

SEEDS OF RESISTANCE:

A PRELIMINARY REPORT

March 2024

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Acknowledgement of Countries from Aboriginal Land to Palestine

We, at Muslim Women Australia, acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional owners of the land on which we stand, and pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise the rich cultural heritage of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the importance of preserving their connection to the land.

We also recognise the indigenous people of Palestine. The history and struggles of the Palestinian people are deeply rooted, and we acknowledge their enduring connection to their land, as well as their ongoing pursuit of justice and self-determination.

In recognising both the traditional custodians of this land, Australia, and the indigenous people of Palestine, we acknowledge the importance of understanding and respecting the histories, cultures, and rights of all indigenous communities. It is a reminder that we should strive for a world where diversity is celebrated, and the rights of all indigenous peoples are upheld.

ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS WILL BE, FROM THE RIVER TO THE SEA



About Muslim Women Australia

Muslim Women Australia – formerly Muslim Women Association, was established in 1983, making us over 40 years old. We are a representative body for Muslim women working to enrich humanity, advocating for equality and the rights of all women, through authentic leadership based on our Islamic principles.

MWA has been supporting and advocating on behalf of all women and Muslim women in particular for over 40 years. At the heart of the MWA is a commitment to fairness, equality and justice in all our interactions and activities that support Muslim women.

Seeds Of Resistance Pilot Survey Results

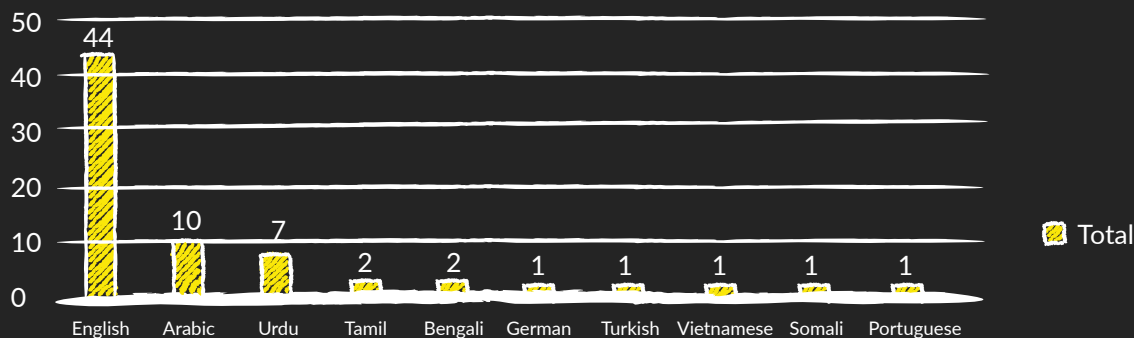
At a Glance

72 Completed Survey Responses

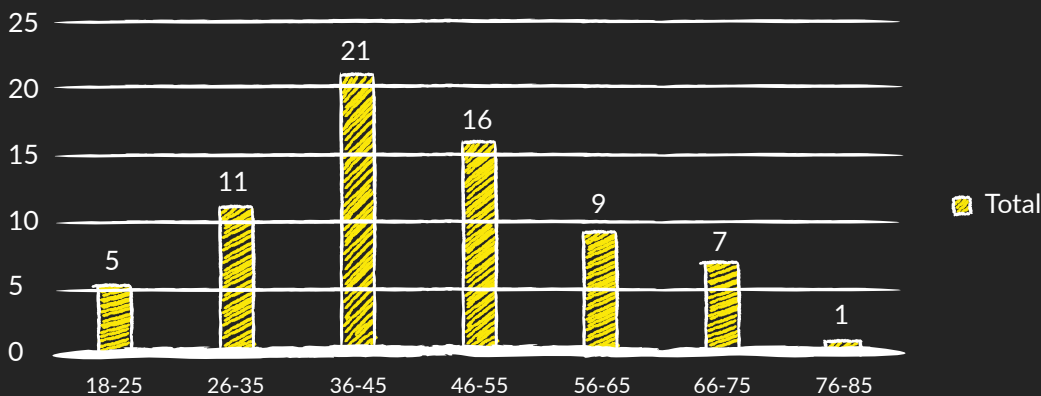
Respondents were:



Main language spoken at home



Participant Age





Over half of participants reported experiencing racism or Islamophobia.

65%

65% reported having difficulties sleeping in the past 4 months.

Over half of participants said the mainstream media reporting of Palestinian people over the last four months has influenced their sense of belonging in the community/ society.

90% of participants felt a sense of betrayal concerning the politicians and their responses to the war against Palestine.

56%

56% of participants reported poor levels of mental health.

Over 40% of participants reported noticing changes in relationships as a result of the war against Palestine.

1 in 2 of participants felt unsafe expressing their views about Palestine in their workplace.

1 in 3 felt afraid of losing their job for speaking/sharing content about their views on Palestine in/or outside the workplace?



Nearly 30% of respondents were more concerned about their economic situation now, than they were before the war/genocide against Palestine

1 in 2 respondents reported feeling unsafe when posting online content about Palestine

1 in 2 participants reported a change in their relationship with faith/religion over the last 4 months

Introduction



(Map: Aljazeera, 2023)

The reality we are witnessing in Palestine today is, unfortunately, not new even though its scale is unprecedented. The struggle for peace, sovereignty and self-determination by the Palestinian people extends back well before 1948 when they were forcibly, and violently, dispossessed of their homes and land by the unilateral declaration of the independence of the Israeli state. It traces back to the emergence of the Zionist movement itself in the late 19th Century.

Zionism emerged at that time as a nationalist movement among European Jews, aiming to establish a Jewish homeland in response to widespread anti-Semitism and persecution throughout Europe and the Western World. This coincided with attempts by Western Powers, led principally by Britain and France, to undermine and ultimately dismantle the Ottoman Empire. This was formalised by the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 (Britannica, 2024), a secret treaty that outlined the division of Ottoman territories in the Middle East between the two powers after World War I, setting the stage for modern boundaries and political dynamics in the region. To give effect to these aspirations western powers fanned the flames of Arab nationalism to sow dissent and rebellion in the Ottoman Empire. In that vein Britain also sought to use the nascent Zionist movement for its own ends.

Strategically, Britain saw the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine as a way to secure its interests in the region, particularly regarding the Suez Canal, a crucial route to India, its crown colony. Additionally, British support for Zionism was influenced by Christian

Zionist sentiment within the government and society, which saw the return of Jews to the Holy Land as fulfilling biblical prophecy. The Balfour Declaration of 1917, in which Britain expressed support for a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine, was a manifestation of these motivations, aiming to gain Jewish support during World War I and post-war geopolitical reconfigurations – all of this, it should be noted, with complete disregard to the wishes of the Palestinian people themselves and a promise made to them by the British to secure their own independence (Jewish Virtual Library, 2017). This was conveyed through the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence, 1915-1916, which was completely contradicted by the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement between Britain and France (Britannica, 2023).

So began 100 plus years of deceit, dispossession, conflict and ultimately occupation.

This perhaps partly explains the reluctance of the West to explore the context of the current crisis given that its inception can very much be placed at the feet of European duplicity. But even when context is explored it generally highlights the wars post 1948 and not the circumstances of the creation of the State of Israel itself or the events in the decades leading up to this – a period critical for very important reasons including:

- The Palestinian people never agreed to the UN Partition Plan at any stage (United Nations, 2000). This was imposed upon them against their will. Further, the creation of the State of Israel was not because of the formal UN processes. The Zionist movement pre-empted this process and unilaterally declared their independent State (Cambridge University Press, 2022). It was this that was the principal cause of the first Israeli/Arab war in 1948.
- In the decades prior to 1948 the Zionist movement, through three main groups which ultimately merged to form the IDF, waged a campaign of terrorist attacks against both Arab and British interests designed to scare Arab Palestinians out of their homes and off their lands and to push back against what they perceived as a waning of British will to give effect to the promises Britain had made. These include key events such as the Deir Yassin Massacre and the bombing of the King David Hotel (Jewish Voice for Peace, 2015).

- Jewish migration to Palestine in the decades leading up to 1948 occurred in several waves, known as Aliyahs. Initially motivated by Zionist ideology and facilitated by the Balfour Declaration and British Mandate, Jewish immigration, despite Arab opposition, slowly increased (Peeke, 1977).
 - Early 20th Century - Jewish population was a small fraction of the total population in Palestine.
 - 1922 - Jews constituted about 11% of the population, with around 84,000 Jews in Palestine.
 - 1931 - The Jewish population increased to about 17% of the total.
 - 1946 - Before the establishment of Israel, Jews made up about 31% of the total population, with an estimated 608,000 Jews living in Palestine (Jewish Virtual Library, 2024).

Putting aside claims of Indigeneity and ancient historical, and religious, claims to the land which both sides may assert, what is abundantly clear is that at the beginning of the 20th Century the number of Jewish Palestinians was minimal and that even by the time of the partition of Palestine the Jewish population still only represented approximately 1/3rd of the total despite efforts by Zionists and the British to change the overall demographics of the land (Jewish Virtual Library, 2024).

In 1948, 1/3rd of the population of Palestine, having taken control of all the arms left behind by the British after they fled the land due to the terror campaign of the Zionist movement, unilaterally declared the creation of an Ethno-Religious State that denied the sovereignty of the other 2/3rds of that population (Peeke, 1977).

