

Palestinian Resistance Movements- History, Tactics, and Changing Conditions

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Format: Self-paced, asynchronous

Target Audience: Learners aged 13-18

Estimated Duration: 90-105 minutes

Module Description: This module explores the history and present state of Palestinian resistance movements. Learners examine the concept of resistance, the historical conditions that shaped Palestinian resistance, and the ways resistance tactics changed across different periods.

The module focuses on four phases of Palestinian resistance: the 1936–39 Great Revolt, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) during the 1960s–1980s, the First Intifada (1987–1993), and resistance in Gaza, including the Great March of Return.

Learners will explore:

- Definitions of resistance, settler colonialism, and Zionism
- The historical development of Palestinian resistance
- The 1936–39 Great Revolt
- The PLO and Palestinian resistance during the 1960s–1980s
- The First Intifada and mass participation
- Different forms of resistance, including protests, strikes, boycotts, and popular committees
- Conditions shaping resistance in Gaza
- The Great March of Return
- How resistance tactics change in response to time, place, goals, and available resources
- The relationship between resistance, displacement, occupation, and the demand for return

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Define resistance using the module's terminology
- Explain why the module describes Palestinian resistance as more than 100 years old
- Describe the major historical phases of Palestinian resistance presented in the lecture
- Identify different forms of resistance used during the 1936–39 Great Revolt and First Intifada
- Explain how conditions influenced the tactics used by Palestinian resistance movements
- Describe the role of the PLO in Palestinian political and resistance organizing
- Explain the significance of the First Intifada as a mass movement originating within occupied Palestinian lands
- Describe the Great March of Return and the goals identified in the lecture

- Compare how resistance tactics differed across historical periods
- Use key terms such as resistance, settler colonialism, Zionism, Intifada, occupation, blockade, and siege accurately

Content Advisory Facilitators should be prepared for the possibility that learners may experience emotional reactions when engaging with the content. These reactions may arise from personal, family, or community experiences related to war, displacement, racism, or political conflict.

Given the complexity and sensitivity of the topics, it is essential to create a learning environment where all participants feel safe, respected, and able to engage thoughtfully.

The goal of discussion is not to force agreement, but to support thoughtful learning, respectful dialogue, and critical analysis of historical events.

Facilitator Guidance - Establishing a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment

Facilitators should be prepared to:

- Recognize signs of emotional distress in learners
- Pause discussions if needed to allow space for reflection or grounding
- Offer learners the option to step away briefly if they need a break
- Provide access to appropriate support resources
- Encourage respectful dialogue while prioritizing learner wellbeing

Facilitators are encouraged to:

- **Validate feelings:** Acknowledge that learners may experience a range of emotions in response to the content
- **Provide choice:** Offer multiple ways to engage, including writing, discussion, reflection, or listening
- **Encourage autonomy:** Allow learners the option to pause, step back, or observe if needed
- **Promote safety:** Establish and uphold shared agreements for respectful and inclusive dialogue
- **Maintain respect and inclusion:** Ensure all learners feel heard and respected, even when perspectives differ
- **Prioritize learning over debate:** Focus on understanding, inquiry, and reflection rather than argument or persuasion
- **Encourage curiosity:** Support thoughtful questioning and open exploration of ideas
- **Model respectful communication:** Use and reinforce language that is respectful, and inclusive
- **Separate ideas from individuals:** Remind learners to critique concepts and arguments rather than people
- **Acknowledge emotional impact:** Recognize that topics such as racism, colonization, war, and injustice may evoke strong emotional responses
- **Encourage active listening:** Support learners in listening with attention, care, and respect for differing perspectives
- **Provide varied participation options:** Allow learners to engage through discussion, writing, or reflection based on comfort level
- **Ensure equitable participation:** Structure engagement so that all learners have opportunities to contribute, and no single learner dominates, is singled out, or is overexposed

Learners should be reminded that participation in discussions or reflections can be flexible. They may choose to listen, write privately, or participate in other ways that feel comfortable.

