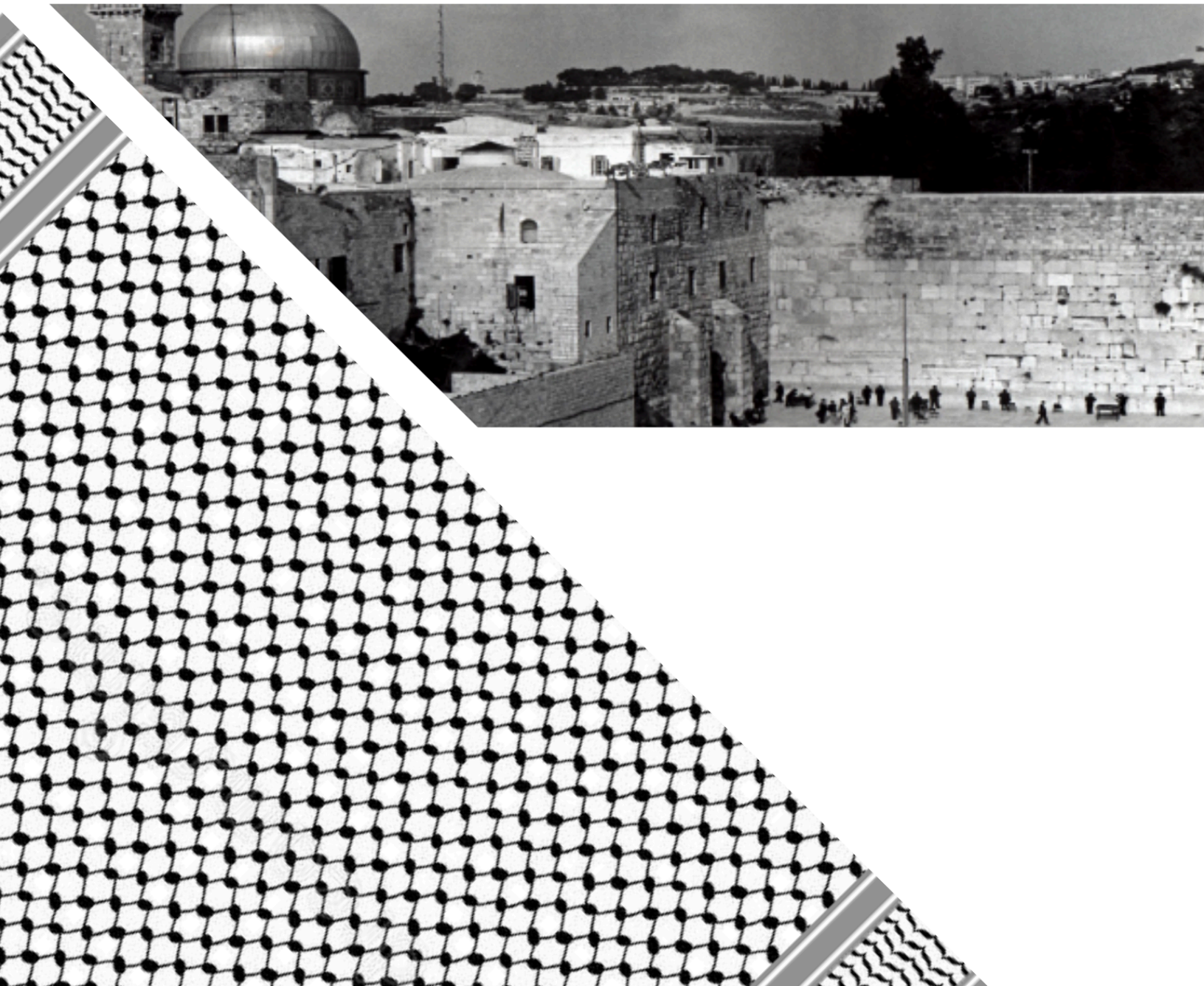




CANADIAN MUSLIM
PUBLIC AFFAIRS
COUNCIL

A GUIDE ON PALESTINIAN ADVOCACY

FOR STUDENTS





A Guide on Palestinian Advocacy For Students & Student Organizations

O V E R V I E W

Introduction	3
A Brief History Of Palestine	3
Geopolitical Context	4
Challenges Faced by Palestinians	4
The Importance of Speaking Up	5
Your Rights	5
What Not To Do	6
What to Do If your Rights are Violated	7
Resources	8