The creation of Israel marked the beginning of a massive displacement for Palestinians, known as the Nakba or “catastrophe,” where approximately 750,000 Palestinians were made refugees, tens of thousands were killed and injured, and a systemic pattern of injustices was established. This period set the stage for the decades-long conflict that has persisted, characterised by the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, the expansion of settlements viewed as illegal under international law, and the denial of

Palestinian refugees’ right of return, a right recognised by international resolutions (Jewish Voice for Peace, 2015).

TIMELINE

1885: The term “Zionism” first coined by the Viennese writer, Nathan Birnbaum.

1896: Theodor Herzl, founder of the Zionist movement, calls for “restoration of the Jewish State”.

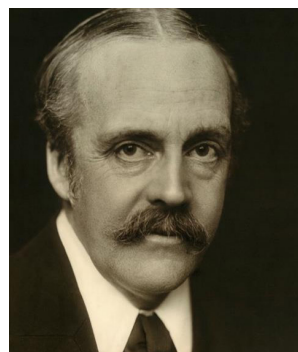


1908: First Palestinian anti-Zionist weekly newspaper is published by Arab Christian Najib Nassar.

1915: British cabinet member Herbert Samuel calls for the British annexation of Palestine in memorandum “The Future of Palestine”.

1916: European Powers conclude secret Sykes-Picot agreement dividing future spheres of influence in Ottoman Empire territories.

1917: The Balfour Declaration promises a “national home for the Jewish people in Palestine”.



1922: The League of Nations grants mandate over former Ottoman territory Palestine to UK. Provisions include terms of the Balfour Declaration, including a “Jewish national home”.

1936-1939: Palestinian rebellion against the British Mandate and Jewish immigration.



1939: UK issues White Paper limiting Jewish immigration.

1942: US Zionists meet in NY and adopt the "Biltmore Programme", calling for establishment of Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth and for unlimited immigration.

1947: In February, UK proposes to relinquish its mandatory role and places the question of Palestine before the UN.

In September, the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) issues a report with plans for partition or a federal state in Palestine - to divide Palestine into an un-named "Jewish State" and an un-named "Arab State" with Jerusalem under UN trusteeship.

APRIL 1948: Deir Yassin massacre: Zionist paramilitary groups kill hundreds of Palestinian Arabs in Deir Yassin, a village near Jerusalem.

MAY 1948: Great Britain terminates the Mandate over Palestine and Israel declares independence on 15 May. First large-scale displacement of Palestine refugees; 15 May becomes an official day to mark the Palestinian Nakba ("catastrophe").

The first Arab-Israeli War broke out when five Arab nations - Egypt, Transjordan (Jordan), Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon - invaded firstly the areas in southern and eastern Palestine not apportioned to the Jewish State by the UN partition of Palestine, and later, East Jerusalem.

Count Folke Bernadotte appointed UN Mediator in Palestine by the UN General Assembly. He

is assassinated four months later by a Zionist militant group.

Security Council establishes a group of military observers to supervise truce, which later became UNTSO.



DECEMBER 1948: UN General Assembly passes resolution 194 calling for refugees to be allowed to return, Jerusalem to be under international regime, UN Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) replaces UN mediator.

DECEMBER 1949: UN establishes UNRWA to replace UNRPR (GA Resolution 302 (IV)).



1950: Israel moves its capital from Tel Aviv to the western part of Jerusalem, in defiance of UN resolutions, and the West Bank is brought formally under Jordanian control.



1967: Six-day war: Israel occupies West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza, Golan Heights, and Sinai Peninsula.

1968: Establishment of UN Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

1974: The UN General Assembly and the Arab League recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

General Assembly reaffirms inalienable rights of Palestinian people to self-determination, independence and sovereignty, and refugee return (resolution 3236).



1975: In 1975 the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) is founded by Resolution 3376 of the UNGA.



1982: Israel invades Lebanon with the intention of eliminating the PLO. After a ceasefire, PLO forces withdraw to neighboring countries. Despite guarantees of safety for Palestine refugees left behind, there are massacres at Sabra and Shatila camps.

1987: First "Intifada" begins in the Jabaliya Refugee Camp in the Gaza Strip.



1993: Israel and the PLO sign the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, also known as the Oslo accords. Several "permanent status" issues are deferred for future negotiations.

1995: Israel and the PLO sign the Palestinian-Israeli Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip ("Oslo II").

1997: Israel and the PLO sign the Hebron Protocol.



1998: Israel and the PLO sign the Wye River Memorandum, which consists of steps to facilitate implementation of previous agreements.

2000: In July, the US President Clinton convenes a Middle East Peace Summit at Camp David which concludes without agreement.

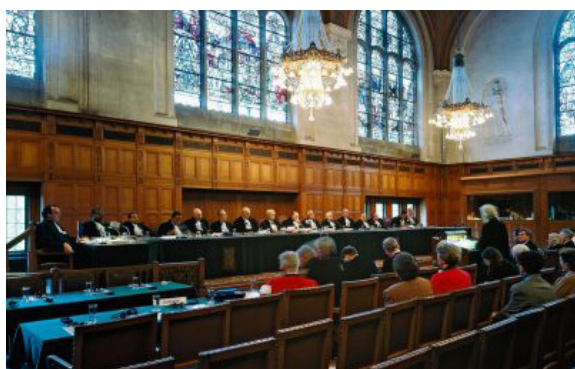


Ariel Sharon's al-Haram al-Sharif visit in September 2000 triggers the Second Palestinian Intifada.

2003: Roadmap for Peace is published by the Quartet and is endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 1515.



2004: The International Court of Justice (ICJ) issues Advisory Opinion on the legality of construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.



2006: In January, Hamas wins Palestinian Legislative Elections; forms Palestinian Authority government. The Quartet responds with Quartet Principles.



2007: Israel imposes a blockade on the Gaza Strip after an armed takeover of Gaza by Hamas.

In November, the Annapolis Conference ends with parties issuing a joint statement committing to immediately implement their respective obligations under the Roadmap and working towards a peace treaty by the end of 2008.

2008: Israel broadens its sanctions and completely seals off the Gaza Strip.



Later in the year, Israel launches "Operation Cast Lead", a massive 22-day military assault on the Gaza Strip.

2009: Security Council passes resolution 1860 calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. HRC creates the UN Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza conflict to investigate violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

2012: In November, Israel launches 'Pillar of Defense' an 8-day military operation against the Gaza Strip.



Later that month, the General Assembly adopts resolution 67/19 granting Palestine the status of non-member observer State in the UN.

2014: Israel launches a large scale military operation codenamed "Protective Edge" on the Gaza Strip.

2016: UN Security Council adopts resolution

2334, stating that Israel's settlement activity constitutes a "flagrant violation" of international law and has "no legal validity".



2022: General Assembly requests ICJ Advisory Opinion on the legal implications of the prolonged Israeli occupation.

2023: Israel launches "Operation Swords of Iron"/commences genocide against Gaza following Hamas attack on 7th October 2023

(United Nations, 2023)

CURRENT CONTEXT

Transitioning from the historical timeline of Zionist terrorism and the complex series of events that marked the early and mid-20th century, we now turn our attention to the current crisis, which has resulted in significant human cost. The earlier incidents, ranging from attacks by various Zionist extremist groups during the British Mandate of Palestine to the integration of such groups into the newly formed Israeli Defense Forces, set a precedent for the ongoing conflict that has persisted into the modern era. Today's crisis, marked by continued violence and the resulting casualties, echoes the historical struggle for territory and sovereignty, yet is further compounded by international politics, humanitarian concerns, and the global response to acts of aggression. As we examine the recent events, it is crucial to acknowledge the enduring consequences of these historical conflicts on both the collective memory and the current state of affairs, underscoring the importance of seeking a path towards peace and reconciliation in a region long torn by violence.

United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

Article II

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

Killing members of the group;

Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;

Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

(United Nations, 2022)



“We are fighting human animals, and we are acting accordingly...We will eliminate everything - they will regret it,” Israel Defense Minister, Yoav Gallant, (Gallant in Fabian, October 2023).



“Human animals must be treated as such. There will be no electricity and no water (in Gaza), there will only be destruction. You wanted hell, you will get hell,” Major General Ghassan Alian, head of the Israeli army’s Coordination of Government Activities in the Palestinian Territories (Alian in Pacchiani, 2023).



“You must remember what Amalek has done to you, says our Holy Bible”. words are reference to a text which goes on to read: Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu (Netanyahu in Marin & West, 2024). In the above statement Netanyahu references the following passage from the Old Testament; “Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass,” (1 Samuel 15:3).

