



مركز العودة الفلسطيني  
Palestinian Return Centre





# WHO WE ARE

**The Palestinian Return Centre (PRC)** works to defend the rights of Palestinian refugees past, present and future.

We are an independent, non-partisan organisation, committed to advocating for Palestinian refugees in accordance with the historical, political and legal basis of the Right to Return.

PRC was established in 1996. In 2003 PRC became a member of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP). In 2015, the organisation received special consultative status with the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

PRC remains committed to working for the right of return for Palestinian refugees displaced after the two mass exoduses of 1948 and 1967, and the ongoing waves of refugees created by Israel and conflicts in the region.



## Message from the General Director **Tarek Hamoud**

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**Since its establishment in 1996 PRC has carried the message of millions of voiceless Palestinian refugees.**

We work to promote and publicise the plight of the Palestinian refugees while advocating for their basic rights. Although we have faced many challenges at the Centre, our message has reached politicians, parliamentarians, journalists, students and member of the public at on a global scale.

70 years after the Nakba, some key questions remain unanswered and intrinsic problems endure unaddressed. Firstly, the

complex and emotive question of the status of Jerusalem is still uncertain. Secondly, the future of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is equally ambiguous, as at the time of writing, the United States has halted all funding. Although a number of nations have stepped up their contributions to UNRWA, the prognosis looks catastrophic for the five million Palestinian refugees who rely upon daily support and welfare that the Agency provides. Thirdly, Israel's continued illegal settlement building has encroached so far into Palestinian territories that the prospect for a viable two-

state solution seems increasingly unworkable.

PRC continues to work tirelessly with international partners, including national governments and transnational bodies such as the United Nations, to tackle and solve these challenges faced by Palestinian refugees both in the Occupied Territories and across the diaspora.

I hope this introductory brochure not only provides you with good examples of our work and what PRC stands for, but also gives you an insight into the importance of addressing the plight of Palestinian refugees.

# MISSION STATEMENT

*“Everyone has the  
right to leave any  
country, including  
his own, and return  
to his country” -*

The Universal Declaration of  
Human Rights, Article 13 (2)

**PRC works to defend and promote the Right to Return of  
Palestinian refugees of 1948 and their descendents in the  
diaspora.**

Our work focuses on educating the public, defending human rights and empowering Palestinian refugees to ensure their plight remains firmly on the political and international human rights agendas.

We partner with Palestinian refugees, international NGOs, governments and transnational bodies who are committed to advocating for the historical, political and legal basis of the Right to Return.

The Right to Return is a universally recognised right in international refugee law, human rights law, the law of nationality, and the law of state responsibility. UN General Assembly passed Resolution 194 (III) in 1948 affirming the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and to obtain restitution and compensation.





# RATIONALE

Seven decades after the Nakba ("Catastrophe"), the plight of the Palestinian people is yet to be resolved.

The Nakba refers to the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, when 750,000 Palestinians were forcibly removed from their homes, rendering them and their future descendants stateless.

Our centre remains resolutely committed to the advancement of the Palestinians' right to live in their homeland in peace, freedom and dignity. We communicate their messages to a wide audience in an effort to restore their usurped national rights.



# PALESTINIAN REFUGEES


The international community estimates that there are more than seven million Palestinian refugees. This number includes the 750,000 refugees displaced from 1948, plus their descendants in the wider diaspora. Five million of these refugees are registered and eligible for aid and assistance provided by UNRWA. As stated by Pierre Krähenbühl, UNRWA Commissioner General, **“one cannot simply wish away 5 million people”**.

According to UNRWA statistics, nearly one-third of registered Palestine refugees, more than 1.5 million individuals, live in 58 recognised Palestine refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Socioeconomic conditions are poor. Infrastructure is barely present and statelessness affects the mobility of workers and families across the world.

*...no settlement can be just and complete if recognition is not accorded to the right of the Arab refugee to return to the home from which he has been dislodged. It would be an offence against the principles of elemental justice if these innocent victims of the conflict were denied the right to return to their homes...”*

– Folke Bernadotte, 1948 (first UN mediator)





# VISION

**TO BE THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT PALESTINIAN REFUGEES**

AWARENESS AND EDUCATION TO PROMOTE A  
POSITIVE EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGE

PRESERVE PALESTINIAN IDENTITY

EMPOWER PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

## AWARENESS AND EDUCATION TO PROMOTE A POSITIVE EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGE

**Educating and informing the general public, politicians, stakeholders, key decision makers and international organisations about the complex dynamics surrounding the Palestinian refugee issue.**

Over the past 20 years we have organised events and conferences that bring together academics, politicians, practitioners and journalists in order to educate, inform and advise the public and governments on various elements of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Additionally we produce informative content in different media from books and reports to videos and interviews on the situation of Palestinian refugees. We have collaborated with international media organisations such as Al Jazeera on some of these initiatives.

