

# Palestine Is Gone! Gone! راحت فلسطين

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)  
Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)  
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*Lately, a particular memory/image of my grandmother Sitti Fattoum has been coming back to me vividly. She'd be sitting in a chair, maybe watching TV, or at the kitchen table drinking a cup of coffee, when suddenly, without provocation, she would clap her hands, the palm of one striking the back of the other, and say, to no one in particular:*

راحت فلسطين

Palestine is gone! Gone!

I think part of it is that, as a child, I never understood her agony properly — how could I? Startled, I would ask, what was that, Sitti? And she would simply repeat the phrase with such sadness and alarm on her face, it could have all happened yesterday.

How could I, born in exile just after the Nakba, in the arid town of Zarka in Jordan, have any sense of what she had lost, the beauty and richness of what she was holding onto in her heart, her village of Lifta? Even as she went around muttering at the poor soil of her Zarka garden and how it yielded something only with extreme difficulty, I still could not fathom her deprivation and the enormity of her loss. She was an uneducated fellaha (farmer) for whom land and growing things were part of her soul.

And now, on the eve of Israel's annexation of parts of the West Bank, I feel the urge to lament to my children and grandchildren about it, just as she did to me, but I don't know how much of the pain they would understand or absorb.

One thing I wonder about: how did I, born and reared in exile from Palestine, grow up to inherit and possess a psyche that totally inhabits my grandmother's loss and pain. Perhaps part of it is the result of the few years of my life, when I too experienced the feel of the soil of Palestine in my hands, not as a farmer, but as a boarder in Schmidt's Girls College in Jerusalem, where I and my sisters were placed after the early death of our mother and before the Naksa, the Six-Day War on 5 June 1967 and Israel's annexation of Jerusalem, 53 years ago today.

But what about my children and grandchildren? Is their birthright completely lost to them, as I ask in [Palestine is now the birthright of Trump's grandchildren rather than mine?](#)

The Palestinian plight is savagely painful and the pain is compounded by the bafflingly off-hand dismissal and erasure by Western powers of that pain, and by the monumental challenges facing Mahmoud Abbas, our nominal and imposed leader, for many of our true

leaders are either murdered or languishing in Israeli prisons. I hope and pray Abbas will find his way, as mapped for him [here](#), to doing the right thing — transfer the Palestinian Authority apparatus to the Palestinian National Council (PNC)

As a supporter of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, heart and soul, I find empowerment, inspiration, hope and comfort in connecting what's happening globally regarding Black lives, police brutality and the ongoing exposure of the myriad systemic injustices and inequalities in the U.S. that devalued George Floyd's life, with the Palestinian struggle.

As someone said on Facebook, "It literally took the whole damn world to make it happen" — to draw attention to the injustice.

Given Israel's forthcoming unconscionable annexation of parts of the West Bank, even though, in large part, it is merely rubber-stamping the status quo, there is an urgency to the Palestinian struggle that imposes its own priority on the moment and gains strength and solace from what's happening globally with BLM. It will take the whole damn world to rise up against Zionism before Palestine will be free at last.

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