

# The Cultural Genocide of Palestine

By Dr Hanan Chehata





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# THE CULTURAL GENOCIDE OF PALESTINE

By Dr Hanan Chehata

## INTRODUCTION - WHAT IS CULTURAL GENOCIDE?

IN 1948, following the horrors of World War Two and the atrocities committed by the Nazis against millions of people across Europe, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the [Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#)<sup>1</sup> to ensure that no such actions would ever take place or go unpunished again.

However, in a strange twist of fate, the very people who the framers of the Convention had in mind, namely the primarily Jewish victims of the Holocaust, find themselves currently represented by a state, Israel, that claims to speak on their behalf and which is now the perpetrator of similar crimes against another group of innocent people, namely the Palestinians.

But what is genocide? Derived from the Greek word “genos” which means a race or tribe and the Latin word “cide” which means killing, the term “genocide” therefore literally means the killing of a group of people united by tribal, racial or ethnic ties.

Global leaders and, indeed, the population of the world at large are increasingly viewing Israel’s treatment of the Palestinian people as an unmitigated form of genocide. The recent United Nations’ [Goldstone Report](#) concluded that in Gaza last year Israel committed gross “violations of international human rights and humanitarian law and possible war crimes and

crimes against humanity.”<sup>2</sup> While that related to a military assault on the Palestinians, there is another element of genocide which is too often ignored by the world at large, and that is “cultural genocide”. It is vital that this aspect of the assault on the Palestinian people is not ignored and there are very strong arguments to be made which demonstrate that Israel is engaged in a daily and increasingly vindictive campaign of cultural genocide against the Palestinians.

Although cultural genocide has never been defined by international law (contrary to the wishes of Raphael Lemkin – the man who coined the term genocide) it can be as equally devastating in its impact as genocide itself. Essentially:

*“Cultural genocide extends beyond attacks upon the physical and/or biological elements of a group and seeks to eliminate its wider institutions. This is done in a variety of ways, and often includes the abolition of a group’s language, restrictions upon its traditional practices and ways, the destruction of religious institutions and objects, the persecution of clergy members, and attacks on academics and intellectuals. Elements of cultural genocide are manifested when artistic, literary, and cultural activities are restricted or outlawed and when national treasures, libraries, archives, museums, artifacts, and art galleries are destroyed or confiscated.”<sup>3</sup>*

In many ways, cultural genocide (which is also referred to as “ethnocide”, “sociocide” and “deculturation”) sets out to achieve the same goals as a physical genocide. As [Professor](#)

Stuart Stein from the University of the West of England has pointed out, “the same objective, the eradication of a group of people differentiated by some distinct traits, such as ethnicity, race, religion, language, nationality, or culture, can be achieved just as effectively in the mid-to-long-term, by gradual processes, as it might be by their immediate physical liquidation.”<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, proving that a cultural genocide has taken place can be a very significant first step towards showing a country’s specific intent to wipe out a group of people. Lawyer and researcher David Nersessian, for instance, points out that:

*“First, acts of cultural genocide – conduct violating what the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) referred to as the “very foundation of the group” – tend to establish the genocidist’s specific intent to destroy the protected group. The ICTY, for example, held that Serbian destruction of Muslim libraries and mosques and attacks on cultural leaders established genocidal intent against Muslims in the former Yugoslavia.”<sup>5</sup>*

This insidious cultural aspect of genocide is therefore an issue of vital importance as it can be symptomatic of a much more deadly malaise.

In the context of the situation in Palestine, however one chooses to define culture, every aspect of Palestinian culture has in some way been subject to desecration or destruction by Israel. There is no element of Palestinian society that has been left unspoiled by the acts of the Israeli government. When it is not Israeli tanks doing the destroying, then it is the Israeli government’s policies. Aspects of Palestinian society that have been decimated by Israel include, inter alia, houses, historical sites, ancient artefacts, places of worship, agricultural land, educational infrastructure, medical and healthcare facilities, economic institutions and so on. The list is almost endless and all such destruction is, without doubt, in breach of international laws and conventions.

It would be impossible to catalogue the full extent of the devastating effects of Israeli policies on Palestinian social and cultural institutions here. Nevertheless, this report will highlight a few examples of how elements of Palestinian culture<sup>6</sup> are being attacked constantly by Israel in what amounts to a concerted campaign of cultural genocide.

## EVIDENCE FOR A CULTURAL GENOCIDE BEING EMPLOYED AGAINST THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE.

**1** *The denial of the very existence of Palestine and the creation of the largest “stateless” community in the world.*

**A** *Occupation and geographical manipulation.*

The most obvious way in which the Israeli government has attempted to destroy any Palestinian sense of culture or identity is the occupation of Palestine itself. The occupation, the roots of which lie in the late nineteenth century, is a resolute and persistent effort to eradicate Palestine and all things Palestinian. This is a central aim of Zionism, the political ideology that underpins Israel.

The 1948 war resulted in the birth of the state of Israel on the land of another people, who had to move or risk being crushed in the process. One of the most obvious demographic impacts of that war was the forced exodus of more than 700,000 native Palestinians from their homeland. That one event more than sixty years ago has resulted in the staggering fact that there are now millions of Palestinian refugees worldwide, of whom 4.7 million are registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); none of whom have any immediate prospect of ever returning to their ancestral home. A third of the refugees live in camps across Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, as well as across the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.



REFUGEE CAMP, JORDAN, 1969



SHEMALI REFUGEE CAMP, LEBANON, 1974

It is widely acknowledged that although most of the world accepts and recognises the modern state of Israel, for many countries there is no such place as Palestine. For years now, maps have been used by Zionists to manipulate and distort the history and reality of the Palestine/Israel conflict. As ex-CIA political analysts Kathleen and Bill Christison point out, such maps:

*“which represent a denial of a Palestinian presence in the land and an affirmation that all of Palestine is Israel, are not a phenomenon confined to religious institutions or to the United States but indeed reflect Israel’s official position since the Palestinian territories were occupied in 1967. Within days of the conclusion of the 1967 war, Israel’s foreign minister ordered that maps produced by his ministry no longer show either the borders of the British Mandate or the 1949 armistice lines, which effectively form the border between Israel and the West Bank – often called the “1967 lines” or the “Green Line”. Before the year 1967 was over, the name “West Bank” had been replaced by the biblical moniker “Judea and*

*Samaria” in all official Israeli documents. As a result, most maps available in Israel and the United States since the beginning of the occupation have failed to delineate any border between Israel and the occupied territories.”<sup>9</sup>*

