




Speech By  
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MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

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## ADJOURNMENT

### Nakba Day

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (10.36 pm): ‘Nakba’ is an Arabic word meaning catastrophe. For the Palestinian people, Nakba Day is a time of pain and resistance. Nakba Day recognises the anniversary of the ‘catastrophe’. On 15 May each year, Nakba Day, Palestinians have continued to call for the right to return to their homes—the homes they were displaced from in 1948.

The Nakba saw between 750,000 and one million Palestinians driven from their homes and land. Depopulated villages and towns were destroyed, ensuring Palestinians could not return. For the Palestinian people Nakba has never ended. Instead, they believe it is still in motion, as killing Palestinians and displacing them from their homes, their communities and their land continues. Just as Australia was built on the myth of terra nullius, so too is the myth that the land of the Palestine was ‘a land without a people for a people without a land’. The anniversary of Nakba is a reminder of not only the tragic events of 1948 but also the ongoing suffering of the Palestinians. The Nakba has had a profound impact on the Palestinian people, who lost their homes, their land and their way of life. It remains a deeply traumatic event in their collective memory and continues to shape their struggle for justice and their right to return to their homes.

Civil society and the majority of the international community have joined with the Palestinian people in their struggle to demand justice and freedom. Over the decades since 1948, Palestinian refugees have faced waves of displacement, some losing their homes several times. In 1967 some 300,000 Palestinians were displaced. Since then, tens of thousands of others in the Occupied Palestinian Territories have been made homeless or forcibly displaced. Currently, there are more than seven million Palestinian refugees worldwide. Palestinians are one of the world’s largest refugee populations. In many countries they face poverty and systematic human rights violations. Most do not have access to resettlement which would alleviate their plight, particularly in places where their situation is precarious.

For some, the Nakba has meant that basically they are stateless, with nothing to go back to. This would be very difficult to put into words. I stand in solidarity with the Palestinian community, which bears the burden of grief, while they continue to advocate for the rights of their people with courage and strength. I have stood beside members of the Palestinian community to commemorate Nakba. I stand beside the Palestinian people.