

TEXT OF PRESS RELEASE PRIOR TO THE NAKBA DAY RALLY/MARCH (May 14th 2021)

On May 14th, 1948, Israel declared itself an independent nation-state on land that had been part of the British Mandate for Palestine just the day before. The following day, Arab nations invaded to restore order and stop the bloodshed that was commencing. What followed the creation of the state of Israel was the forcible expulsion of more than 700,000 Palestinian Arabs by the Israeli army and paramilitary forces in what is known in Arabic as the Nakba, or “Catastrophe.” Entire villages were erased from the map and from history. The entire map of Palestine was altered with Arabic names being replaced by Hebrew names.

The Nakba has not ended for Palestinians. It continues today. More than 1,500 Palestinians—more than half of whom are children—in Jerusalem will be displaced from their homes, under the municipality’s plans to demolish Palestinian buildings to build a biblical theme park. In the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, 169 residents—including 46 children—face imminent displacement as the Israeli courts have ordered them to leave their homes to make room for Jewish Israeli settlers. Right now in East Jerusalem, Israeli forces are forcibly and illegally expelling Palestinian Arab residents in an effort to ethnically cleanse Jerusalem like they already have done in Israel proper.

While politicians and the media in the USA call for calm on both sides, they fail to mention that Palestinians live under a brutal apartheid regime. In 2018, the Israeli Knesset passed a law declaring that Israel is the nation-state for the Jewish people. Israel continues to violate international law by building settlements, ethnically cleansing neighborhoods, and annexing land from not only Palestine but from neighboring Syria as well.

Zionism was conceived from the very beginning as a settler-colonial project with the goal of completely eradicating the Palestinians from the land and erasing any trace of Arabic culture and language. Armed by the United States to the tune of over \$2 billion yearly and illegally possessing nuclear weapons, Israel remains the largest threat to regional peace and stability.

Vermonters for Justice in Palestine (VTJP) is announcing a major rally that will unite all the forces in Vermont who stand with Palestinians for justice and liberation. The rally is Saturday May 15th 2021 at 1pm at Battery Park in Burlington and is being co-sponsored by the following organizations and political parties:

Co-Sponsors:

Vermonters for Justice in Palestine

Decolonize Burlington

Jewish Voice for Peace, Vermont-New Hampshire

Community Voices for Immigrant Rights

Red Banner Anti-Imperialist Collective

Party for Socialism and Liberation

Party of Communists USA

Rise Upper Valley

Education Justice Coalition of Vermont

Vermont Workers’ Center

Will Miller Social Justice Lecture Series