The United States [CIA World Fact Book](#),<sup>10</sup> has on its website a map of Israel and provides numerous facts about Israel but Palestine is nowhere to be found. Similarly, according to the [British Home Office](#), British policy states that: *“Usually, stateless cases involve people who are simply not recognised as citizens by the state or states which might be expected to take responsibility for them. By contrast, in Palestinian cases there is no such state, but there is instead a territorial authority whose international status is uncertain. No doubt you are aware that the United Kingdom does not recognise Palestine as a state, even though travel documents issued by the Palestinian Authority and UNRWA indicate the holder’s national status to be ‘Palestine.’ Consequently, the UK does not consider that a person can have ‘the nationality of Palestine,’... the nationality of all people claiming to be Palestinian is recorded in the travel document as ‘doubtful.’”<sup>11</sup>*

Furthermore, according to the [UK Home Office Border Agency](#) “The UK Government does not recognise the OPTs (Occupied Palestinian Territories) as an independent state and their permanent status has yet to be agreed.”<sup>12</sup>

This makes the Palestinians the largest “stateless” or “doubtful” community in the world! This is in sharp contrast with the original League of Nations “Mandate” for Palestine which states in Article 7: *“The Administration of Palestine shall be responsible for enacting a nationality law. There shall be included in this law provisions framed so as to facilitate the acquisition of Palestinian citizenship by Jews who take up their permanent residence in Palestine.”*

The denial of the legal right of millions of Palestinians to return to their homeland is one of the most obvious ways in which Israel is attempting to destroy their culture. To rip

people from the land of their birth and prohibit them and their descendants from ever returning is surely the most unequivocal way to destroy any connection between the people, their land and their heritage. It also contrasts sharply with Israel's "Law of Return" for Jews. This gives any Jew, anywhere in the world, the right to take their spouses and their children and to move to Israel to live permanently on the land where Palestinian homes once stood and in many cases still stand.

For those Palestinians who remained behind when the Israeli occupation began and for those who have been born in Palestine and Israel since then, there are daily tales of toil, imprisonment and persecution. The Israeli government is attempting, on every possible front, to destroy the very cultural fabric of Palestinian society, and the international community, thus far, has let them do it unimpeded.

**B** *The denial of the Palestinians' right to self-determination in defiance of international law.*

The right for a people to exercise self-determination is a right enshrined as a basic principle of international law. For instance, the Charter of the United Nations and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights state that, "All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."<sup>13</sup>

This is clearly not a privilege but an essential and internationally recognised right. However, this is a right that has been consistently denied to the Palestinian people as a result of Israel's Zionist policies. For example, consider the restriction on freedom of movement for the Palestinian people. How can they pursue economic, social or cultural development in a land whose vista has been permanently scarred by a never-ending series of military checkpoints, manned watchtowers, road closures, barriers, electric fences and eight-metres high concrete walls? The building of the "separation" or

"apartheid" wall, an estimated 750km long, is one of the most obvious physical manifestations of the restrictions on the Palestinians' right to roam across their own land and determine their own status and development.

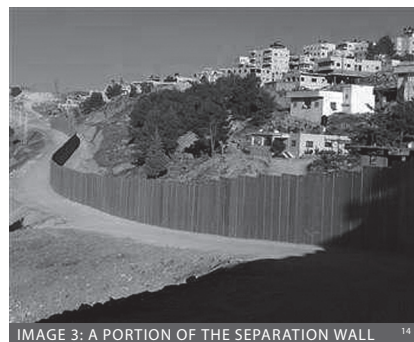


IMAGE 3: A PORTION OF THE SEPARATION WALL <sup>14</sup>

Israel has divided a once cohesive, prosperous and culturally rich society into a series of shanty towns, ghettos and refugee camps scattered across the land. The seemingly paramount Israeli "divide and conquer" policy has taken over the region. Not only has Palestine itself been ripped apart with Gaza and the West Bank separated by miles of "Israeli" territory, but also, even within those regions, division and isolation is the norm. Farmers have been cut off from their crops, shopkeepers from their shops, children from their schools, families from their relatives and so on. Not a second thought is given to physically barring a child from crossing the street, as a matter of routine. Where else in the world would such blatant apartheid-style policies be accepted in the twenty-first century on such a scale? Reminiscent of the Civil Rights era Jim Crow laws in the United States or the apartheid regime in South Africa, such policies are surely of a racist mentality that has no place in the modern world.

But the policies do serve Israel's purpose. After all, how better can one destroy a society and ensure that a culture does not flourish if not through such policies of divide and rule? This denial of the Palestinians' right to self-rule and to their own nationality is a fundamental injustice leading to all of the other abuses of the Palestinian people. In the International



Commission's 1982 "Israel in Lebanon" report it was stated: *"The rejection of the national and cultural identity of the Palestinians results in a rejection of the Palestinian flag, the non-recognition of their Red Crescent Society, the destruction of their schools, the censorship of their books, the refusal to grant prisoner-of-war status for their combatants, and the outlawing of their songs."*<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the report states:

*"...the attempted destruction of the national existence of the Palestinians in the Lebanon is therefore a rejection of their right to self-determination. The right to self-determination is an incontestable legal right in contemporary international law and is one of the basic rights... The continued refusal by Israel to recognize this right is the basis for the tension and violence in the Middle East."*<sup>16</sup>

### **C** Attempts to force loyalty to Israel and the Judaisation of the land.

There are a whole host of tactics being employed by the Israeli government to try and eradicate Palestine and replace it with all things Israeli. For instance, in a controversial move, Avigdor Lieberman's ultra-nationalist party Yisrael Beiteinu pushed for a law that bans the Palestinian commemoration of the Nakba (the Catastrophe) of 1948 in which more than 700,000 Palestinians were forced to leave their homes. Israelis will continue to be able to celebrate the event as their "Independence Day" with parties and flag-waving but Palestinians are banned from marking the day with any form of commemoration ceremony. Under the law passed by the Israeli parliament after just one reading, anyone caught doing so faces a jail sentence of up to three years.<sup>17</sup>

Another law that Lieberman's party wants to see enacted is that of the Loyalty Pledge whereby swearing allegiance to Israel as a "Jewish, Zionist and Democratic state" will be a pre-condition for all Israeli-Arabs to receive their ID papers.<sup>18</sup>

Israel plans to destroy every Palestinian aspect of the landscape and culture and replace

it with an Israeli equivalent. Even the names of villages and towns are not immune. The Israeli Transport Ministry revealed plans in July 2009 to replace traditional joint Arabic, English and Hebrew road signs (each of which display the place names traditionally used in that language) with Hebrew-only versions. Hence, a sign that read "Jerusalem" in English, "Al-Quds" in Arabic and "Yerushalaim" in Hebrew will now only say "Yerushalaim" in transliteration in all three languages. Names that were once famous the world over will cease to exist if the Israeli government has its way. They will be wiped, quite literally, off the map. Jaffa will now be Hebraised as Yafo, Nazareth and Caesarea will now be known as Natsrat and Kesriya, Tiberias as Tverya, and so on.



