

# Call for a change in Australian Government Rhetoric on Israel-Palestine Conflict

Tuesday 18th October, 2023

The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC) and its member societies raise **strong objection against the prevailing narratives surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict**, emphasising the need for a more accurate, nuanced, and humane portrayal in both media and political discourse.

First and foremost, we believe that all life is sacred, and the loss of any life should not be tolerated.

However, 'The current discourse, steeped in misrepresentations, labels the Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation as 'terrorism.' "This label is not only unjust but dangerously misleading," stated Dr. Rateb Jneid, President of AFIC. "It erases the context of a people's struggle against dispossession and military occupation, branding their desperation and resistance as an act of unprovoked aggression."

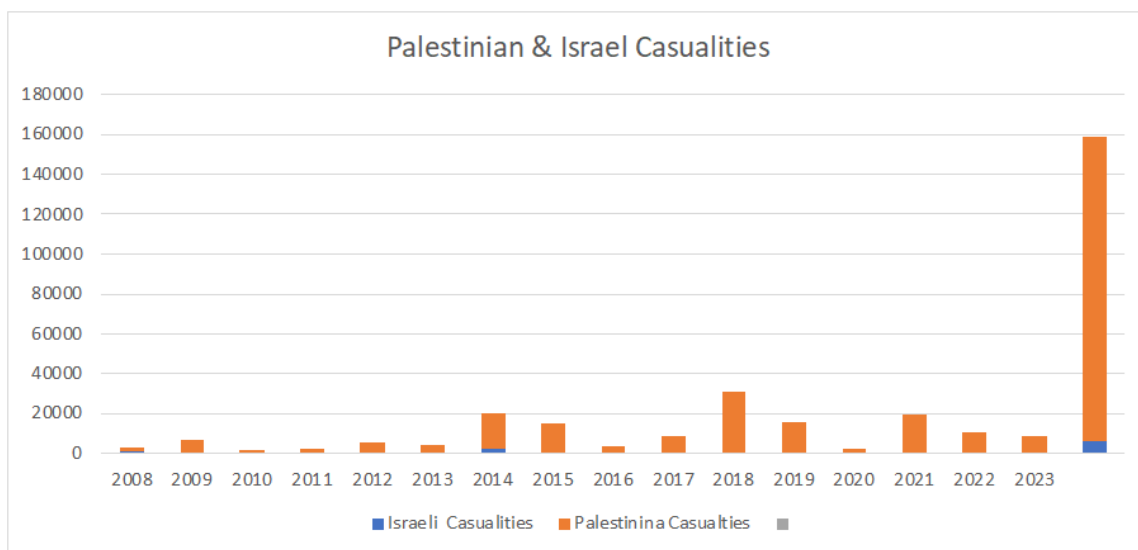
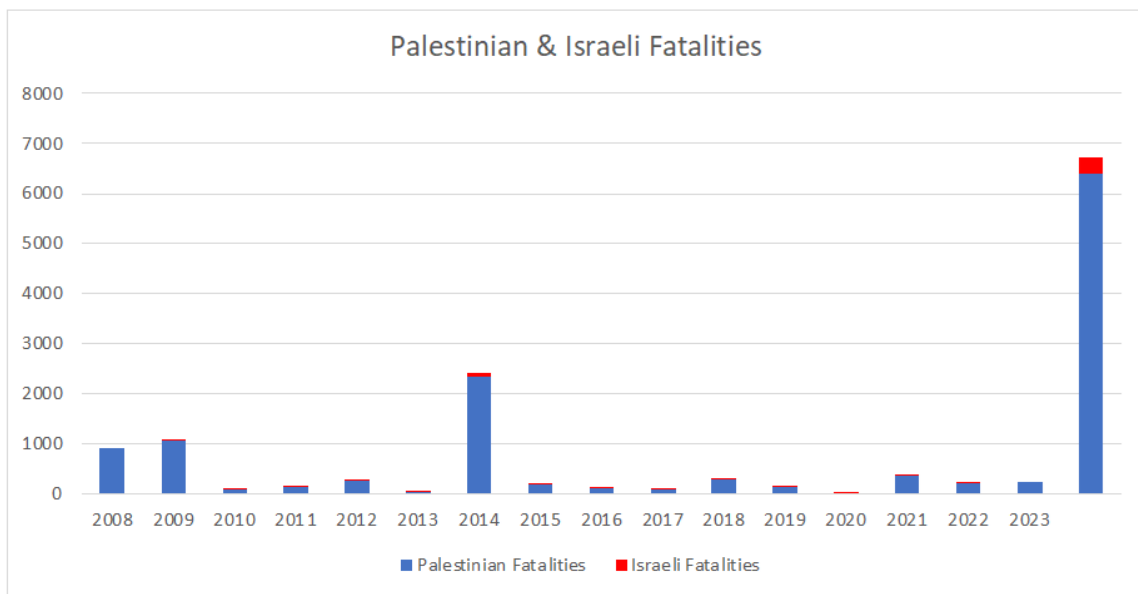
The portrayal of the conflict as a battle between equals is a gross mischaracterisation. Israel, bolstered by significant global powers, possesses one of the world's most formidable military machines. In stark contrast, the Palestinians, armed with limited resources, face monumental disparities in armament, support, and international diplomatic leverage.

