

As migrant and BAME groups in Britain, we reaffirm our fundamental right to the freedom of expression enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA), and publicly to express our anxieties about the suppression of information on the history and lived experience of our communities.

Many of us arrived in the UK as migrants and as refugees seeking safety from war and repression. We had to confront the effects of racism, persecution and colonialism, past and present. As a result, we know their exact oppressive impact on communities, and can identify where many of the current experiences of injustices we face today in Britain are also based on racism and colonialism.

These problems have a profound impact on current public discussions about race and immigration in the UK. Therefore, it is our right and responsibility to relay our direct experiences of human rights abuses suffered here and abroad, as well as their structural and historical causes, in order that these are addressed. Our right to do this is recognised in Article 10 of the [HRA](#); to impart and receive information provides the basis for a democracy to function. As the [Institute for Race Relations](#) recently confirmed, our communities “have a right to be heard, to make...information public, while others have the right to hear them, and the arguments based on these facts”.

We are deeply worried about current attempts to silence public discussion of what happened in Palestine and to the Palestinians in 1948, when the majority of its people were forcibly expelled. These facts are well established and accessible, part of the British historical record, and the direct experience of the Palestinian people themselves. The [Palestinian community](#) in the UK has raised the [disturbing absence](#) of information about these past and current injustices and highlighted the racism it exposes then and now.

Public discussion of these facts and description of these injustices would be prohibited under the IHRA’s guidelines, thereby removing vital evidence and information from the public arena. Whilst we freely describe the racist policies experienced during the era of British and European colonialism in our countries of origin (indeed it is taught in British schools), the colonial history of Palestinians is being erased. This is an unprecedented and egregious breach of our fundamental rights and those of the wider British public.

We also know of the efforts by [organisations](#), including UK-based fundamentalist groups [aligned with](#) the far-right in the US, to deny Palestinians their basic humanity by suppressing this vital information. At the same time, hard-line conservative groups in the US, such as the Middle East Forum, are providing [funding and support](#) to anti-Muslim extremist Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (aka Tommy Robinson), deliberately increasing hatred, fear, and confusion. These coordinated efforts by right-wing extremists are being actively encouraged by President Trump’s racism and fear-mongering - now aimed at dismantling UNRWA, the [UN agency that protects](#) Palestinian refugees.

The terrible events of this past year in the UK demonstrate the dangers of silencing migrant and BAME communities. The fatal fire at Grenfell Tower, and the shameful Windrush scandal have uncovered active legacies of British colonialism, where racism forms an integral part of British policies, and renders our communities invisible. This denies us our dignity and humanity, and the right to fair treatment under the law: the bedrock of British society.

We urgently remind politicians and public bodies of their responsibilities to uphold the principles of the Human Rights Act for every British citizen and resident in the UK equally, especially the direct victims of colonialism,

racism, oppression and other crimes. As migrant and BAME communities, we stand united against all attempts to suppress our voices and our demands for freedom, justice and equality.