INTRODUCTION

This guide, crafted for students and student organizations, navigates the intricate landscape of Palestinian Advocacy. From uncovering the historical tapestry of Palestine to emphasizing the crucial role of speaking up against injustice, it provides a comprehensive understanding. The narrative then seamlessly transitions into an exploration of your rights, coupled with practical steps for effective advocacy. The guide serves as a roadmap, offering insights into the complexities of the Palestinian struggle, empowering you with knowledge, and equipping you with actionable steps to make a meaningful impact.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PALESTINE

Palestine stands as a cherished nation within Islamic history, revered for its immense significance to Muslims. This importance is rooted in multifaceted reasons that resonate deeply within Islamic teachings and scripture.

Foremost among these reasons is the explicit mention of Palestine in the Quran as the “Holy Land” and the “Blessed Land.” Allah designates its significance in Surah Al-Ma’idah (5:21), emphasizing the divine allocation of this land to the people: “O my people, enter the Holy Land which Allah has assigned to you and do not turn back (from fighting in Allah’s cause) for then you will be returned as losers.”

This sacred land served as the home to numerous revered Prophets, including Ibrahim, Ishaq, Dawud, Yaqub, Sulayman, Zakariya, Yahya, Isa, and other esteemed companions. The significance is further magnified by the presence of Masjid al-Aqsa, one of Islam’s Sacred Masjids and the third holiest site in Islam. It was the initial Qibla, the direction of prayer, for Muslims.



Masjid al-Aqsa’s sanctity is entrenched in Islamic belief and prophecy, with references in Sahih Muslim indicating its future significance during the times of Isa, the son of Maryam (AS), and the defeat of Dajjal, the anti-Christ. Additionally, Palestine holds profound significance as the site of the miraculous Night Journey of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), as explicitly mentioned in Surah al-Israa (17:1).

“O my people, enter the Holy Land which Allah has assigned to you and do not turn back (from fighting in Allah’s cause) for then you will be returned as losers.”

This historical and spiritual tapestry interwoven with the significance of Palestine within Islam accentuates its deeply cherished position among Muslims worldwide. The rich religious heritage, the pivotal role in prophetic narratives, and the promise of future events underscore its profound importance, fostering a deep connection and sense of responsibility among Muslims towards the land and its people.



GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT

The contemporary geopolitical landscape surrounding Palestine is a tapestry woven with historical narratives, territorial claims, and the enduring struggle for self-determination, all rooted in Palestine's profound historic right to its land. Spanning generations, Palestine's claim to its land encompasses not only legal entitlements but also deep emotional, religious and cultural connections to its territory. The inherent right of Palestinians to return to their ancestral lands, acknowledged under international law, stands as a testament to the longing and entitlement tied to their heritage.

Amidst these assertions, the quest for self-determination and statehood for Palestinians remains an unresolved and poignant struggle. This journey is further marred by limitations such as the freedom of movement (including the right to return) imposed by the Israel Occupation and Defence Forces within Palestine, which severely constrains economic development and the basic rights of its people.

Further complicating this landscape are Israeli settlements established within the occupied territories of Palestine. The ongoing construction of these settlements, coupled with land confiscations and the implementation of a separation barrier, raise substantial concerns regarding human rights violations and pose great obstacles to the creation of a viable and independent Palestinian state.

Additionally, Israel, as an occupying power, bears responsibilities mandated by international bodies such as the United Nations. The continued occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem stands as a stark reminder of the persistent struggles endured by Palestinians in asserting their right to self-determination and statehood.

