



Kim McKay AO
Director & CEO Australian Museum
1 William Street
Sydney NSW 2010
Australia
c/- feedback@australian.museum

Dear Ms McKay

The Australian Friends of Palestine Association (AFOPA) understands you have been urged by the Australian Jewish Association (AJA) to rewrite history by expunging the geographical term "Palestine" from references to ancient history in the museum's exhibition, *Ramses and the Gold of the Pharaohs*.

Having seen the museum's response to correspondence to you from the AJA, (posted on AJA's Facebook page as a recent "victory"), we are astonished by your lack of attention to historical fact and research on the word "Palestine". In addition, we are disturbed by your hurried acceptance that you should remove the word from your description of Ramses' activities.

No doubt, the AJA has asserted that there is no such thing as Palestine and that there never has been a state or country called Palestine. This is an attempt at erasure of a people. Until 1948, there was no country or state called Israel, until it came about via a United Nations resolution. Indeed, before the realisation of that resolution, what is now called Israel was called the British Mandate of Palestine.

The Land of Palestine was named for its people in ancient times. The geographical reference was to the Philistines, an ancient Palestinian people. In Arabic, the country is still called "Filastin". While Wikipedia puts a first use of the term Palestine as being by Herodotus in the 5th Century BC, you are referred also to the Holy Bible (oft cited by Zionists seeking to verify ownership of the land of Palestine) at Exodus, chapter 15, verse 14 and the reference to "the inhabitants of Palestina". Palestine is also mentioned in Deuteronomy 29, and the reference is to "the Palestinian Covenant".

Of greater import and scientific standing is the 2021 work, *Palestine A Four Thousand Year History*, by Nur Masalha. One review of the book references Ramses thus:

*(Masalha) has painstakingly and meticulously scoured various documents right from those of Ancient Egypt in which the land was called 'Peleset' in the documents of Rameses II and III. Documents in the form of clay tablets and later scrolls of Assyrian, Christian, and Muslims indicate a clear continuity in the mention of 'Palestine' right down to the formation of the Israeli state. **

Your correspondents at the AJA are seeking to suppress Palestinian identification with the country and with its vibrant history and culture for political purposes. It is part of the Zionist strategy of claiming that “there is no such thing as Palestine” in order to justify the ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948, the military occupation of Palestine that has been in place for over five decades and the ongoing theft of land in the occupied Palestinian territories.

We urge you to stand staunch in defence of history from ideological re-writing for politically motivated ends. To pander to these misrepresentations would amount to what is called cultural genocide, the ideological expunging of cultural identity from the historical record.

Yours sincerely



Christa Christaki
Chairperson

26 December 2023

**Undoing Erasure: What the 4,000-Year History of Palestine Tells Us*, The Wire:
<https://thewire.in/books/nur-masalha-palestine-book-review>

Why Palestine? Because it is a just cause, a noble ideal, a moral quest for equality and human rights. Edward Said

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