“This is a battle, not only of Israel against these barbarians, it’s a battle of civilization against barbarism. And I know in this that we have your support”

The Al Jazeera live tracker provides a grim overview of the ongoing mass violence against Palestinian people, families, and communities. As of February 28th, 2024:

- the death toll in Gaza is at least 29,954,
- including over 12,300 children and 8,400 women.
- Injuries exceed 70,000,
- more than 7,000 are missing presumed dead under the rubble.
- In the West Bank, at least 411 have been killed including over 100 children
- Over 4,500 people have been injured in the West Bank
- Over 85% of the population of Gaza has been internally displaced
- Over half of all residential buildings have been destroyed or damaged
- Nearly 400 educational institutions have been destroyed
- Israel has been accused of using mass starvation as a weapon of war
- The IDF has been accused of perpetrating mass sexualised violence and indignity
- Israeli leaders have referred to the Palestinian people with genocidal language and intent

(Aljazeera, 2024)

As we reflect on these devastating statistics from the Al Jazeera live tracker, it’s clear that the human toll of the Israel-Gaza conflict is immeasurable. The staggering numbers of casualties, including thousands of children and women, the massive displacements, and the extensive destruction of homes and schools, paint a harrowing picture. These numbers are not just statistics, they represent individual lives, families torn apart, and a community’s unyielding resilience and dignity in the face of adversity. The allegations

of war tactics and the use of language charged with genocidal intent underscore the urgency for international attention and humanitarian intervention. It is a poignant reminder that beyond the figures lies a human tragedy calling for a concerted global response to restore peace and dignity to the people of Gaza and the West Bank.

INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE: “PLAUSIBLE GENOCIDE”

Recently the International Court of Justice (ICJ) (International Court of Justice, 2024) in January 2024, ruled in response to a case brought by South Africa, that the acts of mass violence perpetrated by Israel were “plausibly genocidal”. The ICJ ordered Israel to take measures to prevent acts that could fall under the Genocide Convention and to ensure its troops commit no genocidal acts in Gaza. The court emphasised the need for Israel to refrain from any further acts that could contribute to genocide, to punish any public incitements to commit genocide, and to improve the humanitarian situation for Palestinian civilians in Gaza. This landmark decision underscores the international community’s concern over the potential for genocidal acts and highlights the urgent need for measures to protect the Palestinian population in Gaza. The response from Israeli officials has been one of defiance, with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu describing the charge of genocide as “outrageous” and asserting Israel’s “unwavering commitment” to defend itself (Reuters, January 27th 2024).

This ICJ ruling marks a crucial moment in history, offering a path to accountability and emphasising the international community’s responsibility to prevent genocide. The ongoing situation in Gaza and the ICJ’s intervention reflect the complex interplay of law, politics, and the struggle for justice by an oppressed and occupied people.

Central to the Palestinian narrative has been an enduring quest for self-determination and justice, manifesting through various forms of resistance, from armed struggle to peaceful protests, cultural preservation, and legal battles. This narrative serves as a foundation for understanding the “Seeds of Resistance” detailed in this report, illustrating the dignity of the Palestinian people in the face of adversity and their continued struggle for justice and peace. This report highlights the importance of global solidarity and the moral imperative to support the Palestinian cause, urging all of us to demand better from leaders and the international community in addressing this protracted conflict.

MUSLIM WOMEN AUSTRALIA SUPPORTING COMMUNITY FOR OVER 40 YEARS

The genocide in Gaza has given rise to pressing challenges faced by local communities, particularly in environments far removed from the conflict's epicenter. Members of the Australian Muslim community now often encounter workplace discrimination, a rise in Islamophobia, silencing of their voices, doxxing, and targeted attacks for merely speaking up about their historical and current struggles. Such experiences have led many to seek support from organisations like Muslim Women Australia (MWA).

Over the span of four decades, Muslim Women Australia has supported the Australian Muslim community, navigating through the tumultuous waves of global conflicts that have shaped the world stage. From the reverberations of the first Gulf War, through the profound global shifts following the 9/11 attacks, into the protracted War on Terror, and navigating the post-War on Terror era, MWA has been a constant source of aid, advocacy, and community for those affected by these far-reaching events.

These conflicts, including the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (twice), the Syrian civil war and the fallout from the failed Arab Spring, have not only reshaped geopolitical landscapes but have also left indelible marks on the lives of countless individuals within the community. Throughout all of this time the occupation and oppression of the Palestinian people has continued, now culminating in the ongoing genocide taking place in Gaza.

The cumulative impact of trauma on the community over these years cannot be overstated. Each conflict has layered additional complexity to the nature of support required by MWA, necessitating a deep understanding of trauma's multifaceted impacts. The organisation has had to evolve its services to address not just the immediate needs of those directly affected by conflict—such as refugees and immigrants—but also the broader community grappling with the vicarious trauma of witnessing these events unfold. The War on Terror, in particular, has cast a long shadow, not only in exacerbating experiences of Islamophobia, racial

profiling, and the stigmatisation of Muslim identities, but in setting the scene for the dehumanisation of Muslims that we have seen being taken to its tragic extreme in Israel's genocidal rhetoric and intent in Gaza as presented to the ICJ by South Africa.

As the nature of global conflicts has evolved, so too has the complexity of the community's needs, pushing MWA to innovate and expand its support mechanisms. The organisation has not only had to provide traditional forms of support but also engage in advocacy and public education to counteract the narratives that fuel discrimination and misunderstanding. MWA has become a pivotal resource for those affected, offering not just a safe haven but also advocacy and support to navigate the complexities of trauma, discrimination, grief and identity. As these individuals grapple with the dual challenges of witnessing distressing events in their homeland and facing prejudice in their living environments, the role of MWA and similar organisations becomes increasingly vital. MWA not only provides immediate support but also works towards broader societal change, aiming to combat racism, Islamophobia, and misinformation, and to foster a more inclusive and understanding community.

Through it all, MWA has remained steadfast in its commitment to nurturing a community that can withstand the challenges posed by these conflicts, advocating for peace, justice, and the dignity of all individuals affected by global unrest.

About the Seeds of Resistance Survey

Purpose: Muslim Women Australia recognised the need to survey members of our communities about their experiences and perspectives on Israel's latest genocidal attacks against Palestine and to understand and to support community members and give voice to those for whom it is unsafe to speak.

Muslim Women Australia wanted to create a platform for community members to express their thoughts and feelings about Palestinian resistance and responses to mass violence and racism. Muslim Women Australia acknowledge Mainstream media, political and social responses to Palestine have been complicit in the harm experienced by Australian Palestinian, Muslim and Arab communities by:

1. Minimising Israel's use of genocidal violence by refusing to describe Israel's violence as 'genocide' and by continuing to send funds, arms and political support to Israel.
2. By silencing any dissent against Israel's use of genocidal violence.
3. Mutualising responsibility for the genocide by misrepresenting occupied Palestine (Gaza and the West Bank) as an equal nation-state to Israel.
4. Blaming Palestinian people for the genocidal violence used against them and by dehumanising and devaluing Palestinian lives and suffering in comparison with others.
5. By erasing Palestinian people's skillful and strategic responses to genocidal violence and by discounting the profound and everyday ways Palestinian people have upheld their dignity and humanity in impossible adversities: massacres, famine, mass violence, displacement, systematic sexualised violence, denial of aid, destruction of essential infrastructure etc (Coates & Wade, 2007).

In summary, MWA has recognised the urgent need to document and give voice to community members' experiences and perspectives on the ongoing genocide against Palestinians, aiming to offer support and a safe platform for expression amidst widespread silence and minimisation. MWA seeks to challenge the complicity

seen in mainstream media and political spheres—especially the refusal to label the violence as genocide and the misrepresentation of the power dynamics between Israel and Palestine. MWA's efforts highlight the importance of acknowledging the resistance and dignity of Palestinians.

METHODOLOGY

The anonymous survey included a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative questions. Survey participants were asked to respond to the following topics:

- Demographic questions.
- To describe how participants have demonstrated support to Palestinian people over the last four months.
- To describe what witnessing Palestinian people's dignity in response to mass violence has meant to participants.
- To reflect on how their views have changed (or have not changed) in relation to: "feminism", "terrorism", "the Rule of Law" and "the perception of Muslim men".
- To rate how safe they have felt in the workplace, in community/public spaces and online and to describe any experiences of racism in the last four months.
- To describe how the war/genocide against Palestine and how local responses to Australian Palestinian, Muslim and Arab people over the last four months, may have affected participants physical and mental health, stress, economic situation, sleeping patterns, sense of belonging in the broader Australian community, relationships and connection with their religion and/or their faith.
- To provide recommendations to the general Australian public, to mainstream media outlets and journalists, to Muslim community leaders and to Australian political leaders.

This survey had a focus on both resistance to racism and dignity. Many community attitude surveys on violence and abuse (including racism) focus on "impacts". While this is an important area of focus, it can minimise the highly skillful, active, creative and

ingenuous ways people resist harm and indignity against themselves and others. By asking questions about how people, families and communities have carefully and skillfully resisted and responded to anti-Palestinian and anti-Muslim abuse over the last five months we aim to reveal the profound strengths and dignity of Palestinian, Muslim and Arab people while challenging racist deficit narratives.

WHAT IS RESISTANCE?

For every act of violence by a perpetrator(s) there is an act of resistance by the targeted person or group of people. In the context of violence, including domestic, family and sexual violence, racism and in genocidal violence, resistance is often covert, it may look like appeasing the perpetrator, keeping your head down, skilfully choosing not to speak up, it may look like “freezing” your body. These are examples of covert resistance, and these subtle acts are used by survivors to increase their safety and dignity.

(Coates & Wade, 2007; Insight Exchange, 2020)

WHAT IS DIGNITY?

All acts of violence, humiliation, violation, abuse and discrimination are attacks on human dignity, human worth, human belonging, human wellbeing and safety.

As much as people resist violence, they resist indignity and humiliation

(Insight Exchange, 2020)

When we listen for and celebrate survivor’s skilful resistance to violence and abuse, we honour and uphold their dignity and their innate divinity.

