

FROM GAZA TO GREECE:

In Solidarity with Palestinian People



From Gaza to Greece

"What am I to do without exile, without a long night staring at the water?" - Mahmoud Darwish

For Gazans, the Eastern shore of the Mediterranean is a horizon. On all other frontiers, they have been subject to blockade since 2006, enclosed in what has been called "the world's largest open-air prison". The sea at least carries the possibility of hope. When, however, they try to cross this sea through the Aegean into Europe, it becomes a prison wall: from 2022-2023, more than 10,000 Palestinians were pushed back from the Greek islands while attempting to cross the Aegean Sea, the second largest nationality group (after Afghans) to be subject to this practice. Not only does Europe, through its blind-eye to the current Israeli onslaught, fail to protect the right of Palestinians to live in their own land, it even denies them the right to live in exile.

On the position of Greece

Greece, for its part, has reinforced the blockade of the Palestinians by signing security agreements with Israel and Cyprus. It is worth noting that Greece was the last country in the EU to recognise Israel in 1989 and the only country in Europe not to recognise Israel in the United Nations' resolution in 1947. Yet today, it is promoting the EU-Israel alliance to serve its geopolitical interests. There are both anti-semitic and anti-islamic stereotypes in Greece. Due to the current developments, the latter is more visible today, but intrinsic anti-semitism still strongly resides in the nation-state's identity. Immediately after the war was declared on 7th of October, Greece sent the frigate Psara to the Israel-Lebanon border and deliberately chose to abstain from the UN Resolution on the humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza. Moreover, the government has created a climate of terror within the country by adopting the "Palestinian = Terrorist" rhetoric. This led to the arrest of a Palestinian who raised the Palestinian flag in Syntagma Square, to which the Minister of Citizen Protection personally intervened to praise the quick reflexes of the Greek State in suppressing solidarity.

Greece created a greater climate of fear among the already oppressed and incarcerated Palestinian migrants in the camps, where overnight, state and security services decided to ban or restrict the demonstrations within camps allegedly fearing "terrorist attacks". On 12 October, a group of 123 Syrians and Palestinians were intercepted in Leros island attempting to board a ferry for Piraeus. There was speculation that the group was attempting to join Palestine solidarity demonstrations in Athens scheduled over the following days. Security officials framed this as an attempted response to "the call made a few days ago by the Palestinian organization Hamas for a holy war". The National Information Service (EYII) and Anti-Terrorism unit warned of the risk of "uprisings" in the Aegean island camps, and the Ministry of Migration and Asylum decided to "temporarily suspend the possibility of exit of the residents". Meanwhile the Governmental Council for External Affairs and Defence (KYΣEA) decided to strengthen security measures in

response to the risk of "riots" in the island's camps, leading to the deployment of reinforcements of riot police.

On 18th of October, around 700 people in the closed camp of Samos were surrounded by police forces after attempting to demonstrate in solidarity with the people of Palestine, with 5 people arrested on charges of incitement, resistance and breach of the peace. $H K\alpha\theta\eta\mu\epsilon\rho\nu\eta$ newspaper described it as a "demonstration of support for Hamas". Days later, on 20th of October 2023, the exit of Arabic-speaking people from Schisto and Malakasa camps was prohibited as an "emergency measure", during a period in which Islamophobic attacks against Arabic-speakers increased. The discourse of state actors and mainstream media cast protesting Palestinian migrants and their supporters from the Arabic-speaking world yet again as a threat to public order, a terror-sympathising enemy within.

On the effects of the war on migration

Historically, since the 1948 Nakba, an overwhelming majority of Palestinians were driven from their homes to become refugees in their own land. Statiscally, around 70% of the Gazan population are either refugees themselves or descendants of refugees. Roughly half of the population of Gaza are children. Under the conditions of the blockade, it has been completely forbidden for Palestinians to leave Gaza, with the exception of those experiencing specific medical problems that need medical attention that cannot be obtained in Gaza. The UN World Food Programme specified that half of the population of Gaza lives in a state of constant food insecurity. Furthermore, UN reports have shown that since 7th of October, about 2 million people have been displaced in Gaza, while the population of Gaza was 2.1 million people.