IMAGE 4

The flimsy pretence that this is being done to make navigation easier for drivers and tourists fell away when the Transport Minister, Yizrael Katz, admitted in a politically loaded statement that, "some Palestinian maps still refer to the Israeli cities by their pre-1948 names [before Israel was founded]... I will not allow that on our signs. This government and certainly this minister will not allow anyone to turn the Jewish Jerusalem to Palestinian Al-Quds."<sup>20</sup>

In reaction to this, the BBC reported that "Israeli-Arabs said it is an attempt to erase the Arabic language and heritage which predates the modern Israel."<sup>21</sup>

These are some of the means by which, side



by side with the complete overhauling of the Palestinian landscape and physical remoulding of the demographics of the region, Israel is moving towards the destruction of any sense of Palestine and Palestinian culture. As one [Arab-Israeli artist](#) has lamented, “They are deleting our memory... They’re going to delete our language, our Arabic street names... We’ll become Jewish.”<sup>22</sup>

## 2 Al-Aqsa Mosque – Threats, excavations and prohibitions on worship.

One of the most troubling aspects of the Israeli cultural genocide of Palestine is taking place in Jerusalem, the Holy City which occupies a central place in the traditions of all three Abrahamic faiths, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Beyond this, in terms of historical and cultural identity, what the pyramids are to Egypt and the Eiffel Tower is to France, you could say that is what Al-Aqsa Mosque is to Palestine. A symbol of inspiration, national pride and cultural heritage, the mosque and the land on which it stands is one of the most revered and loved Palestinian landmarks and is recognised as such worldwide, with its golden “Dome of the Rock” in the centre of the Noble Sanctuary. Even the Israelis use pictures of this iconic site to entice tourists to Jerusalem. (A practice [banned](#) in mid-April 2010 by Britain’s Advertising Standards Authority on the grounds that “the ad implied that the part of East Jerusalem featured in the image was part of the state of Israel”; this, the ASA concluded “was likely to mislead” visitors to Israel.)

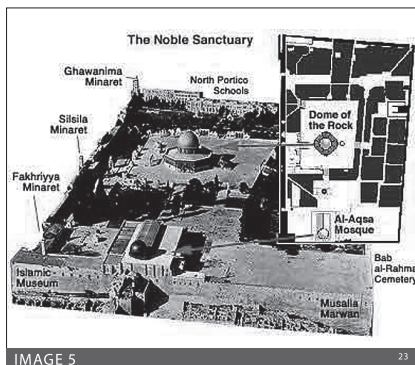


IMAGE 5

23



IMAGE 6: AL-AQSA MOSQUE

24

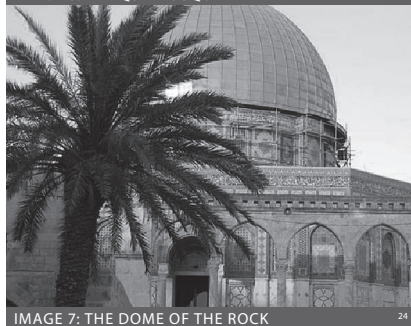


IMAGE 7: THE DOME OF THE ROCK

24

However, despite the reverence felt by over one billion Muslims for this site, there is a long-standing history of the mosque being targeted by Zionist extremists. The acts of terrorism directed at Al-Aqsa Mosque and Sanctuary have often been instigated and condoned by the Israeli government. Over the years the mosque has been set on fire,<sup>25</sup> subject to plots to blow it up,<sup>26</sup> vandalised, threatened with destruction and on one infamous occasion worshippers were even executed by a gun wielding Zionist terrorist as they prayed.<sup>27</sup> In September 2000 Israeli action sparked the Second Intifada (uprising) during which hundreds of people were killed and thousands injured following a visit by Ariel Sharon and hundreds of armed Israeli soldiers to the holy site. In September and October 2009 tensions escalated yet again as a result of provocative Zionist behaviour around the mosque; and again in March this year clashes broke out following the [opening of a Synagogue](#) a few metres away from the mosque.



Furthermore, adding fuel to the fire, the mosque has been subject to increasingly harsh and unjustifiable Israeli-imposed access restrictions. This includes closures and only allowing men over the age of fifty (the age varies) to attend Friday prayers.



*Hundreds of women wait, during Ramadan, at the Qalandia checkpoint to go into Jerusalem where they want to pray the Friday prayer in the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Israeli soldiers guard the checkpoint.*

Israel is engaging in dangerous behaviour which many fear may ignite the Third Intifada.<sup>30</sup> The threat to the mosque is constant and very real and the Israeli government is doing its best to see that this threat continues unabated.

One of the most sinister ways in which the Israeli government is planning to change the physical and spiritual landscape of Jerusalem, and consequently Palestinian culture, are their apparent plans to destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque and replace it with the “Third Temple of Solomon”. Israel is so immune to world opinion that it no longer even pretends to conceal these plans. Although official statements coming

out of the Israeli government try to refute such claims, the building of the Temple in the Noble Sanctuary is spoken about quite openly in Israeli and Zionist communities. In an attempt to prepare the world for such an event, Israelis even call the site on which the mosque stands the “Temple Mount”. They do this in all news reports and press releases on incidents which occur in and around the mosque. It is unfortunate that this trend is being followed by the Western media.

In a 2009 BBC Documentary, “The Frankincense Trail”<sup>31</sup>, Kate Humble interviewed Yehuda Glick, the Director of the Temple Institute. The Institute is an extreme Zionist organisation preparing to build the Third Temple.<sup>32</sup> According to Ms. Humble, there are “tens of millions of dollars pledged to start construction at short notice” and Glick confirms that he is just waiting for the call from “the government of Israel, the United Nations that we’ve got permission to build” and then his organisation will start construction with utmost haste. The Temple Institution, based in Jerusalem, declares in its “Statement of Principles” that it aims to be part of the “process that will lead to the Holy Temple becoming a reality once more” and says that “the Temple will be rebuilt.”<sup>33</sup> In another interview, Rabbi Chaim Richman, Director of the Temple Institution’s International Department, proudly describes some of the various items that they have made which are now just waiting to be used in the, as yet un-built, Temple, including the garments and gold crown of the High Priest, musical instruments, a ceremonial table, ceremonial vessels and so on.<sup>34</sup>

One would not normally object to the construction of a place of worship. However, it must be kept in mind that this particular project can only come to fruition following the destruction of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the Dome of the Rock and other existing Islamic buildings on the holy site. More than one billion Muslims around the world would consider this to be an unacceptable price to pay.

Muslims worldwide are increasingly concerned with the Israeli excavations being carried out around and under the mosque and many Muslim governments have condemned strongly such excavations, including the [Malaysians](#),<sup>35</sup> [Jordanians](#)<sup>36</sup> and [Syrians](#),<sup>37</sup> among others. Nevertheless, Israel continues to use every possible pretext to justify the presence of their bulldozers on the Noble Sanctuary. In February 2007, bulldozers began excavations outside the Moroccan Gate (Bab El-Maghriba); Israel's unconvincing explanation was that it was repairing a ramp leading to the mosque.

