

Summary and Goals of Session 6:

Participants transition from learning about the history of the Nakba in previous workshops to thinking about the ongoing effects of the Nakba. In this session, we look at who the Palestinian refugees are under international law and consider a range of views regarding how they might be included to ensure a peaceful, just resolution.

Total time: 1.5-2 hours

Materials and set-up:

- Whiteboard/chart paper/markers
- Video equipment with Internet connection
- [Graphs](#) on Palestinian refugees
- [Map](#) and [informational posters](#) to hang around the room
- Reflection questions on chart paper/computer screen

I. (20 min) Opening

1. (2 min) Welcome

Facilitator Action: Briefly welcome participants to today's session.

2. (18 min) Prep Readings and Opening Discussion

Facilitator Action: As a whole group, briefly discuss the prep readings. The key here is to establish a basic shared understanding of the U.S., Israeli, and Arab governments' positions regarding the refugees in 1949. Facilitator takes notes on chart paper/computer screen and guides discussion:

- *What are some of the main arguments you've heard for or against the right of return?*
- *What questions/concerns were raised for you through the readings or earlier sessions regarding the right of return?*

Facilitator Note: Depending on your audience, acknowledge the discomfort or uncertainty some participants may feel about the implementation of the Right of Return. Beyond the conversation, participants can express their thoughts in their personal notebooks or share on the ongoing group notebook.

II. (20 minutes) Who are Palestinian Refugees?

Materials and set-up:

- [Graphs displayed on screen](#)
- [Map](#) and [informational posters](#) hung around the room

Facilitator Action: This exercise will establish “Who are Palestinian Refugees?” Prior to the activity, hang this [map](#) and [informational posters](#) around the room. On the computer screen, display [these graphs](#) showing the distribution of refugees. Explain that Palestinian refugees have varied experiences depending on where they live. Encourage participants to walk around the room and consider the following guiding questions as they examine the informational posters:

- What stands out to you?
- What similarities and differences do you notice between the varying experiences?

Facilitator Note: You may want to draw participants’ attention to the current crisis facing Palestinian refugees in regards to the Syrian civil war. In particular, note that while the United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) was originally formed to give special protection to Palestinian refugees, it has now resulted in a detrimental gap in protection for Palestinian refugees from Syria compared to those covered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). For more information, [read this article from the Nation](#).

Facilitator Action: After 10+ minutes, bring participants back together and ask a few people to share their responses to the guiding questions. Use this to connect to the next activity.

III. (15 minutes) Refugee Life Today

Materials and set-up:

- Internet connection
- Computer/projector

Facilitator Action: Choose one or two of the following videos to illustrate the previous discussion and hear what life is like today for refugees in their own voices.

- Video of [Khaled](#) from Dheisheh refugee camp
- Video of [Khouloud](#) from Aida refugee camp
- [Nakba survivor videos](#)

Encourage Participants to keep this human perspective in mind as we get into looking at Right of Return in practice.

IV. (55-65 minutes) Return in practice

Materials and set-up:

- [Badil's Q&A packet](#) on computer screens
- Whiteboard/chart paper/markers

Facilitator Note: Depending on your audience, participants may still be experiencing discomfort or uncertainty about the Right of Return. If this is the case, use this optional framing to present the next activity to the group: We've now taken in a lot of information as we enter into discussion of the Right of Return. There are many perspectives on the Right of Return, but right now we're examining what it feels like for Palestinians to think about the Right of Return. Though you may have to suspend some of your personal beliefs, we are inviting you to engage in this activity to explore questions of how the Right of Return might be actualized, and why it might feel important to Palestinians who are currently living in refugee camps or the diaspora because of the Nakba.

