

PALESTINE: A REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE ISSUE

SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective defines reproductive justice as "the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities." Reproductive justice is a framework that combines reproductive rights and social justice. It was first fought for by Indigenous women, women of color, and trans people.

At the core of reproductive justice is the need to center the most marginalized, address intersecting oppressions, and join together across issues and identities. Within that framework, Palestine and the freedom of the Palestinian people can be understood as issues of reproductive justice.

FREEDOM

Palestine is an issue of freedom, justice, and equality. When Israel was established in 1948, 750,000 native Palestinians were expelled from their homeland. Israel then built a separate-and-unequal apartheid regime, consisting of a system of privilege for Israeli Jews and a matrix of control and domination for Palestinians. For Palestinians, this system manifests as racial profiling and criminalization; the violent theft of their land and resources; denying refugees the right to return to their homes; second-class citizenship for Palestinian citizens of Israel; and a brutal military occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip that separates families by incarcerating Palestinian men and boys, denying freedom of movement, and more. Israeli restrictions on Palestinian freedom impact every stage of life: Palestinian political prisoners, often held without charge or trial, are shackled during childbirth. **Under this system of Israeli oppression, Palestinian lives and bodies are simultaneously devalued, dehumanized, and obsessively controlled.**



ACCESS

For Palestinians, both access to reproductive healthcare and the ability to reach it are severely limited by Israel's military occupation, which includes the siege of 2 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. As a result of the occupation, the Palestinian healthcare system is drastically underresourced, meaning access to adequate prenatal and postnatal care, treatment, and medicine is impossible for many Palestinian families. For instance, Palestinians in East Jerusalem only have access to 10 infant health clinics, compared to 26 in Israeli West Jerusalem. Palestinians face massive restrictions on freedom of movement in the form of military checkpoints, closures, and a wall that cuts through Palestinian land and cities. 1 in 10 Palestinian women in labor are delayed in reaching hospitals by military checkpoints, which can result in them being forced to give birth in unsafe, undignified, and sometimes fatal conditions.

SAFETY

No place is safe for Palestinians under Israel's separate-and-unequal apartheid regime. Homes are terrorized by the Israeli military in late-night arrest raids that tear children as young as 10 from their beds. Families live under the perpetual threat of the demolition of their homes. Schools are subjected to raids by the Israeli military that pull children from their classrooms. Workplaces and houses of worship are targeted by Israeli bombing campaigns, particularly in the Gaza Strip. Under those circumstances, ongoing trauma—particularly among children—is both widespread and undertreated. According to a study by Doctors Without Borders, around 25% of Palestinian children across the occupied Palestinian territory under the age of 15 suffer from PTSD.

AUTONOMY

Israel has an explicit goal of maintaining a Jewish demographic majority in the country, necessitating the reproductive oppression of Palestinian women, and the treatment of white Jewish Israeli women as reproductive vessels. Israel's apartheid system separates Palestinian families in many ways: by denying Palestinian refugees return to their homes and families, by revoking the residency rights of 14,500 Palestinians from Jerusalem in order to maintain a Jewish demographic majority in the city, by prohibiting Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory from legally living with spouses who are Israeli citizens. Israel also enacts racist reproductive injustice upon non-white Jews in Israel, subjecting groups such as Ethiopian Jews, Yemeni Jews, and African migrants to forced contraception and sterilization.

Find more information, resources, and ways to take action: uscpr.org/reprojustice

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US Campaign for
Palestinian Rights