Human Rights Organizations Condemn Israeli Apartheid

In its 2022 report, Israel’s Apartheid Against Palestinians, Amnesty International stresses that the entire country – Israel and the Palestinian territory – it intends to permanently rule – constitutes an apartheid regime.

Israel has imposed a system of oppression and domination over Palestinians wherever it exercises control over the enjoyment of their rights – across Israel and the OPT and with regard to Palestinian refugees. The segregation is conducted in a systematic and highly institutionalized manner… intended to oppress and dominate the Palestinian people.

The key components of this system of oppression and domination (are): territorial fragmentation; segregation and control through the denial of equal nationality and status, restrictions on movement, discriminatory family reunification laws, the use of military rule and restrictions on the right to political participation and popular resistance; dispossession of land and property; and the suppression of Palestinians’ human development and denial of their economic and social rights, inhuman and inhumane acts, serious human rights violations and crimes under international law, committed against the Palestinian population with the intent to maintain this system of oppression and domination.

The organization has concluded that Israel has perpetrated the international wrong of apartheid.

B’Tselem, the premier Israeli human rights organization, agrees. In its 2021 report This Is Apartheid, it writes:

In the entire area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, the Israeli regime implements laws, practices and state violence designed to cement the supremacy of one group – Jews – over another – Palestinians….

Michael Lynk, the UN Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, noted in his 2022 report to the Human Right Council that for more than 40 years, the UN Security Council and General Assembly have stated in hundreds of resolutions that Israel’s annexation of occupied territory is unlawful, its construction of hundreds of Jewish settlements are illegal, and its denial of Palestinian self-determination breaches international law… But no accountability has ever followed. If the international community had truly acted on its resolutions 40 or 30 years ago, we would not be talking about apartheid today.

The Only Way Out: An Inclusive Yet Pluralistic Democracy

Resistance, activism and protest alone will not end Israeli apartheid, and ending Israeli apartheid by itself will not dismantle Zionist settler colonialism, or restore to the Palestinians their national rights in their historic homeland. Only a clear political program can do that. Joining with the Palestinian-led One Democratic State Campaign (ODSC), ICAHD has played a key role in forging the only program of liberation, justice, inclusiveness and equality possible: one that calls for a single democracy over historic Palestine, yet which also acknowledges the presence of two national groups, Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews.

The program advocated by ICAHD in tandem with the ODSC is based on the following principles:

- Replacing Israel’s apartheid regime with a constitutional democracy between the River and the Sea, based on common citizenship and equal civil rights;
- Implementing the Right of Return for the Palestinian refugees and their descendants, followed by effective policies for reintegrating this traumatized population into society;
- Providing constitutional guarantees protecting the rights of the country’s national, ethnic and religious communities to their collective identities, associations, cultures and institutions;
- Enabling and fostering the emergence of a new, shared civil society; and
- Engaging in creating new regional and global structures of equality and sustainability upon which the success of local decolonization ultimately depends.

You will find the complete ODSC program at <https://onestatecampaign.org/all/en-manifesto>.

No political program can succeed without effective political organization, leadership and a strategy of summoning the power to prevail. In this effort, ICAHD works closely with the ODSC. Our ability to mount a successful anti-colonial struggle depends, however, on mobilizing you, the peoples of the world, the Palestinians’ only genuine allies. Supporting ICAHD is an important step in that direction.

Support Our Work

ICAHD in all its branches – its headquarters in Jerusalem and its active chapters in the UK, the USA, Germany and Finland – plays a central role in the struggle for justice in Palestine/Israel. Inserting a critical Israeli voice into the political discourse is crucial for ensuring a truly inclusive and therefore liberatory anti-colonial movement. It also contributes to the struggle in concrete ways deserving of your support:

