

# Apartheid

## BRIEFING CARD

- **300+** Jewish towns can exclude Palestinians
- **35** unrecognised villages
- **7+** million Palestinian refugees denied the right to return to their homes
- **Different legal systems** for Palestinians in the West Bank
- **Biased allocation** of financial and natural resources
- **Discriminatory laws** against non-Jews in Israel

*“I've been very deeply distressed in my visit to the Holy Land; it reminded me so much of what happened to us black people in South Africa”*

– Archbishop Desmond Tutu, 2002

Palestinians are discriminated against legally, politically and economically within Israel. The **racist nature of Israel** has been highlighted by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who said, “Israel is not a state of all its citizens... Israel is the nation state of the Jewish people – and only it”. This was entrenched in the racist ‘Jewish nation-state’ law passed by the Israeli Knesset in 2018.

The Israeli legal system is based on **tiers of rights and privileges**, with non-Jewish Palestinians having the least rights. **More than 65 laws** restrict Palestinians' housing, employment, education, healthcare and family life. Even the freedom of a Palestinian in Israel to marry someone from outside is denied.

The ‘Nation State Law’ prevents politicians from calling for equal rights for Jews and Palestinians in Israel.

Israel systematically discriminates against Palestinians in its **land allocation**, blocking 80% of state land from Palestinian residential, agricultural, or commercial development.

- Apartheid is an “institutionalised regime of systematic **oppression and domination** by **one racial group over another**”, using “**inhumane acts**” to maintain domination.
- Many people think of South Africa when they hear the word ‘apartheid’. The discrimination by Israel against Palestinians is far worse.
- There are **over 65 discriminatory laws** against those who are not Jewish in Israel.
- Every aspect of Palestinian family life and freedom of movement is affected.
- Palestinians cannot live where they want, must carry ID cards at all times and their vehicle registration plates are marked.
- Apartheid against Palestinians is now acknowledged by the world’s leading international human rights organisations, including **Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch** and the **UN Special Rapporteur**.

There are over 700 admissions committees in towns and villages that **exclude applicants for residency** who do not meet “social suitability” standards, namely Palestinians.

The Israeli government consistently **prioritises Jewish communities** in the allocation of resources for social services. The 2009 Economic Efficiency Law allows the prioritisation of “National Priority Areas”, with schools for Jewish children receiving up to 88% more funding than schools for Palestinian children.

In the Naqab region, Israel **forcibly transfers** Palestinians from the land. It has designated certain areas “military zones” and refuses to recognise **35 villages**, cutting **around 68,000 people** off from electricity and water supplies as well as the health and education system. Israel repeatedly destroys Palestinian villages to pressure Palestinians to leave. Al-Araqeeb village has been destroyed by Israel and re-built by its community **over 200 times**.

The Israeli Law of Return gives Jews around the world the right to live in Israel. But Palestinians, despite having the **Right of Return under international law** and whose ancestors have lived on the land for centuries, are **denied this right**. There are now over **7 million** Palestinian refugees worldwide.

## Apartheid in the West Bank and East Jerusalem

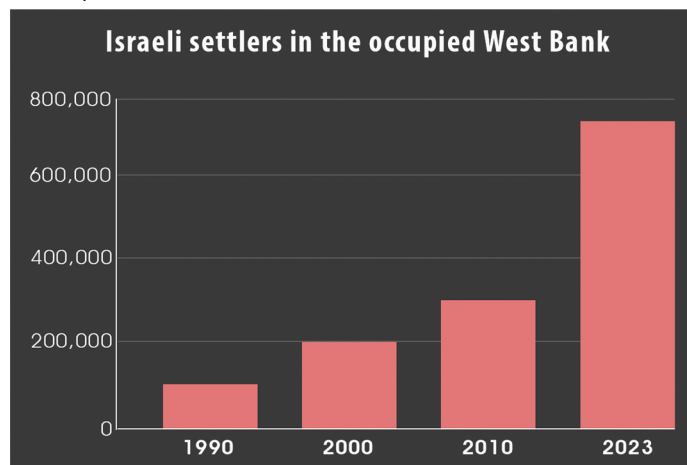
Israel illegally occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem in 1967. Since then, it has imposed laws and policies that undermine non-Jewish Palestinians. It steals Palestinian land and property, targets and kills Palestinians, forcibly transfers Palestinians from their land and denies them nationality and citizenship.

Israel operates two separate legal systems in the West Bank. Palestinians and Israeli settlers are subject to **different legal systems based on race**, even if they live in the same area.

Palestinian children are prosecuted through military courts, whereas Israeli children are prosecuted through civil and criminal courts. Palestinian children are the only children in the world prosecuted through military courts.

Palestinians are treated as an inferior racial group with no citizenship. ID cards must always be carried. In East Jerusalem, Palestinians are granted 'residency' ID instead of citizenship. Since 1967 Israel has revoked the residency of more than 14,000 Palestinians in East Jerusalem.

Israel imposes apartheid through its control of natural resources such as water. Israel has some of the safest drinking water anywhere in the world, but 96% of water in Gaza is unfit for human consumption. Human rights organisation Al-Haq calls this 'water apartheid'. There are over 70km of 'Israeli-only' roads across the West Bank, which Palestinians are not allowed to use.



## Who says it's apartheid?

Palestinians have said this for decades. Palestinian human rights organisations Al-Haq, Al-Mezan, Adalah and Addameer have led the way in exposing Israeli apartheid.

**B'Tselem** (2021) described Israel as “a regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: this is apartheid”.

**Amnesty International** (2021) and **Human Rights Watch** (2022) published reports showing that Israel is committing the crime against humanity of apartheid against Palestinians.

**UN Special Rapporteur** (2022) Michael Lynk, stated “apartheid is not, sadly, a phenomenon confined to the history books on southern Africa...apartheid is being practiced by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory”.

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## References:

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- 2) 'Israel's apartheid against Palestinians: A look into decades of oppression and domination', Amnesty International, February 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/israels-system-of-apartheid/>
- 3) 'Israel's 55-year occupation of Palestinian Territory is apartheid – UN human rights expert', UN Press Release, March 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/israels-55-year-occupation-palestinian-territory-apartheid-un-human-rights>

*Information accurate (April 2023)*



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