians in the areas they were conquering. They wanted for demographic reasons as many Palestinians to flee as possible and commanders on the ground used the opportunity of the conflict to achieve just that. Speaking in 2001 Morris said "A Jewish state would not have come into being without the uprooting of 700,000 Palestinians. Therefore it was necessary to uproot them. There was no choice but to expel that population. It was necessary to cleanse the hinterland and cleanse the border areas and cleanse the main roads. It was necessary to cleanse the villages from which our convoys and our settlements were fired on". Interview 2004 with Benny Morris

Ilan Pappé, also an Israeli historian, in *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* 2006, claims that it was centrally planned ethnic cleansing. He argues passionately that 'transfer' was from the start a strategy and lies at the root of today's ongoing conflict. Pappé acknowledges that for Israeli society, himself included, that the journey to the truth about 1948 is painful but is the only way forward to a better future for Palestinians and Israelis alike. He says that some Israeli forces committed a number of 'strategic' massacres there was no genocide intent. Labournet Interview 2002 with Ilan Pappé

Thousands of Palestinians throng the beach in an attempt to flee heavy shelling. Many were to drown in the mass exodus. Copied from Ilan Pappé's book *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*.

Kosovan refugees, May 18th 1999

Speaking at a refugee camp in Albania, Tony Blair said his message was simple: those who had been forced out of Kosovo must be allowed to return, to live in peace and security.

He was greeted with chants of "Nato, Nato" and outstretched hands as he walked through the refugee camp at Elbasan. "It cannot be right to have racial genocide and ethnic cleansing being carried out in a part of Europe and for us to stand aside and do nothing," he said.

The Kosovan refugees were all returned.

700,000+ Palestinians were driven from their homes by Israeli forces. They fled to neighbouring countries. International organisations at the time assured them that they would be returned to their homes within weeks. Instead Israel confiscated their homes, public buildings and lands and either destroyed them or gave them to incoming Jewish immigrants. Either way they renamed all the land with Hebrew names. If you go there today there is no evidence of these Palestinian communities. They have literally been wiped off the face of the earth. Israel has not allowed any of the refugees back despite a UN resolution in 1949 and repeated nearly every year since then and to this day does not acknowledge any of this history.

This situation is all contrary to the Geneva Convention and was not tolerated for the Kosovans (see above)

Palestinian Refugees Today

Jordan
1,740,000

Lebanon
394,532

Syria
413,000

Gaza
922,000

West Bank
665,000

UNRWA is the United Nations Relief & Works Agency

Some of the refugees are in Refugee Camps (IN on map) and others not (OUT).

"Imagine that not so long ago, in any given country you are familiar with, half of the entire country had been forcibly expelled within a year, half of its villages and towns wiped out, leaving behind only rubble and stone. Imagine now the possibility that somehow this act will never make it into the history books and that all diplomatic efforts to solve the conflict will totally sideline, if not ignore, this catastrophic event." Ilan Pappé *The Ethnic Cleansing of*

Palestine