- ICAHD equips you with a wide range of campaign materials: maps and other visuals, PowerPoint presentations and films. Obstacles to Peace, ICAHD’s manual for activists, gives you critical analysis that empowers you to become an effective advocate for justice in Palestine, as will Decolonizing Israel, Liberating Palestine, ICAHD Director Jeff Halper’s latest book. Check out the wide range of resources downloadable on our collective ICAHD website <www.icahd.org>;
- ICAHD conducts international campaigns to end house demolitions, to call for divesting from Caterpillar and JCB whose bulldozers are used to demolish Palestinian homes and – the ultimate campaign, launched with our Palestinian partners – for a democratic state shared equally by both peoples;
- ICAHD engages with Israeli and Palestinian partners in legal proceedings to prevent massive demolition and displacement in the West Bank;
- ICAHD advocates for Palestinian rights throughout the world through speaking tours, webinars, participation in conferences and lobbying as it endeavors to mobilize activists and engage with decision-makers;
- ICAHD persists in its resistance to the demolition of Palestinian homes and, with its Palestinian and Israeli partners, confronting Israeli repression in all its many forms;
- ICAHD conducts in-depth study tours of Israel and the OPT for internationals seeking to understand Israeli colonialism and how to decolonize it – tours our participants have called life-changing.

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Support our important political endeavors by donating to ICAHD via the links on the website <www.icahd.org>
Apartheid: Zionism’s Only Possible Outcome

The “Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” is a misnomer. It is not a “conflict” involving two disputing “sides.” Zionism and its progeny, Israel, represents a unilateral intent on the part of nationalist Jews to take over Palestine. Zionism aims to transform an Arab country into a Jewish one.

No one denies the Jews’ historical and religious ties to the Land of Israel. In fact, Jews were always welcome to immigrate to the country and be part of its society. But the Zionists chose instead to come as settler intent on Judaising Palestine. In this they were enabled by the international community.

- In 1922 League of Nations mandated the British to facilitate “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.” The Palestinians, 80% of the country’s population with national aspirations of their own, were dismissed, referred to in the Mandate as merely “existing non-Jewish communities” lacking all national rights of their own.

- In 1947, the United Nations, with no legal authority, endorsed the partition of Palestine, allocating a full 56% of Palestine to the Jewish settlers, then only 30% of the population, for a Jewish state. The Palestinian majority understandably rejected the Partition Plan.

- By the end of the 1948 war that ensued, Israel has enlarged the territory under its control to 78%, now accepted as Israeli territory. It then cleansed the territory it conquered, expelling some 750,000 Palestinians and taking their land.

- In 1967, Israel conquered the rest of Palestine. Since then, the international community has allowed Israel to complete its colonial takeover of the country. Our governments have done so even in the face of Israel’s blatant violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention and other international laws. They are complicit in Israel’s erasure of the Palestinian presence in their homeland, not to mention their national rights.

- Although Palestinians comprise the majority population between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River, Israel has confined them to tiny, disconnected and impoverished enclaves on only 15% of their historic homeland. The five million Palestinians of the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) live under a brutal military regime with no civil or political rights. Israel’s own Palestinian citizens, 21% of the population, possess only limited civil rights in a state that asserts its exclusively “Jewish” character and are themselves confined to 3.5% of their state’s land.

This is apartheid, defined in the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid as “inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group and systematically oppressing them.”

Israel’s Apartheid Regime

Israelis have taken the apartheid system and perfected it, so to speak, sharpened it. For instance, we had the Bantustans and we had the Group Areas Act and we had the separate schools and all of that but I don’t think it ever even entered the mind of any apartheid planner to design a town in such a way that there is a physical wall that separates people and that that wall denotes your freedom of movement, your freedom of economic gain, of employment, and at the same time is a tool of intimidation and dehumanisation.

In view of our resistance, resistance is effective only if connected to a political end-game. That, we contend, is the establishment of an inclusive democracy, yet one that brings the refugees home and establishes a single democratic state.

Jeff Halper, ICAHD Co-founder and Director

ICAHD
The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions

is a grassroots Israeli organization dedicated to ending Israel’s apartheid regime, restoring to the Palestinians their national rights and establishing a single democracy inclusive of both peoples in a shared civic state.