At the heart of this protracted turmoil is the undeniable reality of the Palestinians' illegal dispossession. For over seven decades, international laws and countless UN resolutions have been disregarded. "Palestinians have lived a reality of persistent denial," states Dr. Jneid. "Denied sovereignty, denied justice, and denied the basic human right to defend their existence."

The human cost of the conflict has been staggering, disproportionately borne by the Palestinian people. Statistics paint a horrifying picture - thousands of Palestinians killed, a significant number being innocent children, and tens of thousands wounded compared to a much smaller number of Israeli casualties. Each of these numbers represents a human life, snuffed out or altered irrevocably in a struggle that shows no sign of abating. Since 2008 alone more than 6,400 Palestinians have been killed and over 150,000 injured in this illegal occupation by Israel. Of these nearly 1500 children have been killed and over 32,000 injured. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties>

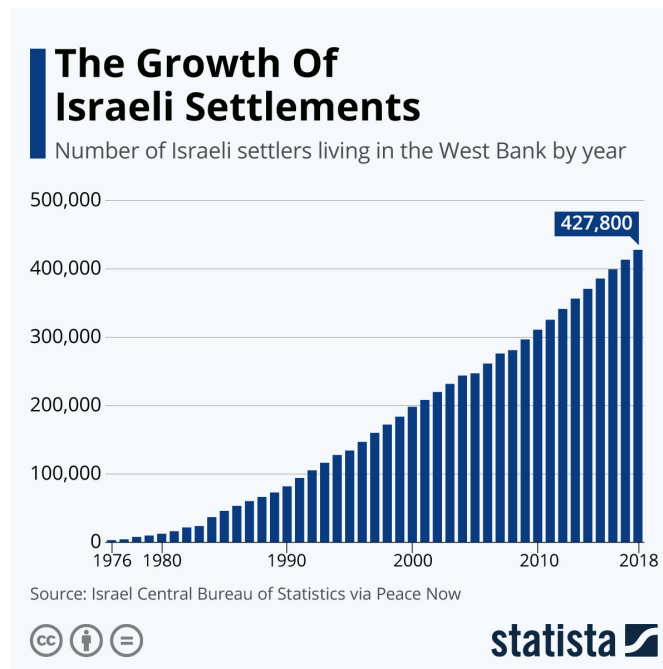


Amidst the cacophony of political posturing, what is egregiously absent is the acknowledgment of Palestinian humanity, the language employed in certain media and political circles serves to dehumanise, casting Palestinians and their existential struggle in a light devoid of empathy, bereft of understanding."

In Gaza, the situation has reached catastrophic levels. The blockade, effectively turning the area into an open-air prison, has deprived over two million inhabitants of basic necessities - clean water, consistent electricity supply, adequate medical care, and the freedom of movement. These conditions, coupled with systematic economic stifling, have created an untenable human rights crisis that has been going now for over 15 years.