It has been estimated that "there are now 25 major excavations in the area around Al-Aqsa Mosque. Twelve of these are ongoing while 13 have been completed. Geographically, there are 11 excavations to the south of the mosque, 13 to the west and one to the north."<sup>38</sup> These numbers are increasing.

The excavations are creating cracks in the walls of the mosque, making it a very real possibility that even a slight tremor could bring the entire structure crashing down. Already the:

*"Persistent tunnelling beneath the mosque led to a landslide near the western side, leaving a crater measuring 2 metres in length and 1.5 metres in width. The UN Security Council has passed more than 20 Resolutions condemning Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem and its military occupation of the West Bank. Israel ignores each of these with impunity."*<sup>39</sup>

Knowing what a massive outcry it would cause if it was to send in the bulldozers and knock the entire structure down, as it is doing with so many other Palestinian properties, the Israeli government is literally chipping away at the foundation of the mosque from below instead. Denying access to the Jordanian authorities, who are responsible for the maintenance of the mosque, it looks as if the Israeli authorities are hoping for it to fall into disrepair so that it can be knocked down for "safety reasons".



Israel is violating international laws which protect freedom of religion. This includes Article 18 of the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#)<sup>41</sup>, Article 18 of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)<sup>42</sup>, Article 27 of [The Geneva Convention](#)<sup>43</sup> and many others.

The world cannot wait until it is too late and the site is destroyed forever. Action is needed now to stop Israel destroying this holy site and compel the Zionist state to comply with international laws, permitting Palestinian Muslims free access to worship in their own mosques.

It should not be forgotten that there are also many Palestinian Christian communities in Jerusalem as well and Israeli restrictions on access to places of worship affect them too. The recent (2010) [Easter](#) holiday, for example, saw Palestinian Christians being refused free access to Jerusalem for what are the holiest days of the Christian calendar.



### 3 *The desecration of Palestinian places of worship.*

It is not just the Al-Aqsa Mosque that is in danger but mosques throughout Palestine are under constant threat. Many of them have already been razed to the ground by the Israeli authorities.



The ability for any group to practice their faith in their own manner and in their own places of worship is one of the most fundamental ways in which they can express their cultural and religious identity and beliefs. Rituals of worship are central to many cultures. The Native Americans, for example, have beliefs and rituals which are central to how they identify themselves. The same is true of Buddhists whose cultural identity is steeped in rituals of prayer and meditation; the Palestinians are no different. Palestine is a land steeped in historical and religious symbolism and significance and it was a land in which, under Muslim leadership, all were free to worship in their own ways.

However, since the Israeli Occupation began, countless numbers of mosques have been destroyed and desecrated across the land, as have churches, which are not exempt from Israeli efforts to Judaize the land. According to a recent report in the Lancet, "although the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem is visited by Christian pilgrims from all over the world, it remains inaccessible to Palestinian Christians from Bethlehem and Ramallah living only 10 km away."<sup>45</sup>

On occasions the desecration of holy

sites has been done during times of military conflict and under the guise of "security measures" – a justification that the recent Goldstone Report found no evidence for in Gaza last year. At other times it has been blatantly declared to be a part of the larger Israeli plan to Judaize the land and to make room for Israeli settlements, hotels and parks.



*The ruins of al-Taqwa mosque in Gaza City which was destroyed in the Israeli attack on Gaza in December 2008 - January 2009 (Wissam Nassar, Maan Images).*

In his book "The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine", Professor Ilan Pappé points out that, "The Israelis turned the mosques of Majdal and Qisarya into restaurants, and the Beersheba mosque into a shop. The Ayn Hawd Mosque is used as a bar, and that of Zib is part of a resort village." Other mosques have been converted into synagogues, such as the mosques at Wadi Unayn and Yazur as well as the mosques in the villages of Kfar Inan and Daliyya.<sup>47</sup> Mosques have been subjected to arson attacks, vandalism, desecration and demolition. Worshipers at the mosques which have remained intact, or at least partially intact, face access restrictions, either in terms of physical barriers, or in terms of closures and curfews. As Professor Pappé explains, "as for the Muslim shrines and Christian churches that survived, these are not always accessible. The church and mosque of Suhmata are still visible today, but if you want to pray there or simply wish to visit these sites, you have to cross the Jewish farms and risk being reported to the police for trespassing."<sup>48</sup>

The disrespect for Holy sites from a people who claim that their very occupation of the

land is founded on adherence to religious dictates and a desire to please God is a very telling trait. The lack of reverence they have for another person's holy sites reveals in them something distinctly unholy and is at odds with the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel in which it is claimed that the state will guarantee freedom of religion and worship to people of all faiths.

This past, present and future planned erosion of Palestinian places of worship is taking place on an increasingly regular basis and is another example of the Israeli attempt to wipe out the cultural identity of the Palestinian people, be they Muslims or Christians. Not only do such Israeli actions violate international laws which protect the right to worship and the freedom of religion but they are also causing psychological damage. The medical journal the *Lancet*, in its 2009 special edition report on "Health in the Occupied Palestinian Territory", points out that:

*"Freedom of worship and practice of religious rituals have been noted as essential components of coping with psychological distress. Religion and faith bring meaning, context and purpose to psychological healing, as noted in studies from Kosovo and Somalia and recommended in guidelines for humanitarian responses. In a region filled with religious symbolism and tradition, renowned for its Holy sites, inaccessibility to sites of worship is a source of profound distress for the Palestinians."*<sup>49</sup>

#### 4 The desecration of cemeteries.

There are too many instances to count whereby cemeteries and grave sites have been desecrated by Israeli bulldozers, tanks and bombs. However, there is an ongoing process of vandalism that is occurring and it is important to look at even a few examples.

In November 2006 the Israeli Defence Forces permitted 1,300 Jewish worshippers to enter a Muslim cemetery near the West Bank city of Nablus at a time when the Muslims were under curfew. According to an official IDF

statement "a handful of worshippers chose to create a provocation and vandalize Palestinian graves."<sup>50</sup> Under the watchful eye of the IDF many of them "sneaked away" and proceeded to vandalise the cemetery by breaking some tombstones and writing "death to Arabs" on others.