CHALLENGES FACED BY PALESTINIANS

Palestinians endure a multitude of challenges stemming from the ongoing occupation, marked by various violations perpetrated by Israel as an occupying power. These violations encompass illegal settlements, the blockade of Gaza, frequent raids and attacks, and the disruptive imposition of motion and travel restrictions, administered through an intricate web of checkpoints and administrative hurdles.

The situation in Gaza epitomizes the dire consequences of these actions. The severe economic hardships, compounded by high unemployment rates and inadequate infrastructure, perpetuate a humanitarian crisis. The blockade severely limits access to resources essential for a dignified life, impeding Palestinians' access to sufficient water, education, healthcare, and other fundamental necessities.



In the West Bank, Palestinians encounter daily hurdles that impede their basic rights and freedoms. The proliferation of illegal settlements and seizures represents a clear violation of international law and ethical norms, resulting in the unlawful confiscation of Palestinian land. Further, the presence of checkpoints and frequent administrative hurdles not only disrupts the flow of daily life but also serves as a constant reminder of the restrictions imposed upon the Palestinian people. These actions, together with the systemic disregard for Palestinian rights, coupled with the apartheid-like conditions and frequent violations of international law, exacerbate the already challenging circumstances faced by Palestinians living under occupation. These continuous infringements on basic human rights perpetuate a cycle of adversity further perpetuating the injustices faced by the Palestinians.



THE IMPORTANCE OF SPEAKING UP

While the Palestinian cause is important to Muslims, it is not exclusive to Muslims. The current state of Palestinians facing injustice is a call for anyone to speak up in a continuous manner until Palestinians are guaranteed their rights. As an occupying power, Israel fails in its duties to ensure the basic needs and rights of the population. Human rights organizations have concluded that Israeli authorities are committing the crimes of apartheid and persecution against millions of Palestinians. This is brought about by several laws, policies, and practices of the Israeli State that intend to benefit Jewish Israelis and maintain control over Palestinians. These include: the fragmentation and segregation of the Palestinian population, restricting their movement, confiscating their land, demolitions, forced evictions, making it virtually impossible to obtain building permits, discriminatory restrictions on their residency status, administrative detention, and refusing the right to return for Palestinian refugees among other practices. Israel also breaks many international laws and UN resolutions such as their expansion of illegal settlements into Palestinian territories and imposing collective punishment on Palestinians.

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As Canadians, we must hold our government accountable for the decisions they make that affect millions of lives. Almost annually, Canada votes on UN resolutions about Palestinian human rights. Canada also provides arms exports to Israel, which have only increased in the last two decades. In addition, the current conditions of the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA) incentivises illegal settlement establishment and erases the Palestinian identity, causing harm by upholding the status quo. The Canadian Parliament has also voted to condemn* the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement in the past, which is a peaceful method of holding Israel’s government accountable for their crimes. All these decisions have an impact on Palestinians in the Occupied territories as well as Palestine human rights supporters here in Canada who are potentially targeted and faced with anti-Palestinian

YOUR RIGHTS

Any person in Canada, regardless of citizenship or immigration status, has the following fundamental freedoms according to Section 2(a-c) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication; freedom of peaceful assembly. There are “reasonable limits prescribed by law” to these freedoms. Most importantly, one must avoid hate propaganda and hate speech.

Please note that in relevance to the cause of Palestinian rights, criticism of Israeli policies and calling them out for crimes of apartheid is not hate propaganda, hate speech, or anti-semitism, though pro-Israelis might claim so. However, blaming all Jewish people for the actions of the state of Israel and discrimination based on stereotypes of Jewish people may be anti-Semitic. Similarly, generalizing Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims, or pro-Palestine activists as “terrorists” is may be Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian racism, or discrimination.



What You Can Do As a Student or Student Organization

Listed below are some things you can do as a student or student organization in high school or a postsecondary institute.

Educate yourself.

We've already highlighted the basics, but please refer to the extra resources at the end of the toolkit for more information and details.

Monitor and document the statements and practices

of your school board or representatives in relation to the Palestinian cause and similar causes.