Additionally, Israel's continual defiance of international calls to halt illegal settlements and annexations of Palestinian territory further entrenches the crisis. The number of illegal settlers on Palestinian land, flagrantly violating numerous UN resolutions, has surged past half a million. <sup>2</sup>

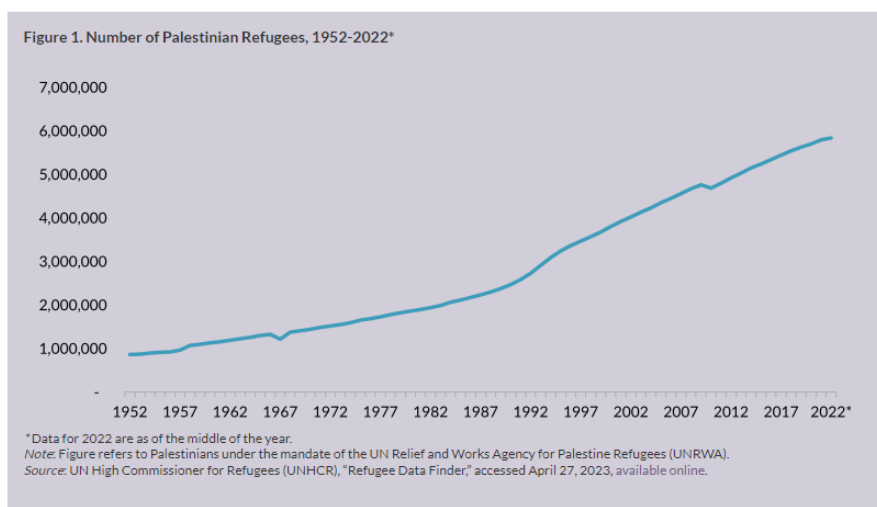
<sup>2</sup> <https://cdn.statcdn.com/Infographic/images/normal/20001.jpeg>



The plight of Palestinian refugees is a stark testament to the escalating crisis, now numbering approximately 5.9 million globally.<sup>3</sup> These individuals and families represent generations of displacement, bearing stories of both historical and ongoing dispossession. They live with the indelible scars of loss — of their homes, lands, and normalcy.

Most significantly, they face the continued denial of their internationally recognized Right of Return, as stipulated in the UN General Assembly Resolution 194.

The state of Israel, in contradiction to international law, persists in its refusal to acknowledge this right, placing stringent, insurmountable barriers that prevent these refugees from returning to their homes. This perpetual state of exile is a stark reminder of the systematic injustices perpetrated against an entire populace, underpinning the urgency for the global community to address their plight with the seriousness it warrants.



<sup>3</sup> <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/palestinian-refugees-dispossession#:~:text=Generations%20of%20Palestinian%20Refugees%20Face%20Protected%20Displacement%20and%20Dispossession,-May%203%2C%202023&text=Seventy%2Dfive%20years%20after%20the,the%20largest%20stateless%20community%20worldwide.>

In light of these realities, AFIC urgently calls on the Australian Government to realign its stance and take actions reflective of true justice and peacekeeping. We call on the Australian Government to:

1. Abandon the one-dimensional 'terrorist' label that oversimplifies the complex dynamics of Palestinian resistance.
2. Advocate strongly for the deployment of an international peacekeeping force to ensure adherence to UN resolutions, international laws, and the safeguarding of civilian lives
3. Acknowledge and advocate for the recognised right of peoples to resist occupation and to have their right to self-determination and human rights.
4. Demand an immediate cessation of all military actions, from all actors, particularly those striking civilian centres. The protection of innocent lives must be paramount.
5. To immediately facilitate the presence of independent observers into Gaza and Israel to report events in factual way.

“It's all Member States who have obligations...not just those in the region” to defuse the worst Israeli-Palestinian conflagration in decades,”  
Martin Griffiths  
*Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.* <sup>4</sup>

AFIC implores all communities to engage with this issue not as distant spectators, but as humane responders to a fellow human crisis. Only with understanding, empathy, and active engagement can there be any hope for a just resolution. Australia has an international obligation to protect lives, human rights and to prevent genocide, and it must have the courage to act.