If such incidents are downplayed as the random acts of individuals beyond the control of the government, then what can be said about the numerous officially-sanctioned projects currently taking place. How can one defend, for instance, the construction of an Israeli Museum on the site of the Mamanallah Muslim Cemetery, which is the largest Muslim cemetery in Jerusalem? The irony of the situation is that the Israelis plan to desecrate this cemetery to pave the way for their "Museum of Tolerance"! According to the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights,<sup>51</sup> the excavations on the site have already led to the remains of more than 300 people being dumped in a mass grave. Sheikh Ra'ed Salah, the Head of the Islamic Movement inside Israel, has called the situation catastrophic. "He noted that 70,000 graves fill the 200 dunam cemetery which has tombs dating back thousands of years."<sup>52</sup> According to the Palestinian News Network:

*"Sheikh Salah also noted that an Israeli American is undertaking the project with 200 million USD coming from California. It is backed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. The museum is a sister project for the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center... Sheikh Salah said, "This resolution is a serious violation of all the holy sites and not only to one cemetery. There are other graves under threat, graves that symbolize our historical background, our culture and religion."*<sup>53</sup>

Similar sacrilegious acts are taking place all over the occupied territories. In Jaffa, a city on the coast of what is now Israel, local residents have been protesting for years over the sale of a cemetery for the purposes of building a Commercial Centre. Tel Aviv Councilman Rifat (Jimmy) Turk told Ynet News that he and a Jewish friend have been behind a poster campaign in Jaffa (see image 13):

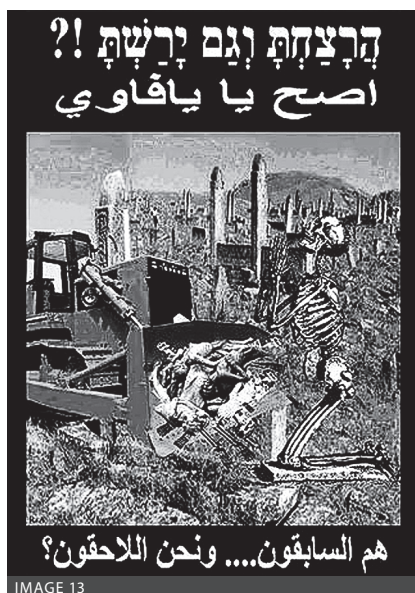


IMAGE 13  
A protest picture hung up around Jaffa protesting against the decision to destroy the cemetery and build a commercial centre instead. The caption reads "Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?"

"[I]n order to enlighten the residents of Jaffa to the present situation, which has not ceased to trouble me. They must awaken from the coma they are in before it is too late, to defend their holy sites," he said. "What will we do in seven or eight years? Will they throw our bodies into the sea? This is what will happen if there is no change. There are no other burial options for Muslims in Jaffa. I wonder about myself. Will I be cremated? Will they throw us away like dogs?" he added. He called on the residents to band together in non-violent protest against the destruction of the graveyard.<sup>54</sup>

It is not only Palestinian cemeteries that have been treated in this way. In 2006 the British government lodged a complaint with the Israeli government for the damage inflicted on a Commonwealth war cemetery. Tim Butcher reporting for the Daily Telegraph from the site of the destruction reported that:

"Israeli forces caused significant damage to the Commonwealth war cemetery in Gaza City, the last resting place for thousands of troops who died fighting the Ottomans in 1917... six headstones

and a perimeter wall were destroyed by an Israeli army bulldozer... More damage was done last week during an Israeli operation in the nearby town of Beit Hanoun, when an attack helicopter used its cannon to fire at one of the cemetery's larger group memorial stones.... Two dozen other headstones have been pockmarked by shrapnel from Israeli artillery and several have been completely destroyed."<sup>55</sup>



IMAGE 14

## 5 The destruction of archaeological finds and historical artefacts of cultural significance.

The destruction of landmarks and culturally significant property is an ancient tactic used by invading forces to demoralise and defeat the local population following a conquest. It occurred in the context of the invading Spanish forces and the Aztec culture, as well as Nazi Germany's attempt to destroy any remnants of Jewish culture. The Preamble to the 1954 Hague Convention states that "damage to cultural property belonging to any people whatsoever means damage to the cultural heritage of all mankind, since each people makes its contribution to the culture of the world."

There is no doubt that Israel has engaged in a campaign of deliberate destruction of Palestinian cultural heritage over the years. The Israelis have not only destroyed historical records relating to ancient artefacts, but also all evidence of the artefacts themselves.



In order to facilitate the construction of illegal Israeli settlements, settler-only roads and the separation wall, there has been wanton but calculated destruction of Palestinian houses, agricultural land and cultural and social institutions. The destruction of the ancient landscape has also seen the simultaneous destruction of countless historical artefacts which are a crucial element of Palestine's rich cultural heritage.

If we divide archaeological finds into two broad categories, movable (such as ancient tools or household items) and immovable (such as historical buildings and ancient relics) we will find that both categories have been subject to destruction by the Israelis. In terms of movable archaeological artefacts, these are being uncovered all the time. In his article *Stealing Palestinian History* Kevin Chamberlain says that there are an estimated 4000 archaeological sites in Palestine. He adds, "When a site is uncovered the Israelis institute a 'salvage excavation,' i.e. the rapid removal and recording of artifacts before the site is covered up. In most cases this results in the destruction of the site... the effect of these 'salvage excavations' is that the all-important context of the site is destroyed and the knowledge that it yields is lost forever." Furthermore, he points to "anecdotal evidence that in conducting many of these 'salvage excavations' only objects of Jewish interest are removed and the remains of other cultures are either ignored or destroyed. It is also alleged that Israeli excavations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) are politically motivated, namely, to uncover evidence of ancient Jewish settlement so as to bolster Israel's current settlement policies."<sup>57</sup>

In addition to the sites interfered with on the direct orders of the Israeli government, there is also a flourishing illicit trade in archaeological finds. It has been estimated by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in the Palestinian Authority that around "200,000 archaeological artefacts were transferred annually during the years between 1967 and 1992 from the OPTs (Occupied Palestinian Territories).

Since 1992 current estimates put this figure at approximately 120,000 artefacts per annum.... there are also likely to be some items of significance within that figure. As occupying power, responsibility for such loss must rest with the Israelis."<sup>58</sup> The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in Gaza issued a warning last December that items of great archaeological value are being stolen by the Occupation authorities from the south of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. It is believed that this is being done in an attempt, again, to change facts on the ground by destroying elements of Muslim heritage in the region and ultimately replacing them with Jewish items, be they real or forged.

In terms of immovable artefacts such as historical monuments, those too have been devastated by the Israelis. An article in the international edition of *The Art Newspaper* in 2002 noted, "*The Israeli army's reoccupation of the West Bank and other Palestinian territories has devastated parts of the historic cities of Nablus, Bethlehem and Hebron in contravention of international law. The destruction has been deliberate, and observers say it amounts to a symbolic attack on the Palestinian presence in the territory. The deliberate destruction of cultural heritage contravenes the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property During Times of War, of which Israel is a signatory.*"

The indiscriminate bombing from helicopters and tanks has also damaged irreparably historic monuments in Nablus, Hebron, Tulkarem and Bethlehem. Recent reports have estimated that, "*In the ancient city of Nablus, the al-Khadrah mosque has been 80% destroyed; the al-Satoun and al-Kabir mosques, converted Byzantine churches, were 20% destroyed; 60 historic houses were demolished (and 200 others partially demolished); the 18<sup>th</sup> Century eastern entrance to the old market has been destroyed; and seven Roman cisterns and at least 80% of the paved streets have been ruined. UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage office has condemned these acts of*

vandalism, describing them as “crimes against the cultural heritage of mankind.”<sup>59</sup>

## 6 The razing of olive groves.

If you ask most people about their definition of culture, food will probably come into it somewhere. A country’s cuisine, a style of cooking or a particular type of food associated with the region is often one of the most immediately evocative aspects of a culture.