Strategies for Managing Difficult Moments

If challenging situations arise during discussion, facilitators may consider the following strategies:

- Pause the conversation if the discussion becomes tense or emotionally charged
- Allow time for reflection or grounding
- Re-center the discussion on the learning goals of the lesson
- Encourage learners to support their ideas with historical evidence or examples from the video module
- Redirect harmful or disrespectful language by reminding learners of shared agreements
- Encourage learners to ask questions rather than make assumptions
- Offer alternative participation options, such as written reflection
- Remind learners that complex historical topics often include multiple perspectives
- **If a learner becomes distressed, pause the activity and provide appropriate support or referral**

Facilitators may establish clear community agreements at the outset, such as:

- Listening actively and without interruption
- Respecting diverse perspectives and lived experiences
- Using thoughtful language
- Critiquing ideas, and not individuals
- Maintaining confidentiality if appropriate

Community Agreements Co-Creation

Suggested Safe Space Activity (5-10 minutes):

Activity: Community Agreements Co-Creation

Instructions:

1. **Ask learners:** *What do you need in order to feel safe, respected, and heard in this learning space?*
2. Synthesize responses into a shared set of community agreements
3. Revisit these agreements throughout the module as needed

Optional Reflection Prompt:

- What does respectful dialogue look like to you when discussing complex or sensitive issues?
- How can you contribute to maintaining a constructive and safe learning environment?

Module Structure:

Warm up: Word Association and Reflection

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

Key Concept: Resistance can take different forms depending on circumstances, goals, and available resources

- Learning Activities:**
- **Word Association Prompt:** What comes to mind when you hear the word “Resistance”?
 - **Optional Activity:**
 - Facilitators may create a word cloud using learner responses to visualize common themes, patterns, or differences in perceptions. This activity can be revisited at the end of the module to reflect on how learners’ understanding may have evolved.

Part 1: Historical Foundations of Palestinian Resistance

Estimated Time: 15–20 minutes

Key Concept: Palestinian resistance as a movement with more than 100 years of history

- Learning Activities:
- **Content Overview:**
 - ✧ Palestinian resistance is more than 100 years old
 - ✧ The lecture connects this history to settler colonialism and Zionism
 - ✧ Settler colonialism is defined as an external power bringing people from another place to settle on land and take control of resources while removing or containing the Indigenous population
 - ✧ Zionism is described as a political movement that began in the late 1800s
 - **Journal Prompt:**
 - ✧ Why might the historical conditions surrounding a movement be important for understanding its development?
 - **Knowledge Check:**
 - ✧ How long has Palestinian resistance existed? *Answer: More than 100 years*
 - ✧ What factors influence resistance? *Answer: Time, place, goals, objectives, conditions, and available resources*

Part 2: The 1936–39 Great Revolt

Estimated Time: 15–20 minutes

Key Concept: Palestinian resistance during the Great Revolt included mass participation, economic resistance, and armed resistance

- Learning Activities:
- **Content Overview:**
 - ✧ In April 1936, Palestinians launched a mass uprising known as the Great Revolt
 - ✧ It opposed British colonial rule and Zionist settlement
 - ✧ Participants closed shops and markets, refused to pay taxes imposed by British authorities, and participated in boycotts
 - ✧ Transportation and shipping workers refused to work
 - ✧ Workers, intellectuals, students, and communities across cities and villages participated
 - ✧ Palestinians also took up arms against British military outposts and police
 - ✧ The Great Revolt is an important early example of organized Palestinian resistance
 - **Journal Prompt:**
 - ✧ Why might a general strike require participation from many different parts of society?
 - ✧ What are some differences between economic resistance and armed resistance?
 - **Knowledge Check:**
 - ✧ When did The Great Revolt begin? *Answer: April 1936*
 - ✧ How long did the Great Revolt last? *Answer: Three years*
 - ✧ What form did the resistance initially take? *Answer: A general strike*