<sup>4</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1142382>

#### Authorised:

Dr Rateb Jneid  
President of AFIC



## Members

Islamic Council of ACT  
Islamic Council Christmas Island  
The United Muslim Council of NSW  
Islamic Council of NT  
Islamic Council of Queensland  
Islamic Council of SA  
Tasmanian Muslim Association  
Islamic Council of Victoria  
Islamic Council of WA  
Arab-Australian Friendship Society  
Bosnian United Society of ACT Inc.  
Young Muslims Association Inc.  
Australian Turkish Friendship Association  
ABH Islamic Society GHB Penshurst  
Central Coast Islamic Society  
Western Sydney Islamic Society  
Elminia Islamic Youth Centre  
Bebnine Akar District Charity Association  
Parramatta Islamic Cultural Assn  
Sydney Islamic Community Welfare  
Australian Beirut Charitable Association  
Bayt Zakat Charity Inc.  
IAAL Charitable Association  
Syria Relief Incorporated  
The Islamic Friendship Association of Australia  
Al Minia Charitable Association  
Canterbury Islamic Society  
The Australian Islamic House in Liverpool  
Lebanese Unity Association  
Tripoli Fayhaa Muslim Association Inc  
El Dunningh Sons Charity Association  
Assalah Islamic Association  
Alebdaa Islamic Association  
Islamic Peace Association  
Jordanian Hub  
Al Salaam Islamic Society of NSW Inc  
Islah Zat Al Bayn for Reconciliation Inc  
the United Arab Moslem Association  
Islamic Society of Alice Spring  
Islamic Society of Darwin  
Islamic Society of Palmerston  
Bosniak Islamic Centre of Qld  
Islamic Society of Algester  
Islamic Society of Central Queensland  
Islamic Society of Darra  
Islamic Society of Gold Coast  
Islamic Society of Holland Park  
Islamic Society of Mareeba  
Islamic Society of Westend  
Islamic Society of Toowoomba  
Islamic Society of Mackay  
Islamic Society of Ipswich  
Islamic Society of Logan City  
Islamic Society of Durack  
Darul Uloom Academy  
Sisters with Helping Hands Inc  
Townsville Islamic Society  
Islamic Society of Gladstone  
Bosniak's Association of South Australia  
Murray Bridge Islamic Cultural Education Society  
Islamic Association of Virginia  
The Eritrean Islamic Society of Adelaide Inc  
Sudanese Cultural and Social Society of SA  
The Islamic Outreach Assn of South Australia  
Somali Communities Council Inc  
Muslim Youth of SA  
Eritrean Muslim Community in SA  
The Islamic Cultural Development Centre of Australia  
The African Muslim Association of South Australia  
Islamic Community Australia Inc  
Adelaide Malay Association Inc  
Somali Juba and Gedo Community Association Inc  
Somali United Community Association of South Australia Inc  
Eritrean and Ethiopian Youth of Adelaide Inc  
Al-Furqan Cultural Association of South Australia Inc  
Adelaide United Families Inc  
Tasmanian Muslim Association  
Albanian Australian Islamic Society  
Ararat Islamic Welfare Association  
United Muslim Migrant Association  
Werribee Islamic Centre Limited  
Islamic Association of Monash Mosque  
United Imams & Duat  
United Sri Lankan Muslim Association of Australia  
Gippsland Australian Muslim Community Inc  
Light of Hidayah Inc  
Australian Middle Eastern Council Inc.  
Alnajat Association of Australia  
Akkar Association of Australia  
Al Amin Islamic Association Victoria Inc  
Integrity Islamic Society of Australia  
Islamic Womens Council of Australia Inc.  
Mazraat Balde Australia Inc  
Australian Women Rights Association  
Australian Human Rights Association Inc  
Victorian Kuredish Associaiton Inc  
Muslim Youth Centre Victoria Inc  
Australian Future Women's Movement Inc  
Alsalaam Islamic Associaiton of Victoria Inc  
The Arabic Community Association of Victoria Inc  
Muslim Women Welfare of Victoria Inc  
Islamic Association of Katanning  
Noorul Islam Society  
Muslim Charity Community of WA Inc  
Kalgoorlie Islamic Centre  
Persutuan Isam Pulu Cocos  
Muslims WA Inc  
Madrash Shiarul Islam Inc  
The Arabic Community Association of WA  
United Australian Islamic Association Inc.  
Muslim Women Welfare & Advocacy WA Inc  
Smile of Hope  
Muslim Youth Support Centre  
International Humanitarian Aid Inc  
Muslim Defence League Inc  
Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jamaah Inc  
Furqan Islamic Association of WA  
Muslim Public Affairs Council  
Al Salam Islamic Society of WA  
Peace Univeral Society  
Freemantle District Islamic Association Inc  
Lebanese Australian Association Inc.  
Muslim Prison Welfare and Advocacy of Western Australia Inc  
Australian Muslim Civil Rights Advocacy Network INC.  
United Muslims Of Western Australia INC.  
Perth United Soccer Club