

ISRAEL'S ETHNOCRATIC DYNAMICS.
A SETTLER COLONIALIST LENS ON APARTHEID-LIKE POLICIES
AND THE MARGINALIZATION OF PALESTINIAN ARABS

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Abstract. Marginalization and hostility towards minority populations, often manifested as discrimination, have been recurring themes in historical conflicts, with the Israeli-Palestinian case being no exception. While drawing parallels to South African apartheid is common among critics, this study seeks to illuminate Israel's distinct ethnocentric framework where the establishment as an exclusively Jewish state has led to preferential treatment for Jewish citizens and systematic marginalization of Palestinian residents. Notably, the utilization of over 60 laws favouring Jewish ethnic supremacy represents a direct challenge to international conventions against racial discrimination.

By employing qualitative analysis of archival data and reports from Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations such as Al Haq, B'Tselem, and Adala, in conjunction with primary documents including the Rome Statute, the Apartheid Convention, and relevant international laws, this study aims to unravel Israel's ethnocentric system within the framework of settler colonialism, providing a comprehensive understanding of its implications and consequences.

Keywords: apartheid, marginalization, Palestinians, settler colonialism, Zionism

INTRODUCTION

The inception of Israel as a homeland for the global Jewish community in 1948 brought relief to the Jewish diaspora, marking a historic milestone. Nevertheless, this defining moment harboured tragedy for the Palestinian Arabs residing in areas under Israeli control, leading to enduring conflict and disparity. In the aftermath of Israel's establishment, Palestinian Arabs, viewed as potential

threats, were relegated to a second-class status, and subjected to discriminatory state policies and practices (Kadman 1).

The complexity of the status of Arab citizens in Israel, constituting approximately 25% of the population, remains a pivotal matter (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics). Notably, the pervasiveness of discriminatory legislation directed towards Arab citizens, exemplified by over 35 proposed discriminatory bills in 2009 under a right-wing government (Ghanim 18), followed by escalated discriminatory policies in 2013 under the Likud coalition (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights), has exacerbated inequality, marginalization, and subjugation within the population.

Fayez Sayegh, a Palestinian scholar, introduced a racial theory of Zionist settler colonization in 1965, arguing that Zionism should be regarded as “racial elimination”, and not simply as a form of European colonialism driven by racial domination. According to Sayegh, Zionist ideology holds Jews to be a distinct race and people, leading to three consequent corollaries: racial self-segregation, racial exclusiveness, and racial supremacy (Sayegh 22). Zionist settlers were noted to have adopted and transcended the lethal principles of apartheid taught by other discriminatory regimes in settler states across Asia and Africa.

Resolution 3379, condemning Zionism as a form of racism and racial discrimination, was successfully passed at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1975, spearheaded by Sayegh during the Decade Against Racism. However, this resolution was rescinded in 1991 following the Palestinian Liberation Organization’s agreement to further the peace process with Israel. Critics argue that the Oslo Accords’ ghettoized sovereignty model contributed to the obfuscation of Israel’s Zionist settler-colonial agenda and Jewish supremacy, providing a false equivalency between a nuclear-powered state and a stateless, dispossessed nation without basic resources or autonomy.

Fragmentation imposed by Israel has divided the Palestinian nation regionally and transnationally across the Gaza Strip, West

Bank, Israel, and a global diaspora. In the aftermath of the Intifada of Unity in 2021, the Palestinian national struggle for liberation from Israel's exclusive jurisdiction over all lands and peoples from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River regained global attention. Embracing a blended legal framework, Israel has pursued a settler-colonial project to garner the greatest amount of land with the least Palestinian presence, employing civil, military, and administrative law alongside systemic warfare.

In December 2019, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination began reviewing a Palestinian complaint alleging that Israel's policies in the West Bank constituted apartheid. This was followed by reports from Israeli human rights organizations Yesh Din in July 2020 and B'Tselem in January 2021, both of which concluded that the criteria for labelling the Israeli regime as apartheid had been met. B'Tselem Executive Director Hagai El-Ad stated, "Israel should not be seen as a democratic state with a temporary occupation; rather, it forms a unified system spanning from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, and we must acknowledge this complete reality as apartheid" (B'Tselem). Subsequently, in April 2021, Human Rights Watch accused Israel of apartheid and called for the prosecution of Israeli officials under international law.

The Apartheid Convention and the Rome Statute are two international treaties that recognize apartheid as a crime against humanity. The Apartheid Convention specifically defines the crime in Article II 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" (International Convention). Similarly, the Rome Statute's definition in Article 7 states: "inhumane acts (...) committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime" (Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court). The United Nations Commission on Human

Rights notes that while the primary focus of the Convention is on southern Africa, its implementation is broad, reflecting the shared concern for recognizing and addressing apartheid wherever it takes place.

In Afrikaans, which has roots in Dutch, the term apartheid translates to “separation”. This term denotes segregating individuals through “a set of policies and practices of legal discrimination, political exclusion, and social marginalization, based on racial, national, or ethnic origins” (Pappé 73). This concept, “apartheid”, gained traction in academic and activist literature during the 1980s and 1990s.

Edward Said’s work *The Question of Palestine* highlights similarities between Zionism and Western colonialist ideals in the treatment of Arabs, particularly Palestinians. For instance, Said discusses how Israelis, as Western colonialists in a perceived backward region, hold certain beliefs about Arabs and their “nomadic” habits (Said, 1979, p. 37). Edward Said’s work on culture and imperialism is a significant contribution to the understanding of the impact of settler colonialism on indigenous peoples. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said contends that imperialism, particularly settler colonialism, not only exerts control over land and resources but also imposes its cultural norms, values, and ways of life on native populations. This cultural imposition serves to marginalize and undermine the indigenous cultures and identities, perpetuating a form of intellectual and cultural domination.

In the 1990s, historian Patrick Wolfe from Australia came up with the concept of settler colonialism. He said it’s not just about when settlers arrived, but how they took over the land by getting rid of the native people. It’s different from traditional colonialism, which focused more on using the native population for their benefit. Wolfe said that even after the frontier closed, settler colonialism continued, and that it still happens today. He even said that Israel is an example of modern settler colonialism. Some other experts have questioned Wