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Members of the Alliance for Water Justice in Palestine recognize that as Massachusetts residents we occupy the land of over three major Indigenous Nations: the Wampanoag, including the Nauset, Nantucket, Pennacook, Pokanoket, Pocasset and Chappaquidick bands of the East, the Mohegan, including the Nipmuc and Pequot of the central portion of the “Commonwealth” and the Mahican, including the Pocumtuc bands of the West. Although their names are used all over our state, we rarely acknowledge what settlers did here to remove them from their homelands. We make a link to the Israeli occupation of Palestine and see the same brutal and relentless drive to remove all traces of Palestinians from their hills, farmlands and villages.

We who are not first nation must not only learn what settlers did but must also take responsibility for the ongoing impact of those actions on first nation communities now. It is time that the City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts stop celebrating 500 years of genocidal occupation on Columbus Day. It is long past time to rename it Indigenous Peoples Day, and start learning about and honoring the Nations that we are blessed to still have our state. Hopefully the annual celebration of Indigenous Peoples Day will inspire more of us to become engaged in supporting the ongoing struggles of indigenous peoples in Boston and beyond.