

Behind the Violence in Palestine

Why is National Nurses United Speaking Out?

- *Apartheid and occupation are a public health crisis.* The occupation and system of apartheid¹ imposed by the state of Israel on indigenous Palestinian people are illegal under international law, violate human rights, and cause great harm to people's access to health care and well-being. As advocates of global justice and global health NNU/CNA/NNOC is speaking out against the occupation and calling for change.
- *The United States government is complicit in abuses abroad when it supports governments that violate people's human rights.* The United States has funded and endorsed the Israeli government's crimes against Palestinian people. Union nurses can use our collective power to demand an end to our nation's support of human rights abuses.
- *Building a just world requires solidarity and cooperation among working people internationally.* Palestinian workers—including health care workers—have issued many calls to the rest of the world to speak out against the occupation of Palestinian territories and the political, social, and economic repression of the Palestinian people. As union nurses who understand the transformational power of standing united with workers across the world, especially those facing systemic racism and oppression, we live into our values when we heed the call of Palestinian people in their fight for self-determination, justice, and peace.
- *Nurses have resolved to build global solidarity for justice, peace, and health for all people.* As a union, we have taken strong stances on global solidarity, the right to organize, and racial justice. We fight to ensure that health care is a human right in the United States and globally, and that health care services are provided with respect for human dignity, unrestricted by considerations of nationality, race, religion, or gender. Repressive policies and blockades obstruct medical solidarity, scientific developments, and health care workers' ability to provide humanitarian aid across international borders.

What do I need to know about Palestine?

- In 1948 the newly created state of Israel, which was founded initially by European settlers, confiscated most Palestinian lands, destroyed over 500 villages, and forcibly displaced over 700,000 indigenous Palestinians. To this day, Palestinians are denied the human right of return to their homelands.
- In 1967 the Israeli government invaded and captured most remaining Palestinian lands. The Israeli military occupation of these lands continues today in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, and Gaza. Permanent military occupation and siege are war crimes under international law.

¹ The 1973 International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid defines apartheid as "inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group or persons and systematically oppressing them."



- Under Israeli military rule today, [Palestinians are denied equal civil, political, and economic rights](#) and are subjected to systematic discrimination and denial of basic freedom and dignity. In short, they live under a system of [apartheid](#).
 - For example, Palestinians are legally prohibited from moving freely across their native homelands. Ambulances are frequently delayed at checkpoints inside the West Bank, which has led to patients dying of preventable conditions. *Listen to a podcast about healthcare in Palestine in the midst of COVID-19 [here](#).*
 - The Israeli military routinely uses search and seizure, excessive force, and punitive legal measures against Palestinians, including about 700 Palestinian children who are detained and prosecuted each year.
 - The Israeli military routinely evicts Palestinians from their homes to establish Israeli settlements—in direct violation of international law.
 - Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and Investigators from the United Nations have described the oppression of Palestinians by the Israeli government as crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution. Again, these are direct violations of international law.

- The United States provides Israel with around [\\$3.8 billion](#) in foreign aid each year, primarily for the Israeli military. This aid is supplied with no strings attached and with virtually no oversight or accountability to US taxpayers.

ISRAEL CONTROLS

Time	Activity	Control
7:30 AM	Take a shower	WATER Palestinians in the West Bank must buy water from Israel's national water company, Mekorot, which appropriates 80% of the West Bank water supply.
8:30 AM	Drive to work, Bethlehem to Ramallah	ACCESS Israel maintains over 98 fixed checkpoints and hundreds of random "flying" checkpoints in the West Bank, choking Palestinian freedom of movement.
1:30 PM	Buy a sandwich	CURRENCY Today, there is no Palestinian currency; everybody uses the Israeli shekel. Israel is capable of blocking any future attempts to create a Palestinian currency.
5:00 PM	Fill your car with gas	GASOLINE Israel has prevented Palestinians from accessing oil and gas reserves on their own territory, making them dependent on Israel for energy needs.
5:30 PM	Get a driving ticket	LEGAL SYSTEM Palestinians are subject to Israeli law even in the West Bank. In Area C, Israel can issue driving tickets to Palestinians, who are subject to Israeli military courts in the event of non payment.
6:00 PM	Visit a relative who gave birth	POPULATION REGISTRY Israel manages a single population registry. All children must be registered with the Israeli registry in order to receive an ID card and/or passport.
8:00 PM	Buy a book on Amazon	IMPORT & EXPORT All Palestinian imports go through the Israeli customs system. Israeli authorities can block any import from reaching its recipient.
9:00 PM	Plan a visit to Jordan	MOVEMENT Any travel outside of Palestine/ Israel requires Israeli permission. There is no way of entering or leaving without crossing an Israeli-controlled border.

VISUALIZING PALESTINE

SOURCES B'tselem, hrw, bit.ly/vp-onestate WWW.VISUALIZINGPALESTINE.ORG

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NOV 2017



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y58njT2oXFE>

OUR PATIENTS. OUR UNION. OUR VOICE.



How can I talk about Palestine?

Our coworkers, friends, and family members may not know the true scale of human rights violations that have occurred against the Palestinian people or may have views that are unfortunately grounded in ignorance or racist stereotypes. It can be difficult to have conversations that challenge these ways of thinking, but it's worth it to address misinformation. We need all of us to win our fight for peace and social justice, and through conversations we can invite others into the movement.

Steps to having a conversation about Palestine ([adapted from Jewish Voice for Peace](#))

1. **Listen.** Ask your coworkers open-ended questions to get a better idea of who they are, what they believe, and what they care about. Listening can help you empathize with them, understand where they are coming from, and start to identify where you have shared values.

Some questions you can start off with:

- What do you think about the NNU Statement for Peace and Solidarity in Palestine?
 - What have you heard about the healthcare issues in Palestine?
 - What do you think about the United States' involvement in the human rights violations against Palestinian people?
2. **Affirm shared values.** Point out values that you have in common, such as equality, human rights, and justice. Naming what you have in common can help build trust and open minds to hearing different views.
 3. **Frame the issues in Palestine using shared values.** Share your knowledge of the injustices against Palestinians within the context of the values that you share. For example, if you've identified that you both care about overcoming racism, point out that the fight against racism also extends to Israeli society. Some of the information in the NNU Statement for Peace and Solidarity in Palestine might be helpful here.
 4. **Don't make the conversation a competition or a history lesson.** Rather than arguing or spouting off facts, strive to have a conversation in which both parties are sharing equally. If you offer information, follow up by asking your coworker or friend what they think. If your coworker argues with you, try responding with a question that may help you understand their stance better. Try to call coworkers into thinking about issues in new ways.
 5. **It is ok to speak strongly against racism, violence, and apartheid.** Bigoted, hateful, racialized attitudes, behaviors, or discrimination against Jewish people *is* anti-Semitism. Criticizing the war crimes, occupation, and apartheid political system of Israel *is not anti-Semitic*. Israel does not speak for or represent all Jewish people, and nearly 25% of Israel's citizens are not Jewish—some of whom live as second-class citizens under Israeli law because they are Palestinian.
 6. **Model vulnerability.** It's ok to not have all the answers to questions your coworkers may ask you. Just remember that you do know that things urgently need to change, and you can share confidently why.

NNU joins with unions, movements and people of conscience in Palestine, in Israel, in the US, and across the world who have taken bold action for peace, human rights, and justice.