Upholding dignity is also a core value in Islam – it is the very heart of Islamic teachings. For these reasons the Seeds of Resistance survey has a focus on honouring the inherent dignity of Palestinian, Muslim and Arab people.



Seeds of Resistance survey distribution:

MWA distributed the pilot Seeds of Resistance survey to members of MWA via email on 8.02.2024 and posted the survey on the MWA website and MWA social media. The pilot survey was temporarily closed on 19.02.2024 to collate and analyze the preliminary findings.

Limitations:

The pilot survey was written in English language and took approximately 45mins to complete. The language, complexity and time to complete the survey would have been experienced as barriers for many potential participants.

A comprehensive report to be released for the 16 Days of Activism 2024

This report outlines the main preliminary findings of the pilot Seeds of Resistance survey. MWA plans to relaunch the community survey in March 2024 and will release a comprehensive report detailing the findings of the second survey and community actions during the 16 Days of Activism 2024.



Message of Thanks

We extend our heartfelt thanks to each participant who shared their experiences and perspectives through this survey. Your courage to speak authentically and candidly on such profoundly challenging issues is immensely valued. Your willingness to dedicate time to contribute to this important conversation is not only appreciated but stands as a testament to the strength and dignity of our community.

Dignity

HONORING THE DIGNITY OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE:

“For every act of violence and humiliation, Palestinian children, women and men have resisted, responded and upheld their dignity and the dignity of others.

Every Palestinian child, woman, and man, from 1948 to the present has been active in responding to the onslaught of violence, humiliation, degradation and to the ongoing occupation of their lands, seas, and skies. In this sense, there are thousands upon millions of Palestinian stories of resistance, of dignity, of endurance, of persistence and of victory. Of these stories, the world has witnessed just a fraction:

- Palestinian children caring for other children including orphaned and injured children.
- Palestinian people working together to rescue people from the rubble following airstrikes on homes, refugee camps, hospitals, shops, Mosques, Churches, schools.
- Palestinian journalists (both professional and citizen) risking their lives to record the unfolding genocide.
- Palestinian medical and healthcare workers continuously to care for the injured and sick in the
- absence of medical supplies and while under attack.
- Palestinian people honouring the dead by wrapping bodies in shrouds and dignifying each person as a martyr.

We asked survey respondents to comment on the ways in which Palestinian men, women and children have upheld their dignity and the dignity of others. We also asked respondents to reflect on the personal significance and the meaning they made from witnessing the dignity of Palestinian people.

I am Palestinian I know how their dignity is very important to us. Women, men and children they are very strong.

(Anonymous survey participant, 2024)

These images and videos have absolutely broken my heart. As a young Palestinian woman with parents who grew up in the West Bank, I feel immensely proud of the strength and resistance of the people of my homeland.

(Anonymous survey participant, 2024)

This is my life since I was born to a mother who had to flee our home in Jaffa 1948.

It has changed how I view the world - like a veil has been lifted. It's woken me up to what it means to be an Arab. I was never proud to be an Arab before, now I have so much pride in my heritage. It's made me understand the purpose of Islam (even though I don't practice the religion, my respect for practicing Muslims has changed). It's made me realise who my parents were, because I never understood their struggle. My whole world has changed, both with heartbreak and pride. Seeing a genocide in real time has affected my soul in a way that nothing ever has before - like history is staring me in the face and showing me what humanity is capable of - both good and bad.

(Anonymous survey participant, 2024)

I feel pride in my heritage as a Palestinian. I feel traumatised by the violence being inflicted on them. I hear my language and think how these are my people and the only thing saving me is that my parents came to Australia.

(Anonymous survey participant, 2024)

THE DIGNITY OF PALESTINIAN MEN

Over the past five months, live-stream images and videos coming out of Gaza and the West Bank have shown Palestinian men, women and children upholding the dignity of others, risking their lives for the safety and wellbeing of others, demonstrating profound courage, generosity and integrity.

The Seeds of Resistance survey asked participants to describe their responses to witnessing the dignity of Palestinian

men. The survey responses appear below.

Watching the men put themselves in the eye of the storm to protect young and old. How their compassion is clearly demonstrated from within the battle grounds unfiltered truth telling through their own eyes.

The Palestinian men have shown incredible humanity and grace.

I think it has improved the images of Arab men but still we live in a world that doesn't want to believe that we have been fooled by the Western world in believing Islam is a religion of terrorists and men suppressing women. The West wants hold onto this image otherwise people around the world will question their actions.

I have always respected and loved them. Now there has gone to a higher level of admiration. They are setting up the standards on men very high in terms of dedication, determination, abilities, responsibility and care. Just amazing.

I have never felt more prouder, and more protective, of the males in my family, community, and brothers in faith the world over.



This is how I viewed our Muslim men, not the "western" version of our men and Islam. They remind me of the Seerah, The Sahabah.

It has reminded me of what I've always known-but what our society tries to deny. Our men have such big hearts and do everything they can for the protection of their family. They are comforting and hopeful, strong and brave, humble.

Courageous, unbelievably patient and faithful.

THE DIGNITY OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN:

In the Seeds of Resistance survey, participants were asked to describe their responses to witnessing the dignity of Palestinian women uphold the dignity and safety of themselves and of others. The responses appear below.

"Women are strong and fierce in their protection of their families and community - experiencing things that only woman can experience but without support/medication/safety. They've remained pillars of strength in a time of terror when they shouldn't have to be. I think if these women when I face hardships and try to harness even just a fraction of their strength to move through it".

“Seeing the young women at the rally every week makes me proud and emotional. I want to hug them and tell them how much they inspire me. I wish I had that courage when I was their age. I hid, and they are out and proud and it’s so beautiful to see”.

“Seeing how the women take care of their children and families. Seeing one woman making sweet treats for the children to keep their spirits up”.

“Maintaining modesty during hard times, showing strength even though they are burying their children and watching homes/land being destroyed”.



“Sharing when they have so little , aiding each other in the most desperate of times, continuing to report and make the world aware despite having every reason to give up , risking their lives to save others”.

“The way women just kept going making do with the little they have and at times nothing, they made sure they baked bread and cooked and washed while keeping a smile on their faces, holding families together”.

“May it be the woman who is contended with the will of Allah and thanking him for making her family martyr, may it be the children of Gaza strongly holding onto Quran and reciting it in times of extreme need with love and yaqeen, may it be the grandfather who spoke about his soul looking at his grandchild or the children playing in this adversity. Every human of Gaza is living embodiment of true Muslim. How a person who loves Allah and His Rasool (PBUH) should be!”

THE DIGNITY OF PALESTINIAN CHILDREN

The Seeds of Resistance survey asked participants to describe their responses to witnessing the dignity of Palestinian children. The survey responses appear below.

I can’t really write about this without crying, some of those images of babies and children’s bodies will never leave me and I can’t fathom their bravery. I am inspired by their ability to have dignity, to have grace and to still call for peace. I saw a little boy who worked out how to readjust wires in the campsites to create electricity for his family, he deserves all the education and love in this world, it is our great loss that we cannot give it to him. I see the images of kids carrying their cats, smiling, finding joy with their friends and families, despite the horror.

“Despite of what it looks like in videos / photos, it is clear as sun that our brothers n sisters and children in Filistine are the beacon of light, imaan and true spirit of humanity. The maturity of 10 yr olds how they talk, how they recite the verses of the Quran and how they look after their siblings when their parents have been martyred is beyond amazing SubhanAllah. May we learn from them and surely people are learning from them”.

"Seeing children articulate their pain and sorrows then quickly sharing that wide smile telling the whole world how their childhood has been reduced to the rubble that many are buried under".

"Palestinian children are the embodiment of dignity, bravery, courage, resilience and honour"

"The children of Gaza have shown on TV and social media their bravery and determined to survive and live in a free Gaza and Palestine in spite of the unspeakable suffering they are enduring. Australian children in marches and rallies are also an inspiration".



"Seeing the struggle of Palestinian families especially children and upholding their dignity by not giving up and were content in just what they currently have it taught me to be patient and to fight in what you believe in as knowing Allah swt knows what's best for us"

"I will never forget the press conference held by Palestinian children in Gaza asking for the world to pay attention to them. That shook me to my core. The children who are sharing what little aid they are given. One young boy was offered so many things and he declined after the 3rd piece of food so that he wouldn't be "greedy". The young 9 year old journalist... incredible".

"I just feel like all of the children are my children and the children of Palestine have been stripped of the childhoods and families. They uphold their dignity through raising their voices to the world and again, unwavering strength in their faith".

"When I see kids marching with their families I feel love for them. Seeing the connection of the families, from siblings, parents, grandparents to the kids makes me happy and emotional. I cry at every rally".

"The children have displayed so much intelligence - emotional and intellectual - and seeing how they can still smile and care for each other breaks my heart. I love seeing them report from Gaza, trying to inform the world so eloquently, wishing only for the war to be over. I see them selling goods to support their families".

"Trying to find happiness in the little things in life. Dancing, singing, reading Quran, engaging with the journalists of Gaza".

"Children showing that they will resist and live their lives as best they can, eg playing in the camps, rescuing items from their homes".

"Touching one's soul - these children made me speechless".