Part 3: The PLO, 1960s-1980s

Estimated Time: 15-20 minutes

Key Concept: Palestinian resistance took new organizational and political forms following the Nakba and the dispersal of Palestinians

Learning Activities:

- **Content Overview:**
 - ✧ The 1948 Nakba forcibly expelled more than 750,000 Palestinians from their homes
 - ✧ Palestinians became refugees and lived in refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine
 - ✧ The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was formed in the 1960s
 - ✧ The PLO became a major Palestinian resistance organization
 - ✧ Fatah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine were among the factions organized through the PLO
 - ✧ During the 1970s and early 1980s, resistance included social and political efforts and international advocacy
 - ✧ Much of this resistance was organized from surrounding Arab countries
- **Journal Prompt:**
 - ✧ How can displacement affect the organization of a political movement?
 - ✧ Why might a movement use both political advocacy and other forms of resistance?
- **Knowledge Check:**
 - ✧ What does PLO stand for? *Answer: Palestine Liberation Organization*
 - ✧ When was the PLO formed? *Answer: In the 1960s*
 - ✧ What goals did the lecture identify in the PLO? *Answer: Representation of Palestinians, self-determination, and the right of refugees to return*

Part 4: The First Intifada, 1987-1993

Estimated Time: 20-25 minutes

Key Concept: First Intifada was presented as a mass movement involving many sectors of Palestinian society and a variety of resistance tactics

Learning Activities:

- **Content Overview:**
 - ✧ A major uprising began in 1987 inside the West Bank and Gaza
 - ✧ The killing of four workers from Jabalia refugee camp in Gaza as the spark for the uprising
 - ✧ The movement became known as the First Intifada, meaning “uprising” or “shaking off”
 - ✧ Daily life under occupation as involving checkpoints, military raids, curfews, and expanding settlement
 - ✧ Nearly all segments of Palestinian society participated, including youth, families, villages, and cities
- **Journal Prompt:**
 - ✧ Why might a resistance movement use many different tactics instead of relying on only one?
 - ✧ What role did ordinary people play in the First Intifada?
 - ✧ How did popular committees affect everyday community life?

- **Forms of Resistance:**
 - ✧ Protests- approximately 3,805 demonstrations in less than the first year, averaging 115 per
 - ✧ Strikes- Tax strikes involved refusing to pay taxes to the occupation
 - ✧ Boycotts- Palestinians boycotted Israeli products when Palestinian alternatives were available
 - ✧ Popular Committees- Volunteer committees provided social services
- **Knowledge Check:**
 - ✧ What does “Intifada” mean according to the lecture? *Answer: Uprising or shaking off*
 - ✧ Name two non-armed forms of resistance discussed in this section? *Answer: Protests, strikes, boycotts, or popular committees*
 - ✧ Why does the lecture describe the First Intifada as significant? *Answer: Resistance was organized and carried out from within Palestinian occupied lands, with broad participation across Palestinian society*

Part 5: Gaza and the Great March of Return

Estimated Time: 15–20 minutes

Key Concept: The resistance in Gaza is shaped by the conditions of blockade and the concentration of Palestinians who are descendants of refugees

Learning Activities:

- **Content Overview:**
 - ✧ Gaza is described as a small and densely populated area
 - ✧ Many Palestinians living there are descendants of people displaced during the 1948 Nakba
 - ✧ Since 2007 Israel has been enforcing a blockade over Gaza by land, sea, and air
 - ✧ The Great March of Return began in March 2018 Demonstrators demanded the right to return to lands from which their families had been displaced in 1948 and an end to the siege on Gaza
 - ✧ Tens of thousands of Palestinians of all ages demonstrated and established encampments near the Israeli-imposed border fence
- **Journal Prompt:**
 - ✧ How can geographic restrictions influence the form resistance takes?
 - ✧ Why might the demand for return remain important across generations?
- **Knowledge Check:**
 - ✧ When did the Great March of Return begin? *Answer: March 2018*
 - ✧ What two major demands does the lecture identify? *Answer: The right to return to lands from which families were displaced in 1948 and lifting the siege on Gaza*

