



# PALESTINE, STATE-BUILDING AND IMAGINED COMMUNITY

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By Dr Diyana Kasimon

The attacks on the Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah earlier this year have evoked grief and anger from around the world. World leaders and citizens globally condemn the act of violence by the Israeli police to crackdown on protesters rallying against the forced eviction of Palestinian families from occupying the neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah, land claimed by the Israeli settlers. The attack did not end there, in fact the Israeli forces have been relentlessly attacking the Palestinians since, resulting in deaths and hundreds of people wounded including women and children. The animosity has also resulted in retaliation acts coming from the Palestinian side.

The conflict between the Palestinian and Israelis has been going on for far too long ever since the public declaration of a Jewish homeland in Palestine during the First Zionist Congress in 1897 and the Balfour Declaration in 1917. This process has left Palestine to become a nation-without-state or a stateless nation due to the forced establishment of the national home for the Jewish people.

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The case of Palestine is a clear example of state-building in the context of peacebuilding and conflict resolution since it concerns with the idea of statehood. The process of state-building of Palestine is not new as the process has already begun since the 1990s in the effort of getting the world to recognise the state of Palestine. While it does draw the attention of the world, it also draws a slew of foreign interventions that make life even more difficult for the Palestinians. As a result, the outcome of the state-building process in Palestine has neither resulted in peace nor a state, which has left Palestine in the nation-without-a-state limbo until today.



The idea of state and nation is best described through the concept of “imagine community” by Benedict Anderson. Imagine community represents the idea that it is “imagined” because the members of a nation “imagine” uniting with their fellow members whom they have never met or heard of, but they share common interests and backgrounds. As for the Palestinians, they already have their own national consciousness, hence their movement towards self-determination. This concept is fundamental in determining the solution for the long-standing conflict. Do Palestinian and Israeli share enough commonality to live in one state, or will having two separate states coexisting be the best solution?

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in conjunction with the recent International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Malaysian Research and Education Foundation (MyREF) and ACCIN through an initiative, Justice for Palestine Action Front (JPAF) stand firmly behind the people of Palestine in ending the oppression, fighting for justice and advocating the Palestinian state for all. At the moment, JPAF focuses on three key areas which are Mobilising World Public Opinion, Strengthening Unity and Collaborations, and Advocacy and Diplomacy; leaving Socio-economic and Infrastructural Development and Health, and Education, Training and Employment to other civil society organisations.

That being said, since we are in the final leg of 2021, JPAF puts high hopes on the international community to come out with immediate and concrete solutions that will end the long years of suffering of the people, uphold human rights and realise its self-determination. The Palestinians deserve to get back their beloved land and reclaim their territories of which their rights are not only legally recognised, but also a place where they can call home. They do not need another year of subjugation as it is already the longest and most enduring conflict in the world.



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