We also aim to mark important events in the timeline of Palestinian history. For example, on the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, as part of the PRC's Balfour Apology Campaign, we produced a short film title "100 Balfour Road" to educate the British public about the UK's historical legacy in Palestine. Following this, our Parliamentary petition which called for Britain to issue a formal apology to the Palestinian people received widespread international support. In response, the UK Government issued a written response, declaring:

*"We recognise that the Declaration should have called for the protection of political rights of the non-Jewish communities in Palestine, particularly their right to self-determination"*

## PRESERVE PALESTINIAN IDENTITY

**Through connecting, enhancing and maintaining the relationships of Palestinian communities in the diaspora.**

PRC puts the preservation of Palestinian identity at the forefront of what we do. We hold events and engage with stakeholders around this specific subject matter whether that may be from political, economic or cultural perspectives. For example, since 2003, PRC has held the 'Palestinians in Europe Conference' which has been a key initiative to help preserve Palestinian identity in Europe. The conference brings together thousands of Palestinians born in Europe as well as those recently displaced from ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, and celebrates Palestinian culture and identity. We have also hosted cultural exhibitions to relate the story of the Nakba to different and diverse audiences.

## EMPOWER PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

*"Palestinian frustration is growing under the weight of half a century of occupation and the paralysis of the peace process"* – Ban Ki Moon, former

Secretary-General of the UN, 2016

**PRC works directly with government bodies and UN agencies to help individual Palestinians develop their own initiatives to support their communities and defend their rights.**

As part of our initiatives to empower Palestinian refugees, PRC has hosted collaborative training courses with international media organisations such as Al Jazeera to help Palestinians in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey develop media and communication skills. We also offer workshops to cultivate a better understanding of the role of NGOs and civil society partners in supporting the Palestinian cause. The objective is to arm Palestinians with transferable skills and knowledge to pass on to future generations organically.

*"I wish to convey to you the deep sense of despair and insecurity that runs through the Palestinian refugee community, but also the extraordinary courage, determination and strength that I witness time and time again in my trips and meetings"*

– Pierre Krähenbühl, Commissioner General UNRWA, 2015



## LONDON



Al-Jazeera and PRC  
conference: World  
War I, impact on  
Palestine, 2014

## GENEVA



Human Rights  
Council event on  
house demolitions  
in West Bank, 2016

## NEW YORK



ECOSOC NGO  
committee,  
voting for PRC's  
accreditation, 2015

U K P A R L I A M E N T



Nakba 70 anniversary event,  
May 2018



Balfour apology  
campaign with Lord  
Norman Warner,  
Summer 2017



US funding cuts  
to UNRWA event,  
May 2018



# UNITED NATIONS

PRC has been a UN accredited NGO since 2003. Through our membership at the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) and as a result of our special consultative status at the Economic Social Council (ECOSOC), obtained in 2015, we play an active role in shaping UN policy on the question of Palestine.

Our aim is to ensure that the catastrophic situation facing millions of Palestinians in refugee camps across the Middle East remains a priority for the international community.

PRC is deeply integrated and engaged within the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). We host regular events and deliver briefs on legal and humanitarian concerns of Palestinian refugees to sessions at the UNHRC. In addition we monitor the situation on the ground in real time and use the legal channels available to us to support Palestinians' access to justice. For example in 2018, we submitted a report based on victims' testimonies to the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on the Gaza protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. We also hold meetings with internal missions at UNHRC as well as public events in Geneva and New York.



# PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES

## UNITED KINGDOM AND EUROPEAN UNION PARLIAMENTARY WORK

PRC works closely within the UK parliament, harnessing our connections with a diverse range of MPs across party lines in Westminster. We hold monthly events hosted by MPs on key and current issues facing Palestinians.

We have the support of, and regularly engage with, Palestine All Party Parliamentary Group Chairs past and present.

MPs and MEPs widely endorsed our successful application for consultative status at the United Nations in 2015.

PRC has organised multiple valuable cross-party delegations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Syria and Lebanon. Some of the parliamentarians that joined our delegations include: Jeremy Corbyn MP, Philip Hollobone, Lord Norman Warner, Baroness Tessa Blackstone, Ms Clare Short, Sir Gerald Kaufmann, Baroness Tonge, Baroness Northover, Lord Nazir Ahmed, plus a number of MEPs.

PRC also works closely with the European Parliament - both at an institutional level and individual level. In addition to hosting and participating in small-scale seminars, PRC representatives are regularly invited to present our work to the European Parliament's Delegation for relations with Palestine.

## CONFERENCES

PRC created the annual Palestinians in Europe Conference (PEC) in 2003; it has been running for 16 years, each year hosted by a different city. At the time of writing, the conference has been held in the UK, Austria, Germany, Denmark, Netherlands, Italy, Sweden, France and Belgium.

The PEC brings together thousands of Palestinians from around Europe, as well as senior politicians, professionals and activists. Each year different themes are discussed, but the Right to Return remains the underlying objective and message of the conference. The conference has become a collaborative initiative between PRC and various European-Palestinian organisations.