Palestine too has such an association and that is with the olive. For thousands of years Palestine has been referred to as the land of the olive, a connection made in many ancient texts including the Holy Qur’an and the Bible. However, even this simple cultural association has not been left undamaged by the Israeli authorities. It is ironic that the olive branch, which has traditionally been a universal symbol of peace, has now become a victim and stark reminder of Zionist aggression.

The connection between Palestinians and their olive crops goes beyond mere sentiment. Olive production is the lifeblood of Palestinian agriculture. The production and export of olives and olive-based products have always been a major source of livelihood for Palestinian farmers. It is estimated that more than 100,000<sup>60</sup> Palestinians make a living from the olive crop, which is traditionally used for producing soap, cooking oil, oil for lamps and so on. Olive trees take about 12 years to come to fruition and they live for an average of four hundred years but many in Palestine are reportedly between 700 to 1000 years old.<sup>61</sup>

It has become Israel’s overt mission to destroy Palestinian farmers’ livelihoods using brutality and vandalism to prevent crops from growing at all. They have declared countless farms as “security zones” or “closed military zones” and then mown down thousands upon thousands of flourishing trees with bulldozers, replacing them with settlements on the Israeli side or deserted and untenable scrub land on the other.

The Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights has reported that since 1967 the Israeli authorities have uprooted or destroyed more than one and a half million trees, 70% of which were olive trees, the staple crop of rural communities.<sup>62</sup> Another Israeli tactic is simply to wall off the olive groves and deny the farmers access to their own land. According to one report, “The village of Anin, west of Jenin in the West Bank, has seen 1,100 hectares of olive orchards cut off by Israel’s security fence [sic]. Permits from the Israeli authorities are difficult to obtain and there are severe time constraints for visits, making it so hard for farmers to tend to their trees that some have given up altogether.”<sup>63</sup>

A report from the [Ma’an News Agency](#) reported how “olive harvesters said they went to their land in the morning but were surprised to find Israeli forces had put up large gates and barbed wire across the entrances to the land. On further enquiry, soldiers told the group they were prohibited from accessing the land because they did not have proper permits to do so.”<sup>64</sup>



According to another report, “About 11,000 Palestinian farmers will lose all or some of their land holdings to the fence [sic]. Sharif Omar, from the village of Jayous, near the Israeli town of Kochav Yair, said: ‘I have lost almost everything. I have lost 2,700 fruit and olive trees. And 44 of 50 acres I own have been confiscated for the fence [sic].’ His village lost seven wells, 15,000 olive trees and 50,000 citrus and other fruit trees. ‘This area is the agricultural store for the West Bank. They are destroying us,’ he said.”<sup>65</sup>

In a report in Haaretz, Gideon Levy reports how he:

*"visited the olive grove of Ayash Abu Hilwan, a farmer from the village of Beit Dejan, east of Nablus... [where] twelve years earlier, he had planted his olive trees on the rocky hillside that overlooks his home, a place that had always been considered part of the village's land. He tilled the soil, cleared the rocks and pruned and irrigated the trees. For 12 years he worked his grove. There was no fruit for his labour because in the hard, rocky soil of Beit Dejan, it takes an olive tree more than a dozen years to produce fruit. But the farmer waited patiently and believed that his children would harvest the crop, just as his father had left him olive trees. Thirteen days after Tu Bishvat, the destroyers of the Civil Administration appeared and began cutting. They cut and uprooted, sawed tree after tree, not sparing a single one. Thirteen days after Tu Bishvat, 600 trees were cut down, the farmer related; the Civil Administration says the number was 291. "It is like raising a child for 12 years and, suddenly, he is gone. Someone killed him," Abu Hilwan, his eyes moist, told me then in his blasted grove."*<sup>66</sup>

Not only are olive trees subject to uprooting, crushing by bulldozer and outright theft<sup>67</sup> but many unsettling reports are also coming out of Palestine whereby olive groves have been set ablaze, often by Israeli settlers. In one incident, for example, on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2009, a large group of settlers from the Kadomim settlement are alleged to have set fire to 290 fully grown olive trees in the villages of Kufur Kadoom and Amatin. This occurred at the beginning of olive picking season and was devastating to the farmers and their harvest.

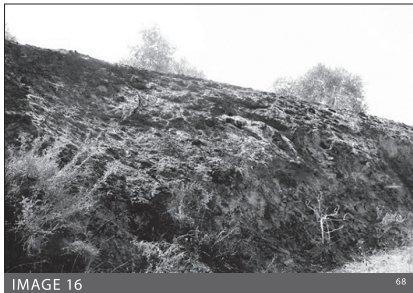


IMAGE 16

68



IMAGE 17

69

In another incident, on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2009, in a coordinated attack, Israeli settlers from the Harvat Gilad Settlement reportedly set fire to 300 trees in the South Nablus village of Sarra as well as other trees belonging to other villages. According to the International Solidarity Movement, local Palestinian villagers told them that Israeli settlers from the illegal Yitzhar Settlement regularly set fire to their olive groves. "This (fire) is not the first time; this is the hundredth time... Every year trees are burnt on this hill... These trees are from Roman times; they are ancient. More than 2000 years old."<sup>70</sup> Similar attacks are too numerous to mention but are increasingly vicious and more frequent.<sup>71</sup>

This is a cultural and environmental travesty taking place, as well as a form of economic oppression. Crop output has suffered a major blow as a result of the Israeli destruction of crops and the restrictions placed on Palestinian farmers barring them from tending their own crops. It has also been a major contributing factor to the soaring unemployment rates.<sup>72</sup> The current situation is nothing short of a humanitarian catastrophe. In a land where Palestinians are struggling to find food and clean water as a result of discriminatory Israeli policies, olives are a vital source of nourishment, one that is being destroyed right in front of malnourished Palestinians.

Not only is the Palestinian land and natural produce under attack but Palestinian farmers themselves are also subjected to extreme



violence. Some farmers have been killed and dozens injured by Israeli soldiers and settlers. Reports of brutality against Palestinian olive farmers by Israelis include attacks by gangs of masked settlers hitting them with sticks, shooting at them with tear gas and rubber bullets and spraying them with unknown chemicals that burn the skin.<sup>74</sup> One farmer commented, "It seems that we are going to pay with blood for each olive oil drop. The Palestinian olive oil this year is going to be mixed with the blood of its owner."<sup>75</sup>

## 7 The destruction of cultural institutions.

No area of Palestinian culture is left untouched by the Israelis; libraries, museums, theatres and even the Palestinian Ministry of Culture itself have not been safe from the onslaught.