Part 6: Comparing Historical Phases of Resistance

Estimated Time: 10–15 minutes

Key Concept: The lecture emphasizes that resistance tactics change according to conditions

Learning Activities:

- **Comparison Activity** Ask learners to compare the four phases:

Period	Main Setting	Examples of Tactics/ Forms
1936-39 Great Revolt	Palestine under British rule	General strike, boycott, tax refusal, armed resistance
1960s-1980s PLO	Palestinian communities and surrounding Arab countries	Political organizing, international advocacy, armed struggle
First Intifada, 1987-93	West Bank and Gaza	Protests, strikes, boycotts, popular committees
Gaza / Great March of Return	Gaza	Demonstrations, encampments, demands for return and lifting the siege

- **Journal Prompt:**

- ✧ What similarities and differences appear across the different periods
- ✧ How did geography affect resistance?
- ✧ Why does the lecture describe resistance as changing over time?

Part 7: Honouring the Land - Reflection Activity

Estimated Time: 10-15 minutes

Key Concept: Understanding our relationship to the land can deepen awareness of historical and ongoing displacement

- Learning Activities:**
1. Use a resource like Native Land Digital to explore the Indigenous territories where you live.
 2. Research local Indigenous communities, their histories, and present-day stewardship efforts.
 3. Reflect on how land and water are protected and managed by Indigenous peoples.

- **Journal Prompt:**

- ✧ What is your relationship to the land and waters where you live?
- ✧ What meaningful actions can you take to support their care and preservation?
- ✧ How will you commit to these actions moving forward?

- **Sentence Starter:**

- ✧ *Social movements that acknowledge Indigenous histories and stewardship may be more effective because...*
- ✧ *Honoring land may help guide actions for justice and solidarity by...*

Part 8: Exit Reflection

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

Learning Activities: Students may choose any one of the following formats:

- **Paper reflection slip submitted in a collection box**
- **Journal entry** kept in a notebook or document
- **Verbal reflection shared** (if comfortable)
- **Journal Prompt:**
 - ✧ One thing I learned

- ✕ One question I still have
- ✕ One impactful quote or idea that stuck with me

Facilitators should clearly communicate that **learners are not required to identify themselves** unless they choose to do so.

- Optional Extension Activities:**
- **Concept Map:** Create a concept map connecting-Conditions --> Resistance --> Tactics --> Participation --> Goals.
 - **Comparative Timeline:** Create a timeline showing the four phases discussed in the module: 1936–39 Great Revolt, PLO, 1960s–1980s, First Intifada, 1987–1993, Gaza and Great March of Return, beginning 2018

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Resistance:** When people struggle against an unjust power that is taking away their land, dignity, and freedom
- **Settler colonialism:** The process in which an external power brings people to settle on land and takes control of its resources while removing or containing the Indigenous population
- **Zionism:** A political movement that began in the late 1800s and sought to create a Jewish homeland
- **Great Revolt:** The Palestinian mass uprising of 1936–39 against British colonial rule and Zionist settlement
- **PLO:** Palestine Liberation Organization, formed in the 1960s
- **Self-determination:** The ability of a people to determine its political future.
- **Intifada:** Uprising or “shaking off.”
- **Occupation:** Military control over territory
- **Blockade:** Restrictions on movement and access imposed around a territory
- **Siege:** A policy described in the lecture as cutting off a country or group of people from the world
- **Boycott:** Refusal to purchase or participate in something as a form of protest
- **General strike:** A coordinated refusal by workers and/or communities to work or conduct ordinary economic activities
- **Popular committees:** Volunteer community organizations that provided social, educational, medical, agricultural, and other services
- **Great March of Return:** A series of demonstrations in Gaza beginning in March 2018 focused on the right of return and ending the siege
- **Nakba:** The 1948 displacement of Palestinians, referred to in the lecture as the historical context for later resistance movements