ABSTRACT

As is evident from headlines over the last year, Palestinians are facing much worse under the COVID-19 pandemic than Israelis. Many news sources focus mainly on the pre-existing conditions of West Bank, Gaza, and Palestinian communities inside Israel. However, mainstream news sources have examined how these conditions arose in the first place. My project shows how the Gaza Strip has been reoccupied by a system that discriminates against Palestinians and creates severe conditions for the health of Palestinians during this global crisis—although Palestinians have been resilient throughout the pandemic, their need for healthcare and basic human rights should not be overlooked.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

While many see the founding of Israel in 1948 as the beginning of discrimination against Palestinians, it actually extends back to early Zionist colonization in the 1920s. Today, discrimination against Palestinians continues at varying levels throughout West Bank, Gaza, and Israel itself. Here, I will provide some examples:

- Pre-1948 When the infrastructure of what would eventually become Israel was first built, it was intentionally designed to be a disadvantage for Palestinians. One of the clearest examples of this was the electricity system established by Pinhas Rubinstein in Jaffa. While Zionist settlements had a system of public electricity, Palestinians had to buy it individually, and sell parts of their own land to the electric company in exchange for service (Discom, 2013). This meant that they had to pay a lot more to access electricity from the beginning, but the practice of Zionist resource control continues to the present day.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Gaza is destroyed because of how overcrowded major cities in the Gaza Strip are, and this problem has only increased as more and more civilians have lost their homes in Israel's brutal and unrelenting airstrikes throughout the region.

While the situation is less severe in West Bank, it is still deeply concerning. West Bank experienced a spike in cases last month, with a daily average of over 2,000 new cases; the number in recent weeks has dropped to an average of 500, but the population is still under-vaccinated, meaning that the possibility for another wave of infections remains high. Israel maintains control of major roads in the occupied West Bank, and has been known to delay emergency vehicles from arriving at their destinations, meaning that West Bank Palestinians cannot get efficient access to healthcare unless they are fortunate enough to live near a hospital. This practice has been especially evident in the recent wave of attacks on Palestinians by Israeli settlers and police, during which several videos of Israeli police denying medics access to treat victims have surfaced. Additionally, home expulsions in villages such as Sheikh Jarrah have put Palestinians in a place of holding precarious, as which stated above, is a major concern for COVID safety measures.

REFERENCES

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