

WHAT IS ANTI-PALESTINIAN RACISM?

Anti-Palestinian racism is a form of systemic racism that works to silence, exclude, erase, stereotype, defame, or treat Palestinians and their stories as less than human.

It shows up in many ways including:

- Denying the Nakba, e.g. saying the violence, massacres, forced expulsions, terror campaigns and other crimes committed against Palestinians during the establishment of Israel in 1948 never happened.
- Justifying violence against Palestinians, e.g. bullying or threatening a student for wearing a keffiyeh or standing up for Palestinian rights.
- Denying that Palestinians are the Indigenous people of Palestine with their own identity and rights.
- Erasing Palestinians' human rights and their equal dignity and worth, e.g. not being allowed to talk about what is happening to Palestinians.
- Excluding Palestinians or Palestinian perspectives and stories or pressuring others to exclude them, e.g. not being allowed to join a club or host an event.
- Defaming Palestinians or their allies with slander, such as calling them inherently antisemitic, a terrorist threat or supporter, or against democracy.

Why is this Racism?

Racism is made up to excuse unfair treatment. It is not based on science or biology. Like anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Palestinian racism is built into systems of power and causes serious harm. It treats Palestinians as less human, erases their identity, and blames them for their suffering. It spreads lies and stereotypes that harm Palestinian youth and their allies. It takes away their human rights and teaches others to accept cruelty towards them. Naming and challenging anti-Palestinian racism is the first step towards justice.

CONTACT



Mission

Our mission is to end racism against Palestinians and their allies including advocates for Palestinian rights and freedom

Institute for Understanding of Anti-Palestinian Racism is a US 501(c)(3) nonprofit org.

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Scan the QR Code to see the digital version of the youth guide, learn about our research & find more resources. Visit us at <https://antipalestinianracism.org>



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Countering Anti-Palestinian Racist Myths



A Youth Guide created by the
IUAPR Teen Committee
Education Project

INTRODUCTION

Upholding the rights of every human being is essential to fighting hate no matter what, no matter where. In talks about Palestine and Israel, you may hear racist myths and stereotypes about Palestinians. These myths are used to excuse injustice against them. This guide aims to show why those myths are false and to give facts to help counter them.

From the River to the Sea, Palestine Will be Free = freedom, equality, and justice for all

Myth: "From the River to the Sea Palestine Will Be Free = calling for genocide of Jewish people"

Why the myth is false:

- "River to the Sea" refers to **historic Palestine** – the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. "Palestine will be Free" means exactly that: **freedom for all** people. Palestinians today do not have **freedom, equality** or **justice** because of discriminatory Israeli laws and government actions.
- Saying a call for **freedom** has built in violence (e.g. is inherently genocidal) is a form of racism. This is not a new strategy. It was used against Blacks in apartheid South Africa and in the US when they were calling for **equal rights** and **freedom**.

Facts you can state:

- This chant imagines a future where all people in **historic Palestine** have **equal rights** and **freedom** – no matter what their religion is.
- It is unjust and racist to say people calling for **freedom** are inherently violent, threatening or genocidal.

Palestine does exist. Palestinians do exist.

Myth: "No such thing as a Palestinian or Palestine doesn't exist"

Why the myth is false:

International law and United Nations records recognize **Palestinians** as the **Indigenous** people of Palestine, with a distinct and unique identity, culture, dialect, traditions and food. Palestinians have had a continuous presence in **Palestine** for thousands of years.

Facts you can state:

- Claiming Palestinians "don't exist" or Palestine "doesn't exist" is called Nakba denial and it is racist.
- It is an attempt to erase **Palestinian identity** in order to justify taking land, **human rights** and **civil rights** away from the **Indigenous** people of Palestine.

Students have the right talk about Palestine or Palestinians at school

Myth: "We can't talk about Palestine at school because it's too controversial or political"

Why the myth is false:

- Public schools cannot ban a viewpoint simply for being "controversial" or "political" because it goes against the **US Constitution's First Amendment right of freedom of speech**.
- Singling out Palestine, while allowing talk of other **human rights** struggles—like South African apartheid, the **Civil Rights** Movement, or **Indigenous rights**—is unfair and unequal treatment called viewpoint discrimination.

Facts you can state:

- Talking about Palestine is about **human rights, freedom, equality** and **justice**.
- Student **freedom of speech** on these topics (when non-disruptive) is **protected** by the US Constitution and the Supreme Court.
- Blocking education about Palestine or Palestinian stories and history is not neutral; it is a form of anti-Palestinian racism called erasure.

Palestinians are humans and supporting Palestinians means supporting human rights

Myth: "Palestinians are terrorists, and supporting Palestine means supporting terrorism"

Why the myth is false:

- Palestinians are mothers, fathers, babies, children, brothers, sisters and grandparents who should have **human rights** like us.
- During the Nakba, when Israel was created in 1948, Zionist gangs carried out massacres and terror campaigns. They forced over 750,000 Palestinians from their homes and land. They destroyed more than 500 Palestinian villages. Palestinians are still struggling for **freedom, equality** and **justice**.
- Calling the Palestinian people "terrorists" is a racist stereotype that is used to justify violence against them and their children.

Facts you can state:

- **Palestinian children want to live** normal lives without fear of being killed, just like all children.
- It is racist to stereotype or treat Palestinians or their supporters as less than human for calling for **freedom** and **human rights**.
- **Title VI** of the **Civil Rights** Act can **protect** Palestinian students and allies from discrimination based on national origin when they speak up for **Palestinian rights**.

Palestinians want peace, freedom, equality and justice, not hatred

Myth: "Palestinians don't want peace/ hate Jews"

Why the myth is false:

- Since the Nakba in 1948, Palestinians have worked for **peace**. They supported UN resolutions in 1948, 1949, and 1967, recognized Israel in 1988, and joined the Oslo Accords and 2002 Arab Peace Initiative.
- In 2018, Palestinians in Gaza held the **peaceful** Great March of Return.
- For centuries, Palestinian Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived together **peacefully**. Palestinians are not raised to hate any religion.

Facts you can state:

- Palestinians have supported **peace** talks, UN resolutions, and marches since 1948.
- Amnesty International and B'Tselem, Israel's largest **human rights** group, have found apartheid. They also determined Israel is committing genocide.
- Palestinians are struggling for **freedom, equality, and justice**. Saying they "hate Jews" is racist and false.

Criticism of the Israeli government & support of Palestinian rights is legitimate

Myth: "Criticism of Israel or support of Palestine is antisemitic"

Why the myth is false:

- Speaking out against the Israeli government's actions, including B'tselem's and Amnesty International's findings of genocide, is not attacking Jewish people.
- It is racist to say Palestinians and people (including many Jewish people) supporting Palestinian **human rights** are antisemitic. This lie silences and harms them. It is used to justify violence and denial of Palestinian **human rights, freedoms** and **equality**.

Facts you can state:

- Supporting Palestinian **human rights** does not take away from Jewish **human rights**. Human rights is not a zero sum game.
- Stopping genocide is not antisemitic — it is a **moral duty**. The UN Genocide Convention says everyone must help stop genocide.