In accordance with PRC's vision and mission, the PEC's aims include:

- ♦ Celebrating Palestinian culture, folklore and heritage with the many Palestinian generations across Europe through music, dance and culinary traditions. There are always great dabke performances!
- ♦ Explaining the Palestinian perspective of the conflict to wider European communities; hosting the conference in different cities every year has been beneficial to distributing and promoting our messages.
- ♦ Strengthening the Palestinian objective to end Israeli occupation through our work with European partners to achieve a common goal.
- ♦ Preserving Palestinian identity among the diaspora in Europe and working to maintain connections to their ancestral homeland.

## WORKSHOPS & SEMINARS

PRC holds workshops and seminars at UNHRC, the UK Parliament, the UN in New York on specific legal and humanitarian issues faced by Palestinian people. The events are public and are designed to communicate high level issues to a broad audience, from those who are well versed in UN security council resolutions and their implications, to individuals or groups who know less about this topic. In 2018 PRC hosted an event at UNHRC with UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territory Occupied since 1967.

PRC also holds joint events in collaboration with like-minded organisations and individuals. For example, we host meetings in Parliament with cross-party support from groups such as Labour Friends of Palestine, Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine and Scottish National Party Friends of Palestine. We have also worked with other Palestinian civil society organisations and Universities in the UK.





## PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES

### EXHIBITIONS

PRC showcases exhibitions at every Palestinians in Europe Conference. We also regularly bring the exhibitions to student-run events at UK universities. The themes of our exhibitions have focused on the Nakba, Jerusalem, Apartheid and the Gaza Strip. In 2013 we presented our exhibitions at the Global Peace and Unity (GPU) conference held at the London Excel Centre.

In January 2017 as part of a Palestinian cultural festival, PRC was invited to Santiago, Chile to host an exhibition on the Nakba. Chile is the largest diaspora. Further to this, during the Palestinian Society's conference at Imperial College London, PRC hosted an exhibition in March 2018.

PRC is planning for future initiatives with other partner organisations to expand our contribution to the Palestinian cause from a cultural perspective.



## REPORTS & PUBLICATIONS

The Journal of Palestinian Refugee Studies (JPRS) has been published by PRC since 2011. The aim and scope of JPRS is to provide a forum for original research to discuss and debate different aspects of the Palestinian refugee issue.

In 2015, PRC in collaboration with Public Interest Investigations (Spinwatch), a British based research group, published the report "How Israel attempts to mislead the United Nations." PRC publishes regular reports that focus on highlighting the conditions of Palestinian refugees under occupation and in exile.

PRC has published numerous books, including: "From Refugees To Citizens At Home" (2001, co-published with the Palestine Land Society); "The Israeli Law of Return & Its Impact on the Struggle in Palestine" (2004); "Palestinian Refugees in the Arab World: Realities & Prospects" (2012, co-published with the

Al Jazeera Centre for Studies); "Britain's Legacy in Palestine" (2013); and "World War I Impact on Palestine: A Hundred Year Legacy" (2016).

PRC is also the distributor of academic Salman Abu Sitta's "The Atlas of Palestine 1917-1966" (2nd edition 2010).

## INFORMATION BANK

PRC has an extensive archive of information related to the Palestinian refugee issue. Our archive includes books, publications, reports, UN briefings and event transcripts. It provides a crucial resource for academics and researchers as well as policymakers, stakeholders or activists who are looking for factual information which may support or complement their work.

# CRISIS RESPONSE

## ACTION GROUP FOR PALESTINIANS OF SYRIA (AGPS)

The Action Group for Palestinians of Syria (AGPS) is a London-based human rights watchdog and observatory that monitors the situation of Palestinian refugees in war-torn Syria. The AGPS emerged in response to the emergency created by the Syrian conflict. The AGPS was established by PRC in 2012 but now runs as an independent organisation.

The AGPS provides daily updates, statistics, and reports covering the displacement and violations against Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS). The AGPS also keeps a record of the number of PRS deaths and detainees held in prison as result of the Syrian conflict.

The AGPS comprises a team of international journalists, analysts, on-the-spot reporters, news correspondents, veterans and local activists working to disseminate purely fact-based information to a wide audience without bias or a political agenda.

In a short period of time the AGPS has become an established and reliable source of information on Palestinians from Syria. AGPS' work has been cited in academic books and it is often included in news articles. AGPS has also been contacted by the UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria for consultation regarding the issue of Palestinian refugees affected by the conflict.

FURTHER INFORMATION:  
[www.actionpal.org.uk](http://www.actionpal.org.uk)



Palestinian child overlooks destroyed UNRWA school in Khan Eshieh camp in Syria.



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[www.prc.org.uk](http://www.prc.org.uk)

[twitter.com/prclondon](https://twitter.com/prclondon) | [facebook.com/returncentre](https://facebook.com/returncentre)

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