1. (45 min) Small group exploration of Return

Facilitator Action: Break into four groups for 15 minutes, then return for 30 minute discussion:

- Each group will be assigned 4 questions from [Badil's Q&A packet](#) starting with "What is the role of refugees in implementing a durable solution?" on page 24.
 - Group 1:
 - What is the role of refugees in implementing a durable solution?
 - How do refugees envision a future relationship with Israelis?
 - If Palestinian refugees are not nationals of the state of Israel, how can they claim to have a right to return to Israel and repossess their properties?
 - What is the reason behind the forcible transfer of Palestinians?
 - Group 2:

- *How can the refugees return if Israel is to maintain its Jewish/Zionist character?*
 - *Why can't Israel define itself as both a Jewish and a democratic state?*
 - *Why don't refugees return to a future Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip?*
 - *Does the right of return to Israel conflict with a two-state solution?*
 - *Group 3:*
 - *Why don't the Arab states absorb the Palestinian refugees?*
 - *How can refugees return when their villages and homes have been destroyed and new towns built in their place?*
 - *What happens when someone else is living in a refugee's home?*
 - *But who will own what land?*
 - *Group 4:*
 - *Why is Israel opposed to durable solutions for Palestinian refugees?*
 - *Why are Palestinian refugee and IDP rights not respected?*
 - *Is Israel a colonial state? Is it guilty of the crime of apartheid?*
 - *How can the right of return contribute to peace and reconciliation?*
- *Ask the groups to look at the [Badil packet](#) and their corresponding sections and prepare a summary to share with the group.*
- *Each group will have 3-4 minutes to present their findings and 5 minutes to answer questions from the rest of the group. After all groups present, tie together what was shared and encourage participants to come back to the packet at a later point to learn more.*

Facilitator Note: *One of the many contentious issues that may come up during this session is the matter of whether right of return and compensation for Palestinians should be linked to compensation for Jews who left Arab states (either because they fled, were expelled, or were induced to leave by Zionist activists). You may want to respond by acknowledging this as an important question, but one that is independent of Israel's obligations to Palestinian refugees under international law, and one that has been used to deflect from these obligations. Though it is beyond the scope of our curriculum, for further information interested participants may want to look at the following links:*

- [Israel's cynical campaign to pit Arab Jews against Palestinian refugees](#) by Richard Irvine
- [Bodies and Borders: An Interview with Ella Shohat](#) by Manuela Boatca and Sérgio Costa
- [The Forgotten Refugees](#) by Philip Mendes

2. (10 min) Group reflection on Practicalities of Return

Facilitator Action: Following the group presentations, introduce the concept of “Practicalities of Return.” That is, the elements of practical planning for the implementation of Return for Palestinian refugees. Encourage participants to name key issues that need to be addressed in order to implement return. Record them on the class notebook/chart paper. Examples might include: land use, citizenship, economy, political structure, resource distribution, legal issues, truth and reconciliation efforts, psychological/emotional obstacles to implementing return, or others.

Facilitator Note: For an alternate activity or more background on the Practicalities of Return for you or for participants, read [Badil and Zochrot’s discussion papers](#), which highlight different visions for the future in detail. You can also watch [this introductory video from Badil](#).

3. (Optional) (10 min) Group discussion on social change

Facilitator Action: At this point, some participants may be overwhelmed by the complexity of the issues to be addressed in order to realize the right of return. It may be useful to remind them of successful movements for social change within their lifetimes. Use the following questions to guide a group discussion.

- What are moments in social movement history where really big changes have happened?
- What do we know about what it took to achieve success in these movements?
- What are the limits to these successes? (Gay marriage doesn’t mean equality and justice for all LGBTQ people, the Civil Rights Movement didn’t mean an end to racism, etc.)
- In the case of the right of return, what is our role? How can we support those leading the movement?

V. (15 minutes) Closing

Materials and set-up:

- Participants’ reflection notebooks
- Reflection questions on chart paper/computer screen

1. (13 min) Closing Reflections

Facilitator Action: Ask participants to spend 5-7 minutes reflecting on the following questions in their journal.

- Think of where you were when you began this session on Right of Return (or the series as a whole, depending on how you're using this workshop).
- How do you think now about the idea of return? What does the Right of Return mean to you?
- Looking at the list of key issues of the practicalities of return created by the group in the previous exercise, what do you think now about the visions and possibilities for the implementation of the Right of Return?

Facilitator Action: Ask participants to write down on a sticky note one question they still have or piece they would like to address in the closing session. If time remains have everyone read out their questions. If short on time, have participants post their questions on the wall where others can read them. Use the questions to help guide the final session.

2. (2 min) Prep for next session

Prep for Session 7

- Ask participants to think about/bring in an example of art or creative practices used to create/represent resistance. Can be connected to any issue.