For example: Are they releasing one-sided statements? Are they being inclusive? Do they suppress speech only with regards to Palestine but don't have an issue when it comes to other similar issues such as Ukraine vs Russia?

Educate students and other student organizations.

Use the extra resources included in this toolkit to educate those in your circle or conduct educational events and workshops.

Form alliances and coalitions with other student groups.

Be strategic with your collaborations and aim for a united voice and call.

Listen to and amplify Palestinian voices.

Educate yourself on the needs and demands of the Palestinian people in real time. Do they need donations? A ceasefire? A specific UN vote? A stop to arms-exports?

Make statements that are thoughtful and strategic.

Educate yourself. Decide on a clear message (Ceasefire now, End the Siege, End arms-exports etc.). Consult more experienced activists or organizations. Release statements as a coalition.

Donate or fundraise.

You can donate to charities and organizations that aid Palestinians on the ground in the West Bank and Gaza. You can also donate to organizations in Canada that advocate for the cause or protect and educate supporters of the cause. Refer to the resources page for examples.

Attend or organize a protest or walk-out.

Be strategic. Choose a clear message. Do it on public property. Remain peaceful. Consult the school guidelines and procedures. Reach out to more experienced organizers. Take precautions such as ensuring there is security and a lawyer present. Choose a knowledgeable and eloquent person to interact with the media if needed. Record, document, and report any incidents.

NOTE: If you attend professional school you may have to be extra cautious at protests and posting on social media. If you choose to post about your protest attendance, or about the issue in general, choose the correct platform and review your messaging carefully. Focus on the human rights aspect and reposting from *organizations such as the UN, HRW, or Amnesty*. Avoid making excessive commentary that can be misinterpreted.



What Not To Do

Do not make rash decisions or statements.

Avoid making a decision or statement that can be easily misinterpreted and used against you.

Do not incite hate against a group of people.

This could lead to consequences such as being accused of discrimination or hate speech. It also negatively affects the Palestinian cause.

Do not violate any laws at protests or events.

Demonstrate your best behavior. Do not vandalize or trespass property.

An example of what **not to do** that is in line with all of these points:

Do not accept being interviewed at protests or events if you are not confident with your current knowledge...especially if you feel like your emotions will come in the way of conveying a clear message that cannot be misinterpreted.

What to Do If your Rights are Violated

If, despite all your precautions and preparations, you are targeted or discriminated against, or you feel that your rights have been violated, do the following:

Record or document the details of the incident.

Collect and gather evidence and correspondences.

If you are under the age of 18, inform a trusted adult.

Report the incident to the appropriate personnel or services on campus.

Consult and follow school guidelines and procedures.

Depending on which institute and level you attend, you could reach out to the school administration, guidance counselor, faculty dean, or equity office.

Seek legal counsel and/or report to human rights and advocacy organizations.

You can report to organizations that are active in supporting Palestinian human rights advocates and activists in Canada such as those listed below:

(NCCM) <https://www.nccm.ca/>

Arab Canadian Lawyers Association (ACLA)
<https://www.canarablaws.org/>

The Legal Centre for Palestine
<https://www.lcpal.ca/>

Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association (CMLA)
<https://www.cmla-acam.ca/>

Muslim Legal Support Center (MLSC)
<https://muslimlegalcentre.ca/>

Canadian Muslim Public Affairs Council (CMPAC)
<https://www.canadianmuslimpac.ca/>



RESOURCES

History of Palestine:

- 4 minute video by the UN
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBjMbe24Vu0&ab_channel=UnitedNationsPalestinianRightsCommittee
- Video by CrashCourse:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1wo2TLIMhiw&t=370s&ab_channel=CrashCourse
- Video by Vox:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGVqjS98OsU&ab_channel=Vox
- Video by AJ+:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6foH3Zc82ZQ&ab_channel=AJ%2B
- UN: The Question of Palestine page
<https://www.un.org/unispal/history/>
- For a deep history of Palestine
<https://www.britannica.com/place/Palestine/History>

Palestine's Relevance to Muslims:

