

# *Palestinians Demonstrate in Gaza to Mark Nakba Day*

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Gaza City, May 16 (RHC)-- Residents in the Gaza Strip, a besieged Palestinian enclave, have staged a mass rally in commemoration of Nakba Day, which marks the 1948 mass expulsion of Palestinians from their homes.

Thousands took part in a rally in Gaza City on Sunday, demanding the return of Palestinians to their homelands. Israelis forced them out in 1948 after occupying their towns and cities in a war with Arabs. The rally, organized by various political factions, saw demonstrators marching from the Unknown Soldier Square to the office of the United Nations in Gaza, waving Palestinian flags and chanting "We will return."

The protesters called for stronger unity among Palestinian factions and groups, including those in Gaza and in the occupied West Bank, in the face of Israel's tactics for continuing the occupation.

The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, which rules Gaza, also issued a statement Saturday, calling for national unity on the occasion of Nakba. Chairman of Hamas' political bureau, Khaled Mishaal, said in the statement that "the rights of return, freedom of prisoners, statehood, and self-determination are inalienable Palestinian rights."

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) says some 750,000 Palestinians were expelled from their lands in 1948 and were scattered across refugee camps in the occupied West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. The number of refugees today is well above five million.

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