IMAGE 18  
*Liana Badr the Director of the Palestinian Ministry of Culture and a distinguished novelist and filmmaker - showed the devastation at the Ministry to journalist John Pilger a short while after it occurred<sup>77</sup>*

During a month-long siege of Ramallah in 2002, the Palestinian Ministry of Culture was vandalised by the Israeli forces. According to one Israeli witness, journalist [Amira Hass](#), the sight that greeted Ministry workers on their return to work included overturned furniture, urine stains, rotting food, Israeli symbols emblazoned across the walls and piles of human excrement. Someone "even managed to defecate into the photocopier" Hass reported.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, "all the high-tech and electronic equipment had been wrecked or had vanished - computers, photocopiers, cameras, scanners, hard disks, editing equipment worth thousands

of dollars, television sets. The broadcast antenna on top of the building was destroyed." If the very institution set up to preserve Palestinian culture has not been excluded from an Israeli campaign of vandalism and destruction how can we expect them to treat Palestinian culture as a whole any better?

This sort of behaviour is by no means something new. Similar patterns of behaviour were recorded in the 1982 "Israel in Lebanon" report by Sean McBride in which he relates:

*"The systematic destruction of or transfer to Israel of the records, documents, artifacts, books etc... associated with the Palestinian people. The total destruction of the work of the Centre for Palestine Studies and the removal of their archives, as with Palestinian offices in Beirut, has been clearly documented... There has been a conscious attempt to disrupt the social organization of the Palestinian people to ensure that, through their disposal, their sense of identity and group loyalty would be weakened, if not destroyed."*<sup>78</sup>

There is a widespread campaign which is attempting to stifle all avenues for cultural development and preservation in Palestine. In February 2008 Israeli administrative orders were extended, once more, for the closure of over 80 Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem. This included cultural, media, social and economic institutions.<sup>79</sup> There have even been reports of the Israeli destruction of Palestinian libraries. In 2002, for instance, "The largest association of libraries in the world... passed a resolution deploring the destruction of Palestinian libraries and cultural resources during Israel's invasion of the West Bank."<sup>80</sup>

The charred remains of Palestinian buildings scar the landscape. Remnants of mosques, churches, schools, public baths, libraries, social and cultural institutions, radio stations, schools, charities, soap factories and many others dot the land. Even those cultural institutions that have remained intact are still largely inaccessible by virtue of obstacles such as, inter alia, the Separation Wall, the ongoing illegal siege on Gaza, the curfews and other

restrictions, all of which impede any work that such institutions may attempt to carry out. No cultural institution has been spared the Israeli ravaging of Palestine.

## CONCLUSION

To say that there has been a concerted and ongoing campaign of cultural genocide against the Palestinian people is stating the obvious. Even without a legal definition in international law the requirements for accusations of cultural genocide as set out above and as understood by academics and scholars seems to have been more than fulfilled by the Israelis in Palestine. Those who reject the contention that cultural genocide has and is being employed against the Palestinian people would be hard pressed to identify one aspect of Palestinian culture that has not been targeted and brutalised as a result of Israel's Zionist policies.

In the context of the type of genocide that Israel is employing against the Palestinian people, the writers of the 1982 Israel in Lebanon Commission report said that, at the very least, "the specific form of genocide which can be said to apply is the adoption of all kinds of measures, short of killing, to destroy the national culture, political autonomy and national will in the context of the Palestinian struggle for national liberation and self-determination."

Today, following events such as Israel's brutal Operation Cast Lead in December 2008 – January 2009, wilful murder will be seen as the main aspect of the physical genocide being perpetrated against the Palestinians. However, the conclusion reached in the 1982 report shows that there is an active campaign taking place to terminate the Palestinians culturally as well as physically. The existence of that report is evidence that this genocide is neither a recent nor an outdated policy; it is ongoing and longstanding. The vast majority of examples have not been included in this document.

Even prominent Israeli figures have admitted that several forms of genocide are taking place.

Israeli professor and political sociologist at Ben Gurion University Lev Grinberg, for example, wrote an article in 2004 entitled "Symbolic Genocide". In it he wrote, "What is symbolic genocide? Every people has its symbols, national leaders and political institutions, a home land, past and future generations, and hopes. All these symbolically represent a people. Israel is systematically damaging, destroying and eradicating all of these, with unbelievable bureaucratic jargon."

Despite the furore that Grinberg's article produced in Israel, his report's final analysis does not go far enough. It is not just a "symbolic" genocide that is taking place. Even in the 1982 "Israeli in Lebanon Report" the authors concluded, "The majority of the commission adopts the view that the pattern of activity dealt with in the Report substantiates the allegation of the deliberate destruction of the national and cultural rights and the identity of the Palestinian people and that this constituted a form of genocide... which is of sufficient gravity to warrant the most serious concern and censure."

Israel's cultural genocide of Palestine is not a subversive act. The state continues openly and blatantly to attack every possible avenue by which Palestinians could ever hope to preserve their cultural heritage and roots, and the world is sitting idly by watching it happen.

We have not even mentioned the most basic disruptions to family life caused by Israel's withholding of water, gas and electricity supplies to Palestinian regions. Nor have we discussed the curfews, the sieges, the extra-judicial executions, the mass arrests of men, women and children or any of the countless other human rights violations committed by the Israelis against the Palestinians. Each of these is intended to erode little by little Palestinian society and culture. Israel wants to make life as unbearable as possible for the people living under occupation in the hopes that they will eventually break down and concede to every demand made by the Israeli government, no

matter how unjust.

Similarly, we have not even looked at how Israel's aggressive human rights violations have spawned a whole host of new cultural disruptions such as the distorted reshaping of traditional family and gender roles; the increase in the number of widows and orphans; the decrease in the number of breadwinners in the family; the decrease in the number of school leavers or even those attending school; the creation of generations of Palestinian children physically and mentally scarred by Israeli aggression and so on. All of these factors have wrought incalculable havoc on the lives of the Palestinian people and is the legacy of destruction that Israel is leaving in its wake. We can no longer just watch from the sidelines and do nothing. All who have borne witness to the Israeli devastation of Palestinian culture now have a duty to ensure that Israel is held to account for its actions and that Palestinian culture is no longer left to fend for itself and struggle to survive in the hostile shadow of Israel. Palestinian culture has a right to exist and to flourish and we all have a duty to defend that right.

