

There is ample evidence that Israel practices institutionalized discrimination against its non-Jewish citizens. While whites in South Africa sought to control non-whites, Israel has since its establishment pursued various means of getting rid of its non-Jewish population altogether.



The word apartheid refers to any institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over another. The "Israeli Arabs" - about 1.4 million Palestinian Christian and Muslim citizens who live in Israel - vote in elections. But they are a subordinated and marginalized minority. The Star of David on Israel's flag symbolically tells Palestinian citizens: "You do not belong." Israel's Law of Return grants rights of automatic citizenship to Jews anywhere in the world, while those rights are denied to 750,000 Palestinian refugees who were forced or fled in fear from their homes in what became Israel in 1948.

All Israeli politicians are committed to preserving Israel's Jewishness. They have to be. It's the law. As the state of the Jewish people, Israel is the only country in the world that expressly claims not to be the state of its actual citizens (who include a million non-Jews), let alone that of the people whom it actually governs (half of whom are Palestinian Arabs).

Most of Israel's land is the property not of the Israeli people, but of Jewish people everywhere. As non-Jews, Palestinian citizens of Israel are barred from access to state land.

Israel's newly revised nationality law prohibits Palestinian citizens of Israel from marrying Palestinians from the occupied territories and living with their spouses in Israel. The same law does not apply to Jewish Israelis who marry Jewish settlers living in the occupied territories. Similar legislation had been proposed in South Africa at the peak of Apartheid, only to be rejected by that country's supreme court. Israel's nationality law was endorsed by Israel's High Court in 2006.



When Palestinian citizens of Israel demand that their state become the state of all its citizens, they are denounced for imperiling the Jewish nature of the state. The longstanding Palestinian call for a democratic and secular state, for both Arabs and Jews, has always been regarded as a direct threat to Israel's Jewishness.

Israel's Basic Law of Human Dignity and Liberty establishes the state as a "Jewish democracy" although 24 percent of the population is non-Jewish. Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, counted 20 laws that explicitly privilege Jews over non-Jews.

Palestinian children in Israel attend "separate and unequal" schools that receive a fraction of the funding awarded to Jewish schools. Many Palestinian villages, some predating the establishment of Israel, are unrecognized by the government, do not appear on maps, and thus receive no running water, electricity, or access roads. Since 1948, scores of new communities have been founded for Jews, but none for Palestinians, causing severe residential overcrowding.

Anti-Arab bigotry is rarely condemned in Israeli public discourse, in which Palestinians are routinely construed as a "demographic threat." Palestinians in Israel's soccer league have played to chants of "Death to Arabs!" Israeli academic Daniel Bar-Tal studied 124 Israeli school texts, finding that they commonly depicted Arabs as inferior, backward, violent, and immoral. A 2006 survey revealed that two-thirds of Israeli Jews would refuse to live in a building with an Arab, nearly half would not allow a Palestinian in their home, and 40 percent want the government to encourage emigration by Palestinian citizens. Last March, Israeli voters awarded 11 parliamentary seats to the Israel Beitenu Party, which advocates drawing Israel's borders to exclude 500,000 of its Palestinian citizens.

In Apartheid South Africa 87% of the territory was reserved under law for white citizens only, and denied from non-white citizens. In Israel 93% of the territory of the State of Israel, independent of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, is reserved under law for Jewish citizens only.

Jewish citizens are citizens of class A, and non-Jews are second, third and fourth class citizens. This is a classic apartheid construction when it refers to the essential attributes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is essentially between a settler-colonial state and an indigenous population dispossessed by the colonial project.

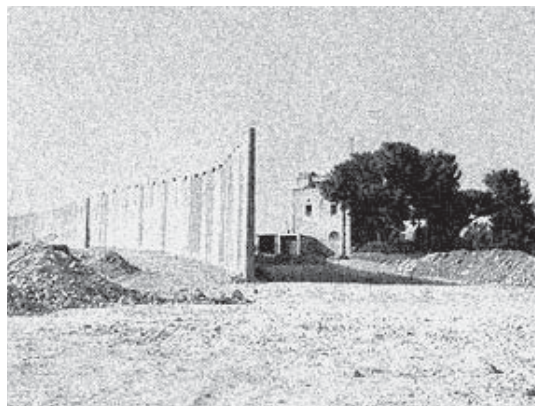


A visit to Israel gives the impression of a standard liberal Western democracy: there are no buses for Jews, buses for non-Jews; parks for Jews and parks for non-Jews; beaches for Jews and beaches for non-Jews. The core apartheid is veiled, and the Jewish National Fund plays an important part in the construction of this veil.

The Jewish National Fund projects itself as an environmentally friendly organization concerned with ecology and sustainable development. It plants forests and establishes recreation facilities open to all. However, most - almost without exception all - of these forests are planted on the ruins of Palestinian Arab villages ethnically cleansed in the 1948-49 war. The forests of the Jewish National Fund are there to veil this criminality and the Jewish National Fund forestation activity is an accomplice to the cover-up of war crimes. Canada Park is planted over the ruins of three Palestinian-Arab localities - Amwas, Yalu and Beit Nuba.

The wall represents an attempt by the government of the State of Israel to cap the expulsion - the ethnic cleansing - perpetrated in the course of the 1948-49 war with a Bantustan solution for the rest of the country. The question of terrorism and the casualties inflicted by terrorism on an innocent civilian population is a very serious question, but the wall is not there to alleviate this crisis of terrorism - the wall is there to isolate the indigenous population in what are effectively huge concentration camps.

Terrorism and targeting civilian population is a serious crisis, but the first terrorist actor in this awful equation is not the Palestinian suicide bomber, but the Israeli army and the government of the State of Israel. Any statement of condemnation of terrorism in the region should list Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz as first on a long list, and a Palestinian suicide bomber as last.



Campaign to End Israeli Apartheid-Southern California

We are a diverse group of Southern California activists, both secular and from all religions, and including Arabs and Israelis, who have come together to further peace with justice in the Middle East. To that end, we have joined a Palestine-initiated campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel, similar to those applied to South Africa during the apartheid era, in order to bring an end to Israel's immoral and oppressive policies towards Palestinians both within Israel and throughout the Occupied Territories.

These non-violent measures should be maintained until Israel recognizes the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination, and fully complies with international law by:

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands;
2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality and abolishing all laws and practices to the contrary; and
3. Respecting and protecting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.

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