SURVEY PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS ON WHAT PALESTINIAN DIGNITY HAS MEANT TO PEOPLE, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA

Below are survey participants reflections on what Palestinian dignity has meant to people, families and communities in Australia:

"At first I felt crippled by the mere facts of horrific images showing their own destruction while here our media wasn't showing any of it. Then as we began to connect and reconnect with our faith and the people who care, felt so much courage and regained my ability to comprehend what was happening.

I'm learning the real active meaning of Dignity and integrity from the lives of those I've never met but have somehow become part of our family. They continue to teach us more lessons along the way, from the fact they've had to endure losing their loved ones who were killed and then having to bury them whole on air is in itself dignity of the highest level.

"It has shown me the reality of what human dignity and excellence is. The sanctity of life. To live with gratitude.

"While these images symbolise their dignity, they simultaneously symbolise everyone else's shame".

"I have never felt so strongly about anything else in my life. Palestinians are my heart and my role models in faith. They are the ultimate leaders uniting the Ummah inshallah".

"They have made me be very Inspired by Gazans bravery, courage, resistance, their love of and submission to God, their love of each other and their love of their land and determination not to leave Palestine".

"The images have been heart breaking and soul destroying. The abject horror they have been experiencing is unfathomable. And yet their resilience is incredible."

"Awe of courage & humanity Despair of the devastation & destruction "

"Palestinian dignity has opened my eyes to humanity".

"The Palestinians have opened our eyes to so much that we never knew before".

"Proud and resilient people. Beautiful, kind, and deserving".

"The images and videos of Palestinians dignity have made me feel so proud and full of hope".

"The bravery and resistance should be an example for all of us who believe in humanity for all and justice against oppression everywhere"

"The images and stories have been devastating and inspiring at the same time".

"The strength, resilience and resistance of Palestinian people are remarkable. The deep connection with each other, the culture, the land and their capacity to fight back for their human rights while maintaining their soul".

"I have also felt so proud of the Palestinian people- their courage, determination and humanity is there for the world to see. It feels unbreakable to me - they are our example, the doctors and nurses while losing their own family, they soldier on to serve others, the journalists continue telling the truth while burying their dead, the people sharing the little resources they have with each other to try and feed as many as possible, the neighbours who pull out their neighbours children from the rubble and declare I will now care for this child - it's incredibly moving and devastating all at once".

"I feel pain as its minewe are one ummah ...one body ...its our pain"

"It's shown me that there are still people upon this earth who are upholding the kalima of la ilaha ilalallah Muhammad rasul Allah with pure ikhlas and have inspired me to be even more rooted in my faith and stand firm for justice no matter the consequences"

"The flag and word instill a sense of sadness but also strength".

"It has been truly humbling to see the strength of Palestinians in face of adversity and overwhelming odds continue to strive to protect their families physically, mentally, emotionally".

"We see the best of humanity in the worst of times".

"Reignite the beautiful qualities of faith, tawakul, sumud. Reminder to lead by action and example. Help me fearlessly raise my head high in truth".

"They show me a deep resilience and dignity against horrendous odds, which breaks my heart at the wanton loss of life".

"Seeing the Palestinian people thank Allah even at times of distress made me want to improve my imaan and gratitude towards Allah. Seeing them help each other and share when they don't even have enough for themselves allowed me to always be grateful for what I have and to always show kindness first".

"The Palestinian people have shown us what strength in Iman, patience in the face of oppression, and ihsan is in traumatic times".

"They have both inspired and challenged me. Their reliance on Allah and Sabre in the face of such adversity has been inspirational but it has also challenged my own lack of commitment and support for their cause before now".



Resistance

RESISTING GENOCIDE, VIOLENCE AND RACISM
FROM SO-CALLED "AUSTRALIA" TO PALESTINE:

*Always was, always will be, Aboriginal Land
// From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be
free!*

Hadith 34, an-Nawawi who reported that the
Messenger of Allah said:

“Whoso ever of you sees
an evil, let him change it
with his **hand**; and if he
is not able to do so, then
[let him change it] with
his **tongue**; and if he is
not able to do so, let him
change it] with his **heart**”.

**How people, families and communities in Australia
have been upholding the dignity of Palestinian
people:**

The Seeds of Resistance survey referenced the Hadith
above asked participants to describe what kinds of
things have you been doing to uphold the dignity of
Palestinian people

- through **actions**
- through **words**
- through **the heart**



ACTIONS

Whoso ever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand/actions

Most participants said that in the last four months they had upheld Palestinian dignity in a number of ways:

- Amplifying Palestinian voices: Sharing social media posts by Palestinian people and translating into English
- Producing and sharing pro-Palestinian social media content
- Wearing Keffiyeh
- Attending pro-Palestinian peace protests
- Donating money to aid organizations/direct deposit to Palestinian people and families
- Boycotting products listed on various Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) lists
- Wearing or displaying Palestinian flag
- joining union movements in support of Palestine
- Supporting Palestinian businesses and products

Comments:

“Providing a safe space for our family young and old to gather together and listen to their grandfather share his Nakba stories with them”.

“Doing my best to share my feelings and thoughts on the issue of pain and displacement with as many ppl I connect with via online meetings or face to face, while resisting the urge to rescue those who feel uncomfortable with what I’m sharing”.

“Acknowledging that this reality is taking place amidst the deafening silence”

“Appreciate the Sacrifice of the people of Gaza and watching the inaction of others”



WORDS

Whoso ever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his tongue

- Writing articles
- Contacting Australian political leaders and advocating for political support for Palestine, permanent ceasefire, reinstating funding to UNRWA
- Speaking up for Palestinian rights in the workplace
- Talking to friends & family about Palestine
- Following pro-Palestine accounts
- Signing and sharing petitions

Comments:

*“Accessing info on events in Gaza, Palestinian history, through alternative media sites to msm...
Sharing links to critical pieces with friends.
Attending weekly marches & rallies. Writing weekly to politicians re Australia’s stance, ABC, SMH & their pro Zionist stance”.*

"I find myself continuously and continually bringing up the dignity of Palestinians and how much they are teaching us about real reliance on Allah swt with purpose and clarity of our own best of life and what it's like to live in resistance with resistance for justice and peace".

"Teaching my children about Palestine and its history".

"At work place encourage every single person to share their feelings, checking on hearts, minds and physical well being".

"I now have more courage to openly post about Palestine without having to worry about others feelings".

"Speaking to family friends and colleagues on what I'm seeing and hearing in the media and the bias against Palestinians:."

"Correcting misconception. Decolonising mindsets".

"Member of the Nurses and midwives for Palestine group, applied to be a delegate so I can vote pro Palestine in the union, helped organise a Palestine film night fundraiser, did face painting and crafts for kids at Palestine events".

"Currently I'm making Pro Palestine crafts, organising a craft night and attending meetings"

"Giving zakat"



HEART

- remembering the People of Palestine in our Duas and prayers
- learning more about/teaching Palestinian history and ways of life

Comments:

"Providing a safe space for our family young and old to gather together and listen to their grandfather share his Nakba stories with them".

"Doing my best to share my feelings and thoughts on the issue of pain and displacement with as many ppl I connect with via online meetings or face to face, while resisting the urge to rescue those who feel uncomfortable with what I'm sharing".

"Acknowledging that this reality is taking place amidst the deafening silence"

"Appreciate the Sacrifice of the people of Gaza and watching the inaction of others"

Many survey respondents reported feeling distressed that they were not able to “do more” to stop the mass violence/ genocide against Palestinian people.

“feeling I am not doing anything at all”.

“I feel helpless and ashamed as a Muslim for not being able to do more for my brothers and sisters in Palestine”

“I have felt helpless and very emotional - I wish there was more I could do to help. I have also felt very angry with the position of the rest of the world in particular Australia - why doesn't everyone else see that these are people and families just like ours trying their best to survive an unjust attack. Its horrendous”.

“I felt guilty and wished that I'm there with them and angry that I couldn't do anything to stop it, upset from anyone live normal life and run as if nothing is happening”



SOLIDARITY

The value and meaning of solidarity

Participant reflections on supportive responses to Palestine and taking a stand against racism and Islamophobia.

We also asked participants to describe the value and meaning of receiving supportive responses, from friends and family, colleagues, community members. Some people reported not receiving any supportive responses at all. For some, even a small gesture of support and solidarity was meaningful:

“In our weekly vigils on the streets of our local rural town we have received multiple Toots from passing cars which have increased over the months. It feels very supportive from strangers”.

“Our recent discussion at work was honest, real & grounded in human rights, peace & the inherent rights of Palestinian people to exist & have self-determination & agency. We spoke of the need for a 2 state solution without fear of being labelled or shamed as anti-Semitic. I was truly grateful for the culture of my organisation & the values & integrity of my staff as evidenced in the discussions”.

“When somebody looks me in the eye and says - I saw a video and now I understand. It's rare, but it happens”.

“I feel many people on social media have shown beautiful support through their engagement and personal messages.

“They said “we are with you”, they actually recognised Palestinians as Palestinians and recognised Palestinians for who they really are... Humans just like us. I got to know that my Aussie neighbour fully support Palestinian people”.

“Acknowledging it is a tough time and being asked if I am ok”.

“This made me feel there was awareness and understanding, not turning a blind eye.”

“On social media and at the protests, you feel that you are supported and the fight for humanity is understood by many”.

