



Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) is an annual series of international conferences featuring lectures, film screenings, cultural activities and demonstrations, aimed at raising awareness about Israel's apartheid policies toward Palestinians, and building support for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) campaigns against Israel in response.¹ The 6th annual (i.e. 2010) Israeli Apartheid Week conferences are being held in cities around the world between March 1 and March 14, 2010, with the theme, *Solidarity in Action: Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions*.

Is Apartheid practiced in Israel?

Yes, apartheid exists both in Israel and in the Palestinian Territories controlled by Israel. Apartheid is quite overt in the Palestinian territories, militarily occupied by Israel since 1967. In the West Bank and East Jerusalem, apartheid manifests itself in various obvious forms: Jewish-only roads; Jewish-only housing (i.e. colonies); the application of two different systems of law: military on Palestinians, and Israeli civil on Jewish colonists in the territories; the racially-defined course of the Wall; and selective policing and investigation; to mention a few. In his book, Palestine: Peace not Apartheid, Jimmy Carter focused on this form of apartheid which Israel imposes in the Palestinian territories.

Apartheid also exists in Israel itself, though its institutions are more subtle. The following cogent examples are discussed in more detail, with examples in CJPME's factsheet, "Apartheid in Israel"²:

1. Confiscation of Palestinian Land for Exclusive Jewish Use
2. Discriminatory Family Reunification Law
3. Discriminatory Funding of Municipal Development
4. Racially-based approval of Building Permits
5. Israeli Non-recognition of long-existing Palestinian Villages
6. Systemic Inequalities for Palestinian citizens of Israel
7. Discriminatory Policing of Palestinian citizens of Israel
8. Denial of equal benefits, services and opportunities to Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel

What is Apartheid?

Apartheid, defined as a crime against humanity by the UN, applies to "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"³, including:

- "Any measures including legislative measures, designed to divide the population along racial lines by the creation of separate reserves and ghettos for the members of a racial group or groups, the prohibition of mixed marriages among members of various racial groups, the expropriation of landed property belonging to a racial group or groups or to members thereof;...
- "Persecution of organizations and persons, by depriving them of fundamental rights and freedoms, because they oppose apartheid."⁴

Can Apartheid exist within a Democracy?

Yes. Apartheid and institutions of democracy are not necessarily mutually exclusive. South Africa was a "white democracy," while the United States practiced a democracy which tolerated slavery for 100 years, and then tolerated segregation for another 100 years. While individuals may theoretically enjoy certain trappings of democracy – e.g. voting rights – a minority group may still struggle for the most basic of human rights and civil protections.

The essential characteristics of apartheid in a democracy are:

1. A system of laws in which the dominant and subservient groups do not have equal rights;
2. A political system designed to ensure that the dominant group is and remains a voting majority.

Apartheid has two forms to it:

1. **Laws.** Apartheid is written into laws passed by majority of those entitled to vote.
2. **Practice.** The laws, in theory, apply equally to all, but are enforced selectively and unfairly by the ruling majority to the disadvantage of the minority.

Apartheid within Israel takes both forms. Unlike South Africa, Israeli laws are generally written in neutral terms (with a few exceptions, notably Law of Return and Nationality Law) and ostensibly apply to all. But they are carefully drafted so as to apply only to Palestinians (e.g. the Absentee Property Law (1950)), or discriminate against non-Jews by using terms such as “a person to whom the Law of Return applies.”

Is IAW anti-Semitic or anti-Israel?

No. Bona fide IAW and BDS movements have never positioned themselves as anti-Semitic, and have never called for the destruction of Israel. In fact, many Jews participate actively in the leadership of local IAW and BDS movements in Canada and elsewhere.

Mainstream IAW and BDS movements do not focus on Jews or Judaism, but on *the behaviour of the Israeli government* towards the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel, and the Palestinians under Israeli occupation in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. When the Israeli institutions maintaining apartheid and occupation over Palestinians are dismantled, then the IAW and BDS campaigns will cease.

It should also be noted that the State of Israel has the same obligations under international law as any other state. It is not “anti-Israel” to expect the Israeli regime it to meet its obligations under international law, any more than it would be “anti-Canada” to expect Canada to respect international law.

How widespread is the support for IAW?

The world’s first Israeli Apartheid Week conference took place at the University of Toronto in 2005.⁵ Three years later, in 2008, University of Toronto President David Naylor asserted: “The future of Israel and its neighbours will not be decided by a small group of activists who talk mostly to themselves on a few North American university campuses.”⁶ In 2010, IAW conferences are being held in 44 cities around the world, including Edmonton, Hamilton, Kingston, London, Montréal, Ottawa, Peterborough, Toronto, Vancouver, Waterloo and Winnipeg.⁷

The wide support for IAW and the BDS campaign reflect broad frustration in Canada and elsewhere with Western leaders and their unwillingness to address the root issues driving conflict in the Middle East. For decades, Western leaders have failed to respond meaningfully to very compelling edicts and opportunities related to the Middle East conflict, among them:

- The 2004 International Court of Justice decision that the Israeli Wall being built in and around the West Bank, and its associated regime of military occupation, were illegal, and must dismantled.
- UN Security Council resolutions, e.g. UNSC 194 (1948) Right of return for Palestinian refugees, UNSC 242 (1967) Israeli withdrawal to 1967 borders, UNSC 446 (1979) Illegality of Israeli colonies in Palestinian territories, UNSC 1397 (2002) The need to pursue a two-state solution, etc.
- UN General Assembly resolutions, e.g. UNGA 3236 (1974) Support for the Palestinian right to self-determination, UNGA ES-10-13 (2003) Demand that Israel dismantle its wall, UNGA ES-10-15 Demand that Israel respect the ICJ ruling of 2004, etc.
- The peace plan proposed by the Arab League in 2002 and 2007, and the need for a credible negotiations process where the Palestinians are not asked to bargain away their human and humanitarian rights.

¹ “Media,” Israeli Apartheid Week 2010 Campaign, <http://apartheidweek.org/en/2010/media>, retrieved 2010.02.16

² “Factsheet: Apartheid in Israel,” Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, Feb. 2007

³ *International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid*, Art. 2, UNGA Resolution 3068, [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/res/3068\(XXVIII\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/res/3068(XXVIII)), retrieved 2010.02.18

⁴ Ibid., Art. 2, para. (d) and (f)

⁵ “The Sixth Annual Israeli Apartheid Week 2010,” Israeli Apartheid Week 2010 Campaign, <http://apartheidweek.org/>, retrieved 2010.02.16

⁶ “U of T president visits three Israeli universities,” Canadian Jewish News, July 31 2008,

⁷ Ibid., “The Sixth Annual Israeli Apartheid Week 2010,”