



HR0213

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1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The United Nations General Assembly recommended  
3 on November 29, 1947 to partition Palestine into two states  
4 against the wishes of Palestine's majority indigenous  
5 inhabitants; and

6 WHEREAS, This partition plan nevertheless provided for the  
7 "Full protection for the rights and interests of minorities,  
8 including the protection of the linguistic, religious and  
9 ethnic rights of the peoples and respect for their cultures,  
10 and full equality of all citizens with regard to political,  
11 civil and religious matters"; and

12 WHEREAS, Before the State of Israel declared its  
13 independence on May 14, 1948, there were already between  
14 250,000 to 300,000 Palestinian refugees who were expelled or  
15 fled from their homes, often after attacks by Zionist militias  
16 on major Palestinian cities and villages; and

17 WHEREAS, By the time the war ended with the signing of  
18 armistice agreements between Israel and neighboring Arab  
19 countries in 1949 that established Israel's sovereignty over  
20 78% of Palestine and, in the process, conquered an additional  
21 23% of Palestine beyond those areas allocated to the Jewish  
22 state under the partition plan, there were at least 750,000

1 Palestinian refugees, approximately 75% of the indigenous  
2 population that had lived in areas that became Israel; and

3 WHEREAS, By 1949, Israel had depopulated more than 400  
4 Palestinian villages and cities, often demolishing all  
5 structures and planting forests or repopulating them with  
6 Jewish Israelis; and

7 WHEREAS, Palestinians refer to this experience of  
8 uprooting, dispossession, and refugeedom as the Nakba, meaning  
9 "catastrophe" in English; and

10 WHEREAS, The Nakba refers not only to the historical event  
11 but also to an ongoing process of Israel's expropriation of  
12 Palestinian land and its dispossession of the Palestinian  
13 people that continues to this day through the establishment  
14 and expansion of approximately 300 illegal settlements and  
15 outposts in the occupied Palestinian West Bank in which  
16 approximately 674,000 Israelis reside as of 2020; and

17 WHEREAS, The United States knew of the scale and magnitude  
18 of the Palestine refugee crisis as it unfolded as is  
19 documented in an October 1948 telegram to the President and  
20 Secretary of State from the United States Embassy in Israel  
21 warning that the "Arab Refugee tragedy is rapidly reaching  
22 catastrophic proportions and should be treated as a disaster";

1 and

2 WHEREAS, The United States voted in favor of United  
3 Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 on December 11, 1948,  
4 which states that Palestinian "refugees wishing to return to  
5 their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be  
6 permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that  
7 compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing  
8 not to return and for loss of or damage to property which,  
9 under principles of international law or in equity, should be  
10 made good by the governments or authorities responsible"; and

11 WHEREAS, Palestinian refugees' right of return is not only  
12 stipulated in a General Assembly resolution but is also  
13 anchored in international law and in Article 13 of the  
14 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states "Everyone  
15 has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to  
16 return to his country"; and

17 WHEREAS, On December 8, 1949, the United Nations General  
18 Assembly adopted Resolution 302 establishing the United  
19 Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the  
20 Near East, which the United States has financially supported  
21 on an almost continuous basis since its establishment; and

22 WHEREAS, Of the more than 7,000,000 Palestinian refugees,

1 the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine  
2 Refugees in the Near East provides much-needed social services  
3 to 5,700,000 Palestine refugees today; and

4 WHEREAS, International law also recognizes that  
5 descendants of refugees retain their rights as refugees, and  
6 according to the United Nations, "Palestine refugees are not  
7 distinct from other protracted refugee situations such as  
8 those from Afghanistan or Somalia, where there are multiple  
9 generations of refugees, considered by UNHCR as refugees and  
10 supported as such. Protracted refugee situations are the  
11 result of the failure to find political solutions to their  
12 underlying political crises"; and

13 WHEREAS, A just and lasting resolution requires respect  
14 for and the implementation of Palestine refugee rights as  
15 enshrined in United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194  
16 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; therefore, be  
17 it

18 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
19 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
20 we recognize the Nakba; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That we reject efforts to enlist, engage, or  
22 otherwise associate the United States Government with denial

1 of the Nakba; and be it further

2       RESOLVED, That we encourage education and public  
3 understanding of the facts of the Nakba, including the United  
4 States' role in the humanitarian relief effort and the  
5 relevance of the Nakba to modern-day refugee crises; and be it  
6 further

7       RESOLVED, That we support the provision of social service  
8 to Palestinian refugees through the United Nations Relief and  
9 Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; and be it  
10 further

11       RESOLVED, That we support the implementation of  
12 Palestinian refugees' rights as enshrined in United Nations  
13 General Assembly Resolution 194 and the Universal Declaration  
14 of Human Rights.