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## **Palestinians ignored in Indigenous rights analogy**

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During Tuesday night's ABC show Recognition: Yes or No? Stan Grant weighed in on his Aboriginal identity after 200 years of European settlement, citing Israel as an example Australia could follow for its cohesion and equal society. Israel, itself a European settlement, was absolutely the last example expected for supporting the rights of Aboriginals' recognition in Australia.

He said: "I have been to Israel and I have seen the sense of Jewish belonging whether you are an Ethiopian Jew or a Russian Jew or an American Jew, with a whole range of ethnicities and everything else around it that coalesce around a sense of belonging and kinship."

Grant astonishingly fails to mention my people, the Palestinian people, who have resided under Israeli occupation or tutelage since (similar to Australia) mainly Europeans established a state on their lands 68 years ago. The use of Israel as an example for a place where "a whole range of ethnicities and everything else around it that coalesce around a sense of belonging and kinship" is flawed and simply unfactual.

In the words of former Israeli Supreme Court Justice Theodor Or, Palestinians in Israel face a structural and systematic discrimination with the Israeli state not doing "enough to grant equality" for its Arab citizens. We haven't even mentioned the 4 million Palestinians living under military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza for 49 years ongoing, or the other 4 million Palestinian refugees who were displaced in 1948.

Palestinians have lived under constant colonisation, dispossession and suffering from an illegal occupation that erodes their human, economic, and existential rights. Some 225,000 children in Gaza today require psychosocial support due to the indiscriminate bombing of Gaza in 2014; over 48,488 Palestinian structures have been demolished; and over 800,000 trees have been uprooted in the West Bank and Gaza. Is this a model Australia wants to replicate?

In an earlier speech Grant delivered at the IQ2 Racism Debate last year he called for Australians to acknowledge the two centuries of "dispossession, injustice and suffering". I find this strikingly similar to the Palestinians' plight for recognition, equality, justice, and statehood.

Suffice to say I find the irony in Tuesday's comments painfully obvious. My 19-year-old sister, a future architecture engineer, was complaining to me yesterday about a 45-minute wait at an Israeli military checkpoint to her university in Ramallah. The military was choking morning Palestinian traffic to let Israeli settlers reach Jerusalem without delay, with no regards to the native population of the West Bank and their livelihoods. This system, which increasingly resembles an apartheid, has to be internationally condemned and de-structured, not subtly praised.

Palestinians have been under a constant wave of colonisation, eroding their existence from the land they have proudly resided on for thousands of years. Just like Grant is rightly proud of his ancestry that might run tens of thousands of years deep, I, too, am proud of my ancestry in Palestine. We both have suffered colonisation, marginalisation, and discrimination - most Palestinians still do - and we all ought to stand for equality and justice for their cause.

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