## (ENDNOTES)

- 1 The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide as adopted by Resolution 260 (III) A of the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948 states that: "Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html>
- 2 The Goldstone Report, also known as the Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission in the Gaza Conflict – Human Rights in Palestine and Other Occupied Territories, can be found at: [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/specialsession/9/docs/UNFMGC\\_Report.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/specialsession/9/docs/UNFMGC_Report.pdf) See p 545, para. 1765.
- 3 David Nersessian, "Rethinking Cultural Genocide Under International Law," Human Rights Dialogue: "Cultural Rights", Series 2, No. 12, Section 1, (Spring 2005). [http://www.cceia.org/resources/publications/dialogue/2\\_12/section\\_1/5139.html](http://www.cceia.org/resources/publications/dialogue/2_12/section_1/5139.html)
- 4 Stuart D. Stein, "Culturecide", (2003), <http://www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/genocide/culturecide.htm>
- 5 David Nersessian, op. cit.
- 6 For the purposes of this report I will concentrate on general aspects of culture as opposed to elements of "high culture" in terms of museums, art galleries, theatres and so on, although these too form an integral part of the concept of culture that is under heavy Israeli attack.
- 7 Image found at: <http://www.un.org/unrwa/photos/archive/refugees/jordan.html>
- 8 Image found at: <http://www.un.org/unrwa/photos/archive/destruction/destruction.html>
- 9 Kathleen and Bill Christison, *Palestine in Pieces – Graphic Perspectives on the Israeli Occupation*. Pluto Press (2009) pp6-7.
- 10 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/is.html>
- 11 Policy relating to statelessness, Palestinian nationality or doubtful nationality. 20th Sept. 2005 <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/freedom-of-information/released-information/foi-archive-immigration/1376-stateless?view=Html>
- 12 Country of Origin Information Report – "Occupied Palestinian Territories." UK Border Agency, 6th August 2009, Para. 101: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/palestine-070809.doc>
- 13 <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm>
- 14 AP Photo, Kevin Frayer: <http://lawrenceofcyberia.blogs.com/news/2004/07/wall.html>
- 15 Sean Macbride, The Report of the International Commission to enquire into reported violations of International Law by Israel during its invasion of the Lebanon, p22.
- 16 Ibid – MacBride p22.
- 17 <http://www.middleeastmonitor.org.uk/news/middle-east/716-knesset-criminalises-the-commemoration-of-the-qnakbaq> Also see "Anger over Palestinian Nakba ban proposal." BBC, 25th May 2009 [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/8066892.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/8066892.stm)
- 18 "Anger over Palestinian Nakba ban proposal" BBC 25th



- May 2009 [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/8066892.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/8066892.stm)
- 19 "Row over 'standard' Hebrew signs" BBC 13th July 2009 [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/8148089.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/8148089.stm)
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 "Arabs defiant on 'loyalty laws' plan." BBC 31st May 2009 [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/world/middle\\_east/8073752.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/world/middle_east/8073752.stm)
- 23 Image found at: <http://www.noblesanctuary.com/>
- 24 Images 6 and 7 found at: Friends of Al-Aqsa: <http://www.aqsa.org.uk/MULTIMEDIA/PhotoGallery/tabid/85/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>
- 25 On 21st August 1969 Michael Dennis Rohan, an Australian Christian Zionist, set the interior of the mosque on fire. The fire caused irreparable damage to the ancient minbar (pulpit) of Salah Ud-Deen (Saladin). Rohan claimed that he was "the Lord's emissary" doing God's work.
- 26 1st August 1984, Yosef Zeruya was convicted of planning to blow up the mosque.
- 27 11th April 1982, Allan Goodman, a Jewish American-Israeli soldier, entered the Holy Sanctuary and went on a shooting rampage with an M-16 rifle killing and injuring dozens of Muslim worshippers as they prayed. (Goodman was pardoned by the Israeli authorities following a period of incarceration.)
- 28 Israeli soldiers fire shots into the air on Memorial Day in Jerusalem 7th May 2003 Photo: AP [http://www.abudis.net/images/occupation\\_images.htm](http://www.abudis.net/images/occupation_images.htm)
- 29 [http://www.miftah.org/Gallery/Ig\\_img.cfm?imgid=1057](http://www.miftah.org/Gallery/Ig_img.cfm?imgid=1057) (AFP/Abbas Moman)
- 30 Adrian Blomfield in Jerusalem, "Fears of third intifada as tension grows in Israel." The Independent, 8th Oct 2009. Also see Dr Hanan Chehata, "Out of control Israel does it's best to provoke a third intifada: <http://www.middleeastmonitor.org.uk/articles/middle-east/722-out-of-control-israel-does-its-best-to-provoke-a-third-intifada>
- 31 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NLD0DinlwQ>
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 [www.templeinstitute.org/statement.htm](http://www.templeinstitute.org/statement.htm)
- 34 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NLD0DinlwQ>
- 35 "Press Statement by the Honourable Dato' Seri Syed Hamid Albar Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia on Israeli's excavation works on the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque." <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/551c81003e7f5f37852572840074d814>
- 36 Mohammad Ghazal, Jordan Times, Sunday 11th February 2007, "King Strongly Condemns Israeli Actions," <http://www.jordanembassyus.org/02112007001.htm>
- 37 "Syria Condemns Israeli Excavations in East Jerusalem." [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-11/05/content\\_10307290.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-11/05/content_10307290.htm)
- 38 "Masjid Al-Aqsa - Facing its most dangerous threat since 1948." [www.gazagroup.org](http://www.gazagroup.org)
- 39 "Al-Aqsa Mosque Under Attack 1967-2008". Leaflet published by the Friends of Al-Aqsa organisation.
- 40 Image is a Ma'an Image found at: <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article6675.shtml>
- 41 ICCPR: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm#art18>
- 42 UDHR: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml#a18>
- 43 The Geneva Convention IV (Civilians) (1949 - Art. 27) <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/385ec082b509e76c41256739003e636d/6756482d86146898c125641e004aa3c5>
- 44 Source: AP Photo - Khaled Omar Image found at: <http://www.trt.net.tr/Galeri/Resim.aspx?GaleriResimKodu=7140a572-bd04-40b0-b30c-e5c165119026&dil=en&Pn=8>
- 45 P54, "Health as Human Security in the Occupied Palestinian Territory - Health in the Occupied Palestinian Territory"; The Lancet, 4th March 2009, By Rajaie Batniji, Yoke Rabaia, Viet Nguyen-Gillham, Rita Giacaman, Eyad Sarraj, Rajja-Leena Punamaki, Hana Saab, Will Boyce, pp48-58
- 46 Image found at: <http://imeu.net/news/article0017049.shtml>
- 47 Ilan Pappé, The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine. Oneworld Publication (2006) p 217
- 48 Ibid. p218
- 49 P54 "Health as Human Security in the Occupied Palestinian Territory - Health in the Occupied Palestinian Territory"; The Lancet, 4th March 2009, By Rajaie Batniji, Yoke Rabaia, Viet Nguyen-Gillham, Rita Giacaman, Eyad Sarraj, Rajja-Leena Punamaki, Hana Saab, Will Boyce, pp48-58
- 50 "Muslim graveyard vandalized - Jewish worshippers desecrate Palestinian cemetery, break tombstones, write 'Death to Arabs' on graves." 06.08.07 Israel News Efrat Weiss. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3410332,00.html>
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