Israel’s policy of demolishing Palestinian homes on both sides of the 1967 border epitomizes its intent to displace the Palestinian people while taking its land. ICAHD focuses on demolitions as a window into Israel’s colonial intentions. Our activists

• Resist demolitions, placing themselves in front of Israeli bulldozers, chaining themselves inside the homes, alerting activists and journalists, risking arrest;

• Rebuild demolished homes as joint acts of resistance with the Palestinian families and their communities. Over the past quarter-century ICAHD has rebuilt 189 homes;

• Take our experiences and analyses to the international community. In Palestine/Israel, ICAHD takes diplomats, journalists and activists on tours of Israeli settlements, enabling by the international community – settlements in the OPT, today numbering 198,000, with a population of 650,000; the 60% of the West Bank governed by an Israeli military government under which Palestinians have no legal protections. Indeed, Area C has been virtually cleared of Palestinians. It is here and in occupied East Jerusalem where Israel has established its settlement-cities and where most demolitions occur.

• Gaza’s 2 million inhabitants have been locked in an open-air prison since 1989, their farmlands destroyed, their fishermen severely restricted from accessing the sea, clean drinking water unavailable. Sealed off from the outside world, Gazans have not seen their families in the West Bank or Israel for a generation.

Israel’s scorched earth policy

• Palestine’s richest agricultural land has been expropriated by Israel or dried out from denial of water. More than a million olive and fruit trees have been uprooted by the Israeli army and settlers, croplands torched, the Palestinian economy devastated.

Discrete settlements (blue areas on map) consolidated into settlement blocs (pink areas)

Almost 800,000 Israeli settlers live illegally in the OPT, half in East Jerusalem, half in the West Bank.

For decades Israel built – illegally but with no interference from the international community – settlements in the OPT, today numbering about 200. It is now connecting the dots. By consolidating individual settlements into settlement blocs, Israel expands its territorial contiguity to the Jordan River, incorporating the settlements into Israel while locking the Palestinians into Bantustans.

The Separation Barrier

• The 3 million Palestinians of the West Bank live behind a 680 km/422 mile Separation Barrier. Concrete walls twice as high as the Berlin Wall surround Palestinian towns and cities; electronic fences fortified by watchtowers, sniper posts, mine fields, ditches, barbed wire, patrol roads, surveillance cameras, electronic warning devices and patrols of attack dogs enclose rural areas.

• Israel officially calls the fortification the “Separation Barrier” to highlight its main purpose: separating Israelis from Palestinians, pure apartheid.

Economic Closure and House Demolitions

• Although Israel destroyed the Gaza economy, Gazan workers are locked out of the Israeli job market. About 100,000 West Bankers work daily in Israel as casual laborers, but work permits are scarce and expensive. According to the UN, the rate of unemployment in the OPT is one of the highest in the world, at 27% (more than 50% in Gaza). Most Palestinians live on less than $2 a day.

• 60,000 Palestinian homes, schools, mosques, livestock facilities, businesses, community buildings have been demolished by Israel in the OPT since 1967. Demolitions go on daily, including the homes of Palestinian citizens of Israel within the “Green Line.” Tens of thousands of demolition orders remain outstanding.

Infrastructure

• A matrix of Israeli highways also incorporate the West Bank and East Jerusalem into Israel, while obstructing the movement of Palestinians and their goods.

• Israel controls the borders between the OPT and the outside world.

Areas A & B of the West Bank (brown areas on map), Area C (in grey) and Gaza

- 97% of Palestinians in the OPT are confined to the 70 disconnected enclaves of Areas A, B, and Gaza, comprising just 10% of their historical homeland. They form the Bantustans of Israel’s apartheid system.

- Area C of the OPT, the 62% of the West Bank ruled exclusively by Israel, is governed by an Israeli military government under which Palestinians have no legal protections. Indeed, Area C has been virtually cleared of Palestinians. It is here and in occupied East Jerusalem where Israel has established its settlement-cities and where most demolitions occur.

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