As of today, Palestinian migrants who manage to arrive in Greece end up in camps which essentially share conditions that resemble Gaza before the 7th of October. Very recently, civil society actors in Greece have drawn attention to the conditions in camps: in Lesvos CCAC, access to food, medical care and asylum procedures has been routinely denied to the camp residents. As of 17th of May 2023, Greek authorities announced that food and water would not be provided to residents who are no longer part of the asylum procedure, a recurring theme over the years. Access to medical care has been severely limited due to the fact that only two doctors are available within EODY, and a transfer to the Vostaneio Public Hospital has become almost impossible. Lack of capacity and "qualified staff" has also been used as an excuse to block the access of migrants to the asylum procedure.

It is fair to say that the conflict that has continued over decades has made several generations of Palestinians refugees over and over again, becoming synonymous with their identity. Whether they stay or whether they leave...

Therefore, we demand an immediate and permanent ceasefire right now! End the blockade in Gaza completely and indefinitely! Freedom and equality for the Palestinian people!



CONFLIC MILESTONES IN THE HISTORY OF S R D E

1897

Emergence of Zionism

persecution, and pogroms against Jewish people in Russia and in Europe in the late 9th century, Zionism was born in parallel with the rise of nationalist movements After years of repeated purges, around the world.

Balfour Declaration

1917

Palestine. The declaration increased the "national home for Jewish people" in considered the principle cause of the popularity of Zionism globally, and is The British Government announces its support for the establishment of a conflict.

Treaty of Versailles and **Mandate for Palestine**

----- 1919 - 1923

Mandate for Palestine, issued by League of occupational zones as a result of WWI. The France and Britain divides Middle-East to Nations, created the British Mandate for Palestine, formally allowing Britain to control Palestine and Jordan

Rise of the Nazi Party

1933

and Hitler was chosen as the Chancellor in 1933. The same year, first the concentration The Nazi Party wins the elections in 1932 camps were built. Jewish emigration to Palestine increased massively.

UN Resolution 181 Issues a Partition Plan

1947

and the withdrawal of Britain. The plan was newly-formed UN proposed the creation of later put into practice despite its rejection an Arab and a Jewish state in Palestine, "resolve the conflict in Palestine", the Following the demands of Britain to

6 millions Jews were exterminated during WWII and Shoah (Holocaust)

1939 - 1945

had to emigrate. Among the Jewish people the feeling of not belonging to any country collaborators. Millions were displaced and dramatically deepened. In Hebrew, the word "Shoah" (Catastrophe) was used this period mainly by Nazis and instead of Holocaust.

Peel Commission

1937

the Peel Commission proposed a two-state were organized by Arab Palestinians, which later led to the Arab Revolt in Palestine, After 6-month-long general strikes that solution for the first time to resolve the conflict.

against Tomasse usto order violence Lesvos

Declaration of Israel and Arab - Israeli War, 1947 - 1949 Nakba

and occupies 80% of Palestine except the result, 90% of Arabs were driven from their Nakba). Israel declares its independence homes in Jewish controlled territories due between Israel and Arab States. As a to massacres (what is known as the The partition plan spiraled into war West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Organization was formed **Palestinian Liberation**

1964

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by Palestinian Arabs

Officially formed in Cairo, the PLO pursued determination of the Palestinian people. It national liberation through the self-

wings which had Marxist and secular views ²alestinian Movement until the early-2000s and was constituted of several different was the dominant political actor of the as well.

"Six Day War" and UN Resolution 242

The UN passes Resolution 242 which states the Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula. the inadmissibility of acquiring territory by occupying the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, withdraw from the occupied territories. Israel expands its borders even more, war. It also underlined that Israel must oblige its duty as a UN Member to

Israel - Lebanon War

1982

1967

during the invasion. The Sabra and Shatila exile. 15000 to 20000 civilians were killed Israeli Ambassador, Shlomo Argov, Israel invades Lebanon to end the existence of Massacres during the invasion also saw Following the assassination attempt of PLO. In the end the PLO, along with its leader Yasser Arafat, were forced into 700 to 5500 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon murdered.



SRAEL CONFLICT **MILESTONES IN THE HISTORY OF**



The First Intifada

pressure on Israel's occupation and due to a divided political leadership, Palestinians protests called the "Intifada" (the Arabic In the absence of international political violent civil disobedience and resistance organized a long-term period of nonword for "uprising").

Oslo Accords 1993

'something" in the future. The PLO became contractor of Israel. Around the same time, srael as a state, and the Palestinians got Essentially, the PLO formally recognized nothing in return except the promise of the "Palestinian Authority" as a sub-An attempt at peaceful negotiations.

