

PAPER 6: APARTHEID

A CRASH COURSE ON THE TRUTH
the separation and privilege of one people over another



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ISRAEL: AN APARTHEID STATE?

Israel is a “Jewish democracy” that is also occupying the Palestinian Territories. Although those Palestinians living within Israel's 1967 borders can vote, there are numerous mechanisms in place that systematically discriminate against the Palestinian minority. Furthermore, in the Occupied West Bank, apartheid can be seen in the physical divisions between privileged (and illegal) Jewish settlers and the indigenous Palestinian population; this separation/apartheid is embodied in the existence of a barrier between the illegal Jewish settlements and Palestinian communities. The illegally occupied West Bank has been transformed into a collection of bantustans, surrounded by Israeli soldiers, hostile settlers, checkpoints, and walls. Apartheid exists within the internationally recognized borders of Israel and also within the West Bank, and is systematically implemented.

APARTHEID IN ISRAEL

What follows are **some** of the many laws in Israel that are discriminatory and which clearly promote apartheid. These are laws, which are systematically put into legislation, and apartheid is a very real part of the system. While it is easy to list these in an academic fashion, please keep in mind how these laws affect the daily lives of Palestinians throughout the region.

LAND: While Israel excludes Palestinians and non-Jews from state land and land belonging to the Jewish National Fund, it does not exclude Jews from the very limited and minimal land remaining under Palestinian (“Arab”) ownership.

CULTURAL EXCLUSION: Any form of Palestinian expression of national self-determination is fiercely suppressed. The Palestinian flag has been declared illegal, and flying the flag is punishable by a prison sentence. The commemoration of al-Nakba is also illegal.

LAW OF RETURN (1950): This law grants every Jew in the world the right to immigrate to Israel. On the other hand, Palestinians who fled in fear during 1948 and 1967 have not been granted the right to return as mandated by the UN. This is systematic discrimination based on **race**. Also, Palestinians cannot become Israeli **nationals**, only Jews can.

INCOME, EMPLOYMENT, AND ALLOCATION OF GOVERNMENT SPENDING:

The Central Bureau of Israeli

Statistics indicates that 85% of Palestinians in Israel are in the bottom five deciles of income distribution while 50% of Jews in Israel are in the upper five deciles. Palestinian families earn, on average, less than 65% of the average income of Jewish families. IDF service is a requirement for employment in many jobs; the vast majority of Palestinians do not serve in the IDF, and thus are excluded from these jobs.

ABSENTEE PROPERTY LAW (1950): This law classifies the personal property of Palestinians who fled during 1947/48 as "absentee property" and makes it state property, even if they are within the state or making attempts to return to it.

APARTHEID IN THE WEST BANK

In the West Bank, the Israeli government has put the Israeli military in charge of policing and protecting its illegal settlements. The military makes no effort to create a democratic or fair system because it admits that the operation is a military one. A Bantustan system has been created, and the West Bank has been fragmented into many pieces, creating a very real divide between Palestinians and illegal Israeli settlers. There are unequal laws, resources, and land available depending on whether a person is Israeli or Palestinian. Moreover, preferential and superior treatment is given to Israelis who essentially control and dominate the lives of Palestinians. What follows are just a few of the ways in which apartheid has become part and parcel of Israel's system of occupation.

LAND LAWS: Military orders that allow confiscation of Palestinian-owned lands under various pretenses. Large areas of Palestinian land have been annexed into Israel in violation of international law. At the same time, settlers are given land.

SECURITY: Settlers are not answerable to Palestinian law, and are considered Israeli citizens. While these Jewish settlers are entitled to security from the IDF, Palestinians are not entitled this right. As such, settlers often act viciously, meeting no consequences.

TWO-TIER LEGAL SYSTEM: A major use of Palestinian confiscated lands is for Israeli settlements (which are illegal under international law). The settlements are given a different legal system than the Palestinians. They are linked legally and economically to Israel with lots of economic benefits for the settlers and companies that operate there. They are also considered a part of Israel, not a Palestinian state. Meanwhile, Palestinians residing in the same region are not given access to their own resources or the same benefits granted to illegal settlers.

THE APARTHEID WALL: This is a barrier separating Palestinians from Jews that have illegally settled in the Occupied Territories. The wall is made up of either an 8 meter-

high (25 feet) concrete barrier or a barbed wire wall, often accompanied with ditches and security systems. The wall is planned to be 708 km long. It is one of the most apparent and atrocious examples of how there is a true separation between two peoples. It has effectively annexed more Palestinian land, bars movement, isolates villages (even Palestinian ones from Palestinians) and is a major obstruction to freedom of movement: all in the name of protecting Israel's illegal settlement activities. 85% of the wall is built on internationally-recognized Palestinian land, (obviously) against their consent.

APARTHEID ROADS: Throughout the West Bank is 1,661 km of roads designated for Israeli use. Palestinians are restricted or barred from using these roads, and 41,525 acres of Palestinian land has been confiscated to create these roads. Palestinian movement is thus heavily obstructed and their lives heavily disrupted. Palestinian-only roads also exist, creating a divide between two people.

“TRAVELLING INTO PALESTINE'S WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP... IS LIKE A SURREAL TRIP BACK INTO AN APARTHEID STATE OF EMERGENCY... IT IS SHOCKING TO DISCOVER THAT CERTAIN ROADS ARE BARRED TO PALESTINIANS AND RESERVED FOR JEWISH SETTLERS.”

RONNIE KASRILS

*Highest serving Jewish South African, former Minister of Intelligence.
and a leader of the struggle against South African Apartheid.*

THE LEGAL DEFINITION OF APARTHEID

As defined by the **United Nations**, the crime of **apartheid** is defined as:

“inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them”. The definition is lengthy and goes onto explain how this includes *“legislative measures and other measures calculated to prevent a racial group or groups from participation in the political, social, economic and cultural life... and the deliberate creation of conditions preventing the full development of such a group or groups...”*

Visit www.veritashandbook.org for a link to the complete definition.



To read more on apartheid in the region, see Ben White's books: **Israeli Apartheid: A Beginner's Guide** and **Palestinians in Israel: Segregation, Discrimination and Democracy**



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