“When others correct the mispronunciation of my name, it always makes me feel seen and heard”.

“My almost 70 year old white Australian ex colleague messaging to check in on me and telling me that she's here for me if I ever need anything. She's also being the most vocal on social media sharing everything that is happening in Gaza. Saying that it's a duty on her to bear witness to their suffering”.

“Friends waited at the police station all night after my arrest”.

Honestly, I cry a lot and I find it hard to see the images repeatedly and feel like my actions are not stopping anything, but then I find hope and solidarity with others when we keep resisting, and I also think what else can we do. We must keep going not just for Palestine but for all of us as humanity. I am not even Palestinian or Muslim, though I too have experienced racism and my family and my communities have resisted colonisation so I feel our experience in that regard is shared

(Anonymous survey participant, 2024)

Participants' Lived Experiences

RACISM

Over half of participants reported experiencing racism or Islamophobia

"I am a domestic cleaner and we have had many clients refuse out service because we are Muslim and pro Palestine. We have also had members of the public spit at us and harass us outside of clients houses."

"When they see my hijab, they always don't even look at me again".

"Honestly, it's systemic on every level, it's hard to put in words, I work in a very progressive but still white space, but I and my other BIPOC colleagues experience it regularly through policies/procedures/systems that work to undermine us and ensure whiteness remains in power".

"More stares more racist comments people pulling car windows down to tell us to go back to our country but we are born here".

My son's friend at school told him he will grow up and kill all the Muslims.

HEALTH

65% reported having difficulties sleeping in the past 4 months

56% of participants reported poor levels of mental health

Gaza situation is keeping me awake at night , I feel helpless , nothing will ever be enough

I get very angry reading about how Australia has responded but try and manage by increasing dhikr.

I am very pained as a result of the war

Being involved in seeing and hearing about the situation in Gaza has affected me overall. I feel more stressed and sad and at time helpless.

Poor attendance to myself in general can't sleep well, I just want the war to end and see my people safe and free

I am chronically ill with a lived experience of mental illness. Both have gotten worse over the past 4 months

The level of grief I am experiencing is debilitating. Some days I'm ok and some days I can't cope at all. I cry every single day and sometimes the grief is so much to bear that I can't function - but it's getting better. I'm feeling more angry than sad now.

I have a health issue that is aggravated by stress. I have had to dial back my time on social media.

It's about dealing with your emotional, physical and mental health in the right way.

The stress of life and health impacts but also what we are seeing has taken its total, some nights you cry some nights you are inspired but what you are seeing. Though lately helplessness is impacting me. I am feeling disillusioned by our leaders and how long it taking to call for a ceasefire.

Just feeling down, depressed and tired of life

Horrific images have caused anxiety depression lack of sleep

This has taken a mental toll on me

It's been hard to find any joy the past 4 months. Even when you are going about your day to day and plastering a smile on your face you can't shake off the images that we're seeing daily. And often feeling helpless to do anything about it. And that's starting to catch up to me.

RELATIONSHIPS

Over 40% of participants reported noticing changes in relationships as a result of the war against Palestine

People who I know really well ignoring my posts but liking each other's holiday pics.

The silence of many who I called friends

I do not want to be friends with them at this stage but lets play it by ear. Maybe I will get an opportunity to explain Palestine to them one day.

I am not as close to my partner

I have sought out people who support Palestine & who have been similarly active

I've just straight up cut people off

I cannot continue to have friendship with people who support genocide

What is happening is so transformative, you start to see life and people in different ways. As a result, some relationships will strengthen and some will fracture.

Those who have remained silent have moved out of the circle

I feel a disconnect with those who have not spoken up about Palestine despite my constant voice on social media about it.

Some people think I care too much

I have felt let down by a lot of people who don't seem to care

I can't seem to connect to friends who are being silent on Palestine. No matter how close we've been.

I don't know if this is due to social media censorship, but hardly anyone engages with me about anything to do with Palestine. But even when I can see people have viewed it, they don't react to it in anyway. I have friends who engage with me on any random thing I post online - but not on Palestine.

losing friends or changing the way you interact with certain friends has been hard

WORK

1 in 2 participants felt unsafe expressing their views about Palestine in their workplace.

1 in 3 felt afraid of losing their job for speaking/sharing content about their views on Palestine in/or outside the workplace?

Nearly 30% of respondents were more concerned about their economic situation now, than they were before the war/genocide against Palestine

"I have noticed a surge of fake friend requests and I have received more emails notifying me that someone is trying to reset my passwords. I am also aware of the doxing and pro Israel groups of people who are deliberately targeting people for their advocacy online. While my accounts are private, I still am cautious, particularly as a public school teacher, of how people could threaten my job and potentially my safety".

"In October I chose to work from home more often as I felt unsafe taking the train to work in the CBD. I was also afraid of confrontation both during the commute and at the workplace".

I am afraid of being disciplined for my views, and

that it may be escalated to me having to choose between my views and my job.

I was very worried about my job after being arrested at a protest.

I was.... asked to remove my badges last year due to the policy of neutrality, I thought that my union organiser would have been helpful and supportive- instead she was unhelpful and misrepresented the union's position on wearing a keffiyeh to work by telling me that since I'm not Palestinian or middle eastern, and hadn't worn the keffiyeh before, it would be controversial to start now and if I did so, the union would not back me up

Employers are going through social media before offering jobs and some instance going through social media to find a post to use as a reason to remove from job.

I have to be very careful about what I post online because I work in the media industry.

I feel very vulnerable as a Palestinian.

I could be targeted and lose my job.

"The news of the white supremacist men in balaclavas in big groups on public transport was terrifying. On one occasion while at a rally we were egged by people in high rises apartments as we walked in the rally on the street. the police didn't do anything but I did notice that the rally route changed the following week".

"My son is cautious about me wearing items that identify my support for Palestinians, so when he is around I do avoid wearing them for his peace of mind".

"I do not wear my kuffiyeh or hold my protest signs visibly until I am in a group".

"I do most of my shopping online to avoid shopping centres"

"I do not go out at night and go out with another person".

"I feel very vulnerable as a Palestinian".

"Whoever speaks out for Palestine on media or news pages then there are pushbacks from society, the silencing, shadow banning posts".

"I hide my kufiye in front of a Zionist surgeon who made threatening comments before my daughters surgery".

I have received death threats for being "antisemitic" when all I've done is post in solidarity

I've realised it's unsafe to call out what's happening in Israel because this is interpreted as

COMMUNITY SAFETY

1 in 2 participants reported feeling unsafe when posting online content about Palestine

anti-Semitic

On social media People supporting Israel are relentless in their attacks, they have no filter or humanity I do not reply to any comments or block people commenting now.

this journey of pain and trauma.

I am looking into religion more seriously

Trying to come closer to Allah more than before

RELIGION/FAITH

1 in 2 participants reported a change in their relationship with faith/ religion over the last 4 months

Much more connecting with my religion so that my faith is stronger for the better.

I've held on to it to see meaning and purpose in this world

Alhumdulilah I am trying my best to strengthen my iman through acts of worship. aking more lessons online and reading more islamic scriptures

I am learning more about Islam - which is something I have never done before.

I am reading the bible and quran

Walhamdulillah I'm more firm in my own faith and have a much more purpose to make sure I let others know how my faith is helping me along

I feel like we are truly going through the end of the days and everything mentioned in the Quran is about the cycle of life not stories of the past only

It's deepened my faith as a practicing Buddhist

I grew up in a Muslim house. My mother was very religious and my father wasn't. I grew up rejecting Islam because my father never enforced it. I still dont consider myself a Muslim because I dont believe in God anymore. But my respect for Islam has completely changed. I understand it now and I see how it embraces an idea of empathy that no other religion does (in my opinion).

It has changed for the better, making more dua, taking the time in salah

it has increased Alhamdullilah

Haven't prayed in a while, started praying again

I am connecting more after seeing the faith displayed by Palestine's and praying for their safety and freedom.

It is much stronger and I am very close to God, even going to start to pray five times a day soon

Praying fajr on time

Strengthened. Relies on.

It's now better, easier to maintain prayers, more remembrance of Allah, more dua

More outward about my faith and stronger in faith

IDENTITY AND BELONGING

Over half of participants said the mainstream media reporting of Palestinian people over the last four months influenced their sense of belonging in the community/ society?

90% of participants felt a sense of betrayal with politicians and their response to the war against Palestine

Examples from politicians



Anthony Albanese expressed on twitter:

'Australia stands with our friend Israel in this time.

We condemn the indiscriminate and abhorrent attacks by Hamas on Israel, its cities and civilians.

We recognise Israel's right to defend itself.'

(Albanese, 2023)

Prime Minister of Australia, Anthony Albanese, addressing the Jewish community in Australia:

"All Australians embrace you in this time of trauma. We hold you in our hearts."

(Albanese in Farrer, 2023)

Leader of the opposition party, Peter Dutton said:

"Israel has provided a response to make sure their country is secure,"

(Dutton in Giannini, 2024).

Peter Dutton addressing Parliament:

"Israel has every right to defend itself and its people.

Israel has every right to deter future attacks and other acts of aggression, of coercion and of interference.

And the Coalition supports – and proudly supports – Israel's right to do what is necessary and needed in the circumstances with every asset available to safeguard its sovereignty, to bolster its borders, to protect its people, and to thwart threats it now faces – the existential threats."

