

Media, Racism, and Palestinian Identity

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Format: Self-paced, Asynchronous

Target Audience: Learners Aged 13 - 18

Estimated Duration: 70 - 85 minutes

Module Description: This module explores how mainstream and social media influence perceptions of Palestinians, the history and culture of the Palestinian people, and strategies for challenging dominant narratives. You will learn about:

- Historical moments shaping Palestinian identity
- Anti-Palestinian racism and media dehumanisation
- Independent and social media as tools for empowerment
- Critical analysis of news and media sources
- Reflecting on Palestinian cultural identity

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

- Explain key historical moments relating to the Palestinian people.
- Define anti-Palestinian racism and media dehumanisation.
- Analyze how mainstream media create harmful narratives.
- Reflect on how independent and social media empower Palestinians.
- Apply analytical tools to critically evaluate news and media sources.
- Demonstrate understanding of Palestinian cultural identity.
- Accurately define key glossary terms.

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 racism, discrimination, violence, or displacement.

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

Community Agreements Co-Creations

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

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. Collect responses via discussion board, shared document, or live poll
3. Synthesize responses into a shared set of community agreements
4. 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 learning environment?
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Module Structure:

Warm-Up - Word Association & Reflection

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

Key Concept: Initial perceptions influence understanding; reflection reveals bias.

- Learning Activities:**
- **Word Association Prompt:** What is the first word or phrase that comes to mind when you hear the term “Dehumanization”?
 - **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: The Palestinian People

Estimated Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Key Concept: Understanding Palestinian history and culture builds context for contemporary issues.

- Learning Activities:**
- **Content Overview:**
 - ✧ Introduces Palestinian history, culture, and identity
 - ✧ Provides historical context for understanding contemporary issues
 - ✧ Encourages reflection on the significance of cultural identity and historical knowledge
 - **Journal Prompt:** Why is it important to understand Palestinian history and culture?
 - **Sentence Starter**
 - ✧ One way to understand the Nakba is...
 - **Knowledge Check:**
 - ✧ Cultural identity includes food, music, language, art. *Answer: All of the above*
 - ✧ Why did many European Jews migrate to Palestine in the late 19th-early 20th century? *Answer: To escape persecution*
 - ✧ Who are Palestinians descendants of? *Answer: Canaanites and other Levantine communities*

- ✧ What is considered historic Palestine? *Answer: Land between Jordan River and Mediterranean Sea*
- **Extended Response:**
 - ✧ What restrictions have Palestinians faced? *Answer: Movement, land, citizenship, rights, voting, resources*

Part 2: Anti-Palestinian Racism & Mainstream Media

Estimated Time: 25 - 30 minutes

Key Concept: Media often dehumanises Palestinians, shaping public perception and policy.

- Learning Activities:**
- **Content Overview:**
 - ✧ Examines how media narratives can dehumanise Palestinians
 - ✧ Explores how language and framing influence public perception and policy
 - ✧ Encourages learners to analyze examples of bias and racialization in media coverage
 - **Journal Prompt:** What does 'dehumanisation' mean to you? How have media portrayals contributed to this?
 - **Short Response:** Have Palestinians been harmed by media defamation? Explain.
 - **Knowledge Check:**
 - ✧ Media often frames Palestinians as guilty, dangerous, inferior. *Answer: All of the above*
 - ✧ True/False: Media language differs in reporting deaths of Israelis and Palestinians. *Answer: True*
 - ✧ What is a primary mechanism for spreading anti-Palestinian racism? *Answer: Mainstream media*
 - ✧ What is the intended outcome of racialization? *Answer: Silencing, exclusion, defamation, dehumanisation*

Part 3: Challenging Dominant Narratives

Estimated Time: 15 minutes

Key Concept: Independent media and social platforms allow Palestinians to assert agency and resist erasure.

- Learning Activities:**
- **Content Overview:**
 - ✧ Explores how independent media and social platforms challenge dominant narratives
 - ✧ Highlights how Palestinians share lived experiences and cultural perspectives
 - ✧ Encourages reflection on media empowerment and agency
 - **Journal Prompt:** How have Palestinians humanised their narratives through independent and social media?
 - **Knowledge Check:**
 - ✧ Early platforms challenging bias (2000)? *Answer: The Electronic Intifada*
 - ✧ Examples of independent media today? *Answer: IMEU, Al Jazeera*
 - **Sentence Starter:**
 - ✧ Sharing lived experiences can demonstrate Sumud (steadfastness) by showing how the Palestinian people continue to...

Part 4: Critical Media Evaluation

Estimated Time: 15 minutes

Key Concept: Language and framing in media shape perceptions; critical analysis is essential.

- Learning Activities:**
- **Content Overview:**
 - ✎ Develop skills for analyzing media language, framing, and bias
 - ✎ Encourages learners to examine whose voices are represented or excluded in the media
 - ✎ Supports critical thinking when evaluating news and information sources
 - **Journal Prompt:** Analyze how language shapes perception: e.g., 'Aid failing to reach Gaza' vs. 'Aid blocked.'" or "12 year old died of malnutrition vs. 12 year old starved to death."
 - **Sentence Starter:**
 - ✎ A key reason dehumanisation matters in media analysis is...
 - ✎ Whose voices are included or silenced?
 - ✎ Evidence that may suggest erasure or dehumanisation of Palestinians includes...
 - ✎ One way to examine whether erasure or bias exists is by asking yourself...

Part 5: 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 6: Exit Reflection

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

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

- **Anonymous digital submission** (e.g., Google Form with no name required)
- **Paper reflection slip submitted in a collection box** (no names required if anonymity is preferred)

- **Private journal entry** kept in a notebook or personal 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
- **Sentence Starter:** Critical media literacy, independent reporting, and social media storytelling can empower marginalized communities by...

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

Optional Extension Activities

- **Mini Essay:** Analyze how digital and independent media challenge dehumanising narratives.
- **Research Task:** Investigate racialized narratives in a contemporary conflict and compare media framing.
- **Critical Reflection:** “Justice begins with truth and the truth begins with your willingness to look closer.” - Merrie Najimy
 - ⌘ What does this statement mean in the context of Palestinian media representation?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Nakba:** Mass displacement of Palestinians in 1948
- **Sumud:** Steadfastness and resilience
- **Historic Palestine:** Land between Jordan River and Mediterranean Sea
- **Dehumanisation:** Portraying a group as less than human
- **Erasure:** Omission or distortion of historical or contemporary truth
- **Media Defamation:** Misrepresentation of a group to be less than without evidence
- **Exclusion:** Denial of representation or voice
- **Racialized Palestinians:** harmful stereotyped and systemically marginalized portrayals of a people to be different or lesser