- The Glorious Virtues of Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa
<https://muslimmatters.org/2017/09/11/the-glorious-virtues-of-al-masjid-al-aqsa/>
- Why All of Palestine is Sacred
<https://yaqeeninstitute.ca/watch/series/why-a-all-of-palestine-is-sacred-taraweeh-reflections>
- Why Jews and Muslims Both Have Religious Claims on Jerusalem
<https://www.history.com/news/why-jews-and-muslims-both-have-religious-claims-on-jerusalem>

The Humanitarian Aspect of Palestine:

- Human Rights Watch (HRW) report
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>
or their 3 minute video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6TLe4J7Dvd0&t=68s&ab_channel=HumanRightsWatch

- Amnesty
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/israels-system-of-apartheid/>
or their video <https://vimeo.com/674482282>
- United Nations (focus on illegal settlements)
<https://press.un.org/en/2016/sc12657.doc.htm>

Canada's Involvement and Responses:

- Canada's UN votes
https://www.cjpme.org/un_dashboard
- Arms exports
https://www.cjpme.org/arming_apartheid
- CIFTA Trade Agreement
https://www.cjpme.org/annexing_palestine_through_trade
- BDS in Canada
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/parliament-votes-to-reject-campaign-to-boycott-israel/article28863810/> And
https://www.cjpme.org/who_supports_bds
- Responses to 2023 escalations
https://www.cjpme.org/crisis_alert_2023?utm_campaign=me_2023_10_23_phone_mp&utm_medium=email&utm_source=cjpme and
https://www.cjpme.org/pr_2023_10_28_unga
- What the Canadian government is doing in response to October 2023 escalations
https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/response_conflict-reponse_conflits/crisis-crise/israel.aspx?lang=eng

Your Legal Rights and the Legal Aspect of Advocacy

- NCCM: National Council of Canadian Muslims guides and videos
<https://www.nccm.ca/community-resources/>
- Just Peace Advocates: Legal and Tactical Guide
<https://www.justpeaceadvocates.ca/legal-and-tactical-guide/>



Advocacy and Relevant Human Rights Organizations

To report an incident or seek legal counsel.

Can also donate to these organizations to support their work.

- National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) <https://www.nccm.ca/>
- Arab Canadian Lawyers Association (ACLA) <https://www.canarablaw.org/>
- The Legal Centre for Palestine <https://www.lcpal.ca/>
- Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association (CMLA) <https://www.cmla-acam.ca/>
- Muslim Legal Support Center (MLSC) <https://muslimlegalcentre.ca/>
- Canadian Muslim Public Affairs Council (CMPAC) <https://www.canadianmuslimpac.ca/>

Explore the Working Definitions of Anti-Palestinian Racism and Anti-Semitism

- Independent Jewish Voices: The Dangers of adopting the IHRA working definition of anti-Semitism <https://www.noihra.ca/toolkit>
- The Jerusalem Declaration On Antisemitism - Alternative working definition of anti-Semitism that does not pose a risk of suppressing speech <https://jerusalemdeclaration.org/>
- ACLA report on Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framing and Manifestations <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61db30d12e169a5c45950345/t/627dcf83fa17ad41ff217964/1652412292220/Anti-Palestinian+Racism-+Naming%2C+Framing+and+Manifestations.pdf>

More Details and Strategies for Organizing Student Walk-Outs or Actions

- Action for Palestine Slides https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1A9jZq4-qDMoB_1EN7orwyJmxwyVmR8QYDYViJpz5IH8/edit#slide=id.p
- Free Palestine Direct Action Toolkit <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oqfOU583ZFhcg-bsEEs7k2fGOdSgMuuE/view>

Infographics and Statistics of Palestine

Educational, accessible, easy-to-digest, and shareable.

- UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) <https://www.ochaopt.org/atlas2019/index.html>
- Visualizing Palestine <https://visualizingpalestine.org/>

Accounts to Follow to Stay Educated and Updated (Instagram)

- @visualizing_palestine
- @letstalkpalestine
- @palestine.academy
- @cjpmeofficial