(Dutton, 2023).

"Now more then ever as a Muslim I don't feel like we belong even though I'm born In Australia"

"It's like we don't exist, Palestine isn't even being shown on the mainstream media... Sense of belonging is non-existent, but we have never been more proud to be Palestinian".

"I feel the people around me have no idea and do not care about what is happening. This makes me feel like an outsider, undervalued".

"I don't feel like I belong in this country".

"Our government especially the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister have shown exceptional bias toward Israel, have not supported the Arab and Muslim community in Australia and have shown biased support to Israel... They have listened to Israeli lies, not requested evidence and have appallingly withdrawn funds to UNRWA at this critical time. They have lacked moral courage and have acted under the thumb of the USA".

"I'm deeply disappointed by their(politicians) public statements which demonstrated their lack of regard for the human rights of Palestinians & their inability to call out & challenge Israel's genocidal war. I expected more of them, both federally & at state level".

"That they (politicians) don't care about Muslims or Arabs".

"Dehumanised. We don't matter".

"Now more than ever as a muslim I don't feel like we belong even though I'm born In Australia"

"There is an inedible bias against Palestine in the media"

"I do not feel at all like Australia is home. The media coverage is appalling".

"It's made me see the blatant double standards and that Arabs and many other ethnic group are not treated as equal or lives valued the same"

"I've no faith in the current Government nor the coalition. I had hope that things would be different. They have let us down".

"I understand that Australia has little power to influence Israel, but I feel our politicians have not tried to hold a strong line"

"I'm deeply disappointed by their public statements which demonstrated their lack of regard for the human rights of Palestinians & their inability to call out & challenge Israel's genocidal war. I expected more of them, both federally & at state level"

"The government does not care about their Palestinian constituents".

"They are scared to recognise the truth"

"Our politicians are not listening to the community. They are complicit"

“Australia with its multiculturalism and comraderie, I expected to side with morals and humanity. I did not expect the shameless support”.

“Apart from the Greens mainly the rest are taking the side of Israel and their genocide which everyone can see”

“Australia could have come out sooner with statements in support of Palestine”.

“I feel our politicians respond and back up other countries like America”

“Even the politicians that were pro-Palestine in the past are doing a 180 and enforcing that same ridiculous narrative that Israel has a right to defend itself. At the expense of Palestinian lives”.

“I am aware that our politicians essentially have no sense of morality, so I didn’t expect compassion. But to hear outright denial of war crimes, that was disappointing”.

“They said ‘never again’ and yet we are paying for it to happen again. The racial element is also so clear. Arab lives do not matter. they take Arab-Australian tax dollars to fund the killing of Palestinians. I am sick”.

“They are all garbage. Honestly disgusted with the lack of reporting, the narratives, the impact of lobby groups”.

“Stop responding to us as terrorists give us a fair representation of our side”

“Start with the assumption that Palestinians are human beings equally as worthy of life and dignity as any other human being”.

“I wish they would stop playing party politics and respond not just with lip service but concrete actions. I also wish they would harness the strengths that their diverse ministers bring to the table as oppose to silencing them for the sake of pretentious “unity”

“Grow a spine and stop living in the shadow of USA politics. The killing of children and civilians is never ok no matter who is doing the killing”

“Reinstate UNRWA funding, call for ceasefire and actually be supportive of ending the genocide and ending the occupation”.

“Stop pandering to the leaders that intimidate them into supporting a genocide. They are essentially destroying Western civilisation as we know it”.

“Listen to the people who voted for you, hundreds of thousands of people across the world protesting for a ceasefire. It is time to demand change don’t just follow the interests of the UK and US, restore funding for aid to Gaza”.

“Proper representation for all and not pander to Zionist lobbying and bullying. To stand for peace justice and humanity. Not to pick sides but unite the community”

Conclusion

This report and the survey findings it contains transcend mere statistics or political discourse, they encapsulate the human struggle for dignity and freedom. They serve as a sobering reminder of the atrocities faced by Palestinians and yet, they also highlight the resistance, resilience, and collective strength that define the Palestinian response to decades of adversity.

The stark figures reported by the Al Jazeera live tracker, representing the loss and suffering in Gaza and the West Bank, demand more than passive sympathy, they call for active engagement from the international community to rectify the wrongs and heal the wounds of the past and present. It is not enough to be moved by the plight of the Palestinian people; we must move forward with concrete actions that affirm their rights and dignity.

The path towards peace is fraught with challenges, but it is a path we must tread with courage and conviction. The report's findings must galvanize us to push for equitable solutions, to hold those in power accountable, and to ensure that the Palestinian struggle for self-determination is not overshadowed by the machinations of global politics.

The horrific statistics detailed within this report underscore the tangible human suffering born from the Israel-Gaza conflict. They speak volumes of the pain, the resilience, and the unyielding spirit of a people yearning for peace and dignity. In juxtaposition to these sobering numbers, the report sheds light on the lived experiences of the Australian Muslim community – a testament to the importance of the work carried out by Muslim Women Australia.

The survey conducted reveals a community grappling with the echoes of a distant war felt keenly in their daily lives. Over half of the respondents have encountered racism or Islamophobia, reflecting a broader issue of social cohesion within the fabric of Australian society. The mainstream media's representation of Palestinians has left more than half of the survey participants feeling marginalised, impacting their sense of belonging and identity within the community.

A staggering 90% feel a deep sense of betrayal by politicians' responses – or lack thereof – to the war against Palestine. This sentiment not only touches on the need for political accountability but also raises concerns about the implications for social harmony and engagement in a united Australian society. Such a profound sense of disenchantment could lead to a withdrawal from civic participation and foster a divide between the community and its leaders. It highlights an urgent call to action for political figures to engage sincerely with these communities, recognising their pain and advocating for justice, peace and dignity both domestically and internationally.

Mental health emerges as a central concern, with 56% of participants reporting poor levels of mental health. This statistic is a stark reminder of the psychological toll that conflict, displacement, and discrimination can have on individuals far removed from the front lines. Organisations like MWA play a crucial role in providing support, not just in moments of acute crisis but as a constant presence offering hope and healing.

The workplace, a space that should be safe and inclusive, feels precarious for many. Half of the participants fear expressing their views on Palestine, indicating a broader issue of freedom of speech and the need for inclusive policies that protect employees' rights to express their cultural and political identities. This fear is compounded by the concern that a third of participants have about job security, which could lead to self-censorship and further isolation.

Moreover, the online realm, which often serves as a community space and a platform for activism, has become a battleground where half of the respondents feel unsafe. The implications of such a digital climate are profound, curtailing the free exchange of ideas and stifling the community's ability to mobilise, organise, and educate.

The concluding message of the report, thus, is not only a call to acknowledge the resilience and strength of the Palestinian people but also a recognition of the Australian Muslim community's challenges. It is a reminder that the fight against racism, Islamophobia, and the silencing of voices requires relentless effort and unwavering commitment. The conclusion of this report is a pledge – a pledge to continue supporting those who resist, to advocate for those who have

been wronged, and to work tirelessly towards a future where dignity, justice, and peace are not just ideals but realities for all.

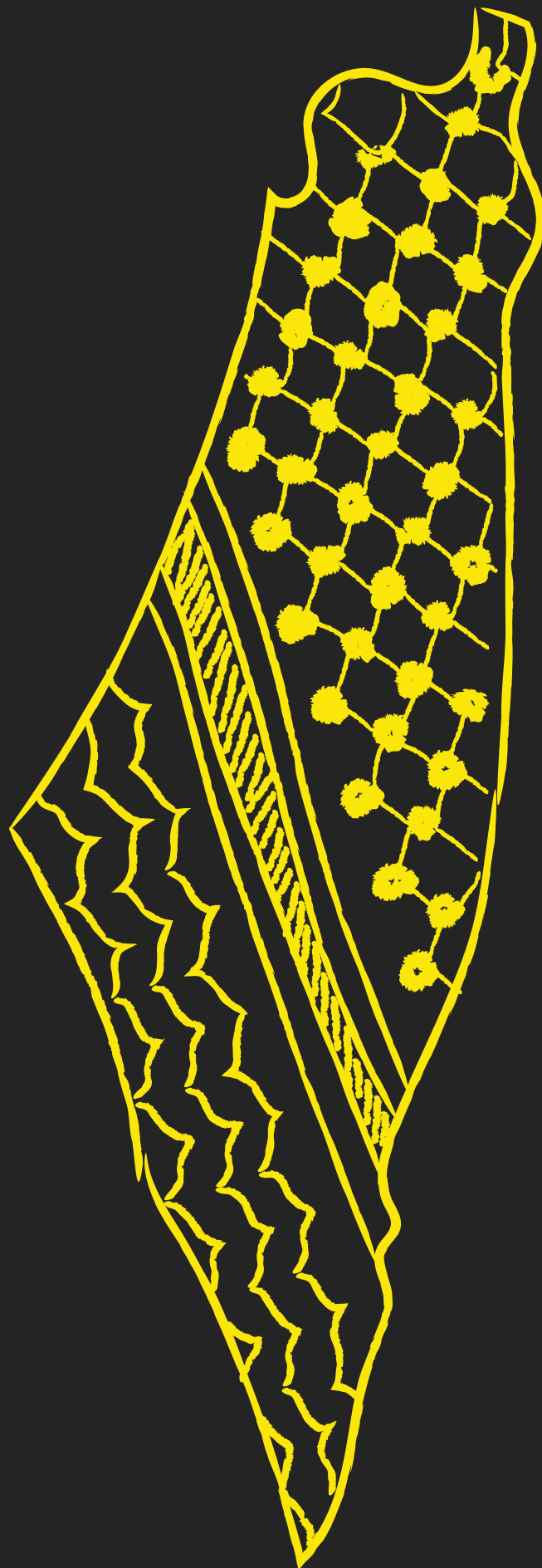
Throughout the years, MWA has been a beacon of hope and support for those impacted by conflict. From the first Gulf War to the present day, the organisation has been steadfast in its commitment to advocacy, mental health support, and community building. This report not only chronicles MWA's efforts but also calls upon all of us to contribute actively to the cause of peace and justice.

