**Want to know more?**

BADIL’s Survey of Palestinian Refugees and IDPs: 2016-2018 provides a comprehensive overview for everyone interested in the Palestinian cause, and more specifically in the refugee issue. The Survey includes:

- A historical and current overview of Israel’s forced displacement of Palestinians including numbers, distribution and demographic characteristics;
- An in-depth analysis of the framework for international protection of Palestinians, including the practicalities of return and durable solutions.

Find the Survey and other BADIL publications online at: www.badil.org

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**The Practicality of Return: A Survey of Palestinian Refugee Youth**

Volume IX (2016-2018)

**Main Findings of the Survey**

- Return remains at the core of the Palestinian question and an inherent part of the Palestinian identity.
- Return is understood to be the key to restoration of human dignity and the full realization of all other human rights.
- Recognition and fulfillment of the right to return was consistently prioritized over political considerations.
- Return ought not to be sidelined by Israel’s wants and concerns if sustainable solutions are to be implemented.
- The failure of the international community, including the Arab countries to implement return, requires Palestinians, either politically, collectively or individually, to take responsibility.

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**What Prevents the Emergence of a Return Movement?**

- Palestinian fear of Israeli repression (39.2%)
- Lack of national vision from political parties (26.4%)
- Existence of barriers and boundaries (13.6%)
- Lack of collective engagement from refugees (12.6%)
- Lack of willingness to live under Israeli rule (8.8%)
- Failure to ensure the status quo after return (6.7%)
- Other (4.8%)

The failure of the international community and the neighboring Arab states to uphold the rights of the Palestinian people since the Nakba has reflected in the results. Yet, in light of that failure, the results also reflect a growing recognition that implementation of return is going to require Palestinians, either politically, collectively or individually, to take responsibility.

**Whose Responsibility is it to Implement Return?**

- International community: 23.8%
- Arab responsibility: 23.0%
- Palestinian political leadership: 18.7%
- Collective popular responsibility: 17.1%
- Individual responsibility of each refugee and IDP: 13.2%

Overcoming the fear barrier, the first identified factor, will be a key component to developing a real program of liberation. In that regard, it is first and foremost, a responsibility of political leadership – the second identified factor. However, the official approach has been to consider return as a result of the liberation of land or of negotiations, instead of treating return as a core pillar of liberation itself.
Though the Palestinian right of return has been affirmed by international law and the international community, putting return into practice has never been discussed in a concrete way. Rarely – if ever – is a discussion had about what return actually looks like and how it would happen.

Accordingly, this questionnaire was not a referendum on the right of return. Instead, the questionnaire observes how Palestinian youth participants perceive return and its practicality, their thoughts on why it has not been realized thus far, why some see it as impracticable, how others imagine return would be within broader political considerations, and what it might need to look like in order to become feasible.

By asking these questions, BADIL sought to:

1. Raise awareness and encourage dialogue on the practical realization of return;
2. Begin to re-conceptualize return as a foundation for ending the Israeli colonial, apartheid regime; and
3. Understand return as a precondition to restoration and maintenance of human dignity, security and peace.

The results clearly demonstrate that after 71 years, return remains both essential and critical to a just and durable resolution to the question of Palestine.

As return is an unquestionable right, Palestinian youth were instead asked about their belief in the feasibility of return. This belief remains exceptionally high among this group. 81.3 percent of Palestinian youth surveyed believe that return is realizable. This figure rises considerably to 97.3 percent among refugee youth specifically.

Return remains at the forefront of the Palestinian narrative and is still the ultimate goal set to be achieved by Palestinians. This is despite the fact that thousands of Palestinians have been injured or killed trying to return to their lands and homes. For those who were able to return, most were then displaced again, in the same way as before.

Since 1948, many individual and collective attempts at return have taken place, and in recent times, the belief in return has been reignited with numerous marches of return organized by Palestinians.

Facts:
80% of Israeli Jews live in 12% of what became known as Israel.
77% of former Palestinian towns and villages have never been built over.

(Source: plands.org)