

Wear Your Palestinian Clothing with Purpose In 2025

“To Palestinians, our clothing is more than just a trend, it's a testimony.”

Since the war on Gaza in 2023, Palestinian clothing has been worn by many people across the world during protests and even in daily life. This is a symbol of solidarity with the Palestinian cause, but what deeper meanings lie within these embroidered patterns, and what is their significance?

The stitches and fabrics of Palestinian clothing are rooted in resistance, history and a creative stance against colonial oppression. Two kinds of Palestinian fashion pieces truly stand out as a form of resistance and beauty: Tatreez dresses and the Keffiyeh.

Although you can find other Middle Eastern countries with their versions of these clothes, Palestinian designs have been uniquely preserved to tell the stories of colonised cities, native plants and foods.

Each pattern has its own story to tell for the next generation of people. Palestinians began creating Tatreez dresses as a way to remember the homes stolen from them after the Nakba in 1948. They later became symbols of pride and protest that continue today.



Photograph taken by Israa Elmousa



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Like Tatreez's designs, the black and white Keffiyeh has become a strong political statement for the Palestinian cause. Once a simple piece of cloth to protect farmers from the sun and dust, Keffiyeh's role in Palestinian culture changed drastically and became politicised in the 1930s when Palestinians began a movement to unite against British colonialism.

This symbol of unity and resistance grew stronger in the 1960s when famous revolutionary figures such as Yasser Arafat publicly embraced it. Iconic global figures such as Nelson Mandela wore it publicly as an act of solidarity and support for the cause.

In 2025, traditional Palestinian symbols and clothing are more visible than ever across social media and even celebrity fashion, with this popularity comes the question, has the meaning evolved? Are people still styling these pieces as a political statement? I interviewed three Palestinians from political and fashion backgrounds to give us a greater insight into these pressing questions.



Photograph taken by Israa Elmousa

Interviews

I spoke with Ahmed Shikur, a Palestinian International Politics student. Ahmed has dedicated his life to understanding the injustices across the world and spreading awareness for his homeland, Palestine.

While Ahmed admits to not being particularly into fashion and purchasing new clothes, he makes a point of supporting Palestinian businesses and exploring new Palestinian thobe styles. He believes it is vital to preserve and honour his heritage through fashion as well as education.

“Palestinian clothing still holds the same historical significance for our people in 2025,” Ahmed said.

“But after October 7th, I feel the real meaning behind our clothes has been tarnished by negative connotations put on them. Sadly, this isn’t surprising; we saw it coming.”

“There has been a great deal of effort from Palestinians to educate others during these times when our clothing has been trending online. To Palestinians, our clothing is more than just a trend, it's a testimony.”



Photography taken by Israa Elmousa

“People are wearing our stories on their sleeves as a badge of honour. As a Palestinian, this is the most accepted I have felt in the world. Our culture is being embraced and celebrated rather than criticised and denied; it feels completely different.” Says Nawal Moussa, a second-generation Palestinian living in Berlin.

Nawal's parents fled the war in Palestine, migrating to Lebanon, where they later had to flee again to Germany. Nawal and her family have collected Tatreez dresses and different styles of keffiyehs to preserve their history and traditions.

“Our cultural fashion is something they cannot take from us. We preserve our clothing for this very reason. This is why I have been collecting Palestinian traditional clothing since I was a child. I also began making them when I was 15.” Nawal said.

“There are Palestinian companies from all over the world who keep our culture alive, from London to America to Jordan, we are hand stitching and selling.”

“The art of hand sewing a Tatreez dress feels almost spiritual. Connecting to a land I am unable to set foot in, our existence is resistance,” Nawal said as she traces her freshly sewn patterns, explaining each story to me. She holds a red and black pattern that symbolises the Palestinian city of Nablus. I am mesmerised by her skills.

“Although I have many positive things to say about our clothes trending today, I do fear the meanings will be lost, but I also have trust that as Palestinians, we will never allow this to happen.”



Photograph taken by Israa Elmousa

I spoke with UK-based Palestinian activist, Salma Najjar. During our interview, Salma reflected on how the meaning of wearing the Keffiyeh has shifted over time. For Salma, fashion has never been about looking her best or following trends; it's been about telling her story as a Palestinian Muslim woman and finding ways to advocate for her country through the art of fashion.

“I have lived in 12 different countries after fleeing Gaza, and I held onto my Keffiyeh throughout it all,” Salma said.

“I have lived through my parents’ warning me about wearing it in public in fear of racist and Islamophobic attacks, compared to now, where people seem to be wearing it freely.”

“I, of course, am happy with this change, but it's frustrating that somehow I am still targeted for wearing my Keffiyeh whilst others can wear it with no backlash.” Salma shared.

“This just shows the racism Palestinians still go through to this day, despite the awareness that has spread for our country. The Keffiyeh may have become an appropriate fashion statement to some people, whilst to us the meaning remains the same.”

Written by Israa Elmousa

All photography taken by Israa Elmousa