As we look to the future, we are reminded of the power of collective action and the strength that comes from unity. The Seeds of Resistance report is not an endpoint but a catalyst for continued advocacy and change. Let this report be a call to all who stand for justice and human dignity—to listen, to learn, and to lend their voice to those who have been silenced for far too long.

In the spirit of the resilience documented herein, let us pledge to continue the work of MWA, to amplify the calls for justice, and to sow the seeds of peace and understanding in every corner of the world. Let us take forward the message of this report with the resolve to see a future where conflict gives way to concord, where oppression is replaced with freedom, and where every Palestinian can live with the dignity and respect that is their inherent right.

In conclusion, the “Seeds of Resistance: Preliminary Report”, launched at the “Sowing the Seeds – More than Numbers” 2024 International Women’s Day event by Muslim Women Australia (MWA) stands as a poignant testament to the indomitable spirit of the Palestinian people and the unwavering support of the global community that stands in solidarity with them. As we close this chapter of documentation and reflection, we must underscore the significance of the voices that have been elevated and the narratives that have been shared.

With gratitude to the survey participants and the community at large, we end this report with a sense of hope and a commitment to action. The journey continues, and it is one that we must undertake together—for the people of Palestine, for the sake of justice, for humanity and for the future we all share.



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Messages to Palestinian People

The Seeds of Resistance Survey asked participants to share any messages they wanted to convey to the people of Palestine. We have included all responses below.

You are the beacon of light for the world, your pain is our pain and sincerely apologise that we are not able to stop Israel from its self-serving destruction of our and culture. Please stay firm and inshallah we will get through this together with our faith in Allah swt for with every hardship there's ease.

I can't even articulate the words. God is great and He is with you. That is everything you need. May you see purified and exalted

I'm sorry, I hate what is happening to you

"I am ashamed as a muslim that i can not be there to help u please forgive me.

May allah swt unite me with u in this dunya and the next oh people of paradise may allah swt send the angels to fight along side you and protect you. I wish I could find a way to be there in palestine and even if I die I die with dignity and honour. Then live with the shame of watching your struggle for the ummah and feeling helpless"

God bless you, you are amongst the special ones, may Allah guide us like you and you are true warriors as we should all be.

Unite and keep going with your faith until Palestine is liberated.

That you will one day be free and that your courage and resistance is an inspiration to us all

"May your martyrs break their fast with RasoolAllah (Peace be upon him). May you always remember how majestically your plight is related to Hussain (May God Almighty be pleased with him)and His family and people who left this world exactly like your loved ones are. May Allah help come to you from ghayb and may justice be done to you by the most adl. Ameen

We love you. We care. We will keep protesting, advocating, acting, calling out the genocide, apartheid, ethnic cleansing, Western complicity & hypocrisy, and Israel's lies. I'm angry about what is happening to Palestinians in Gaza & West Bank. I will not rest till there is justice for the Palestinians. We will not forget you. We will not give up.

The world failed you but God is the greatest and the just will grant you victory

Sabr

"What is happening is not right. We know this, the world knows this. We hold you & want this devastation to end. "

We are with you

Palestine is freeing the world

Oh Brave people of Palestine! Your Sacrifices will change the world.

We stand by you

The world hears, sees & knows the truth, so many of us stand with you but we are silenced by those who have the power & resources to deny you justice & the right to exist as a people & self-determining nation

The whole world is with you and praying for you. We are continually inspired by your resilience.

Stay strong Allah is alwakil

Jazakallahu Khairan

I see you and I see your pain. I won't stop giving you my attention, my heart, my money, my time, my tears. Thank you for showing me what it means to be an Arab, you've changed my soul forever.

We are with you always. Even if you can't see it, we are not the governments allowing this to happen. We are fighting for you every day.

We are proud of you as you redefine the meaning of a Palestinian Man. Breaking one stereotype at a time

We will not give up until Palestine is free.

I'm sorry I didn't realize this sooner. Your life is beautiful and meaningful and I promise to educate our youth to be critical consumers of information and global citizens.

The world is supporting you, there is an uprising across the world against our governments and we will keep fighting for you

May Allah swt grant you all that is good in this world and the next. You opened the worlds eyes to reality and the world will never look the same anymore.

We are With You and We stand with you

Allah sees everything and you will be the winners in the End. Allah loves those who love Him.

You are heroes and will be remembered for making the world stop and question the brutality of colonisation everywhere. I will always stand with you against the oppressors

We see and hear you; we are fighting for you, and we are hurting with you but like you we won't give up. Free Palestine from the River to the Sea.

I wish I was there to help you. Your pain and suffering is seen by God and I promise you, you will get justice because God will ensure this.

Respect!

You will be remembered as Salah UI Din was, you have and continue to make our ummah proud. Like our ancestors before us we will continue to fight for the Palestinian cause through our and pass this legacy to our descendants until our last breath. May Allah swt grant you victory and our martyrs Jannah Al Firdous.

Rely on Allah, for His reward for your patience is vast. May Allah grant freedom the land and people of Palestine all over the world.

God is on your side and is watching. Remain patient and never lose hope or despair. Victory is near.

I am so deeply sorry that the whole world has let you down. But we will not forget you - we will continue to protest and fight until you are free.

Your Lord is just and justice will prevail. May Allah protect and guide and heal all Palestinians and Muslims around the world

You are NOT alonemay we are not with you physically but our hearts and mind are with you ...you are in our prayers always

We will always support and keep going do not ever give up.

Sending peace, love and hope always!

"To my Palestinian brothers and sisters

May Allah grant to the highest place in Jana

You have shown us once again that you are the most bravest people who strengthened our imman."

You have taught the world what it means to truly live with faith, dignity and purpose. Victory is here. May Allah give you the strength to keep standing firm.

Increasingly, the world feels with you and stands behind you. Don't lose hope

That more and more of the world is waking

up. More and more of the world, due to social media, are starting to question the narrative they've heard all their life about "good vs bad" and we are not going to let our governments sweep it under the rug anymore. No matter how long it takes, we will fight for you and with you the best way we can.

Palestinian people are freeing us! From the river to the sea, always was, always will be.

I see you and I care. I see through the propaganda and I know you did not bring this on yourselves and you do not deserve it. I grieve every life lost, and I am outraged by every act of Israeli violence. I do not want to live in this world that can let its people down so completely.

You are not alone we are watching we are praying and shouting for you. We cry for you and we feel you like family torn from us. Please keep strong, people do care and Allah will not leave these atrocities unanswered for.

We hold you in our hearts and will continue to support you through prayer donations and love

Be Steadfast with faith and consider it a biggest test of Your Eman. Just think about Imam Hussain sacrifices for the sake of Allah SWT.

You are an inspiration

Allah with you and may Allah give your victory after saber.

You are amazing very strong people.

I love you

Palestine will be free - From the river to the sea

Across the region, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency is an indispensable lifeline, delivering vital support to millions of Palestinian refugees. It is more important than ever that the international community stands with UNRWA as a source of support for the Palestinian people.

From the river to the sea Palestine will be free. I will always support Palestine in anyway I can.

I love you, my heart bleeds for you and your pain and suffering, I pray Allah (the Most Magnificent and Benevolent) continue to show His presence and his wonderful healing powers. That each and every one who has been damaged and injured both physically, emotionally and spiritually find a way to their own sense of peace.

Do not give into the Zionists. The help from Allah is near. I am forever making dua for you and In Sha Allah you will be free from the oppression and violence.

You are the people of Allah and those whom Allah has described as when tested they say to Allah we belong and to him we shall return. Your Lords help is and was never far away, you shall be victorious and your reward will be both in this world and the hereafter.

Wot can we tell them. I am ashamed of wot the world is doing to them. Wot is happening and continuing to happen is a shame.

May Allah s.w.t. grant you victory, justice and the highest station of Jannah.

To keep their faith and reliance on Allah during this time and to know that we see them, hear them and stand with them.

Keep resisting occupation and keep raising your flag for justice and peace for all. Never give up and I'm sorry that I can't do more to stop this.

We are sorry and please forgive us for letting you down. We love you and your legacy will live forever in our hearts and minds hoping will change the world to be better.





Muslim Women Australia

Muslim Women Australia is a representative body for Muslim women working to enrich humanity, advocating for equality and the rights of all women, through authentic leadership based on our Islamic principles.

+61 2 9750 6916 | mwa.org.au | info@mwa.org.au
Facebook: MuslimWomenAustralia | Instagram: @MuslimWomenAustralia