Hamas was born and separated itself from the PLO.

2008 - 2010

Operation Cast Lead / Mavi

Operation Pillar of Defense and Operation Protective

Edge

2012 - 2014

63000 homes and decimated infrastructure. **Marmara Flotilla Incident** killed 1200 people, destroyed more than Operation Cast Lead, initiated by Israel, Systematic operations kept being carried out to massacre Gazans in order to "crush operations ended with the murder of more

their will of existence". These two

than 2200 people along with the destruction of 18000 homes.

2022 An aid flotilla, Mavi Marmara, left Turkey with blockade, resulting in the ship being stopped 10000 tons of aid material to break the in international waters by Israel with 8 passenger being murdered by IDF.

The Great March of Return

2018 - 2019

Gaza on the 70th anniversary of the Nakba march together to break the blockade on attacked by Israel. 225 Palestinians were international community, carried out civil disobedience protests. The idea was to by executing the "right to return". The Gazans were stopped and brutally killed and more than 9000 injured. Gazans, with the support of the

2006

Subsequent Blockade Elections in Gaza /

against Gazans. Later on, elections were held and resulted in the victory of Hamas. elections fair. Israel denounced it. Hillary Gaza, a hard blockade was established Following the withdrawal of Israel from The international community found the Clinton stated that "US should've rigged the elections."

Netanyahu and Far-Right Elections in Israel **Coalition**

7th of October Offensive of

2023

l Hamas and Today

57th Government of Israel. The result was Elections in Israel were held to elect the the formation of the most hard-line farright government in the history of Israel.



The Second Intifada

Held in Camp David through the invitation

Camp David Summit

of the US, the Summit was to finalize the

Oslo Accords and establish a lasting

2000 - 2005

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2000

Summit and provocations that Ariel Sharon intifada was triggered. The resistance was Palestinian Authority, leading up to the violently crushed by Israel and by the Due to the failure of the Camp David made at the Al-Aqsa mosque, a 2nd deaths of thousands Palestinians

Palestinian Authority. No conclusion came

out of the Summit and it ended in failure.

agreement of peace between Israel and



- In the loving memory of Refaat Alareer

Rest in Power (6.12.2023)

This poem was posted in November 2023 on the social media account of Refaat Alareer. In December 2023, in the midst of the Israeli military's campaign of genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, news broke that Alareer was murdered by Israeli violence. Alareer was an important political voice in Gaza, organizing Palestinian youth to engage in writing to amplify their voices. He has written several books and contributed to various projects such as "Light in Gaza: Writing Born of Fire", an anthology published in 2022. He was an academic in the Islamic University of Gaza teaching literature and Shakespeare. He refused to abandon his family during the shelling and stated on a live interview: "(...) I am an academic. Probably the toughest thing I have at home is an EXPO marker. But if the Israelis invade, if they barge at us, charge at us, open door-to-door to massacre us, I am going to use that marker, throw it at the Israeli soldiers. Even if that is the last thing that I would be able to do."

What follows is a poem that he published on social media before he lost his life:

"If I must die You must live To tell my story To sell my things To buy a piece of cloth And some strings So that a child, somewhere in Gaza While looking heaven in the eye Awaiting his dad who left in a blaze And bid no one farewell Not even to his flesh Not even to himself Sees the kite, my kite you made, flying up above And thinks for a moment an angel is there Bringing back love If I must die Let it bring hope Let it be a tale"



We are the Open Assembly Against Border Violence Lesvos.

The assembly came together in May 2022 in response to the ongoing pushbacks happening from the island of Lesvos. We do not only focus on pushbacks, but on border violence more generally, for example we stand against the use of detention centres, surveillance, the criminalisation of solidarity and migration itself. We are a non-hierarchical self-organised assembly, and we take all decisions collectively.

We meet to exchange information about and prepare actions against pushbacks. We understand ourselves as having a clear political perspective on this phenomenon, but as an open assembly we do not have any single ideological identity.

We prepare actions, public interventions and info-sessions, to bring the topic to the attention of (local) society.

The assembly gathers every Wednesday between 17:00 to 19:00 in Mpineio. Otherwise you can contact us on <u>borderviolencelesvos@espiv.net</u> or through our web page on https://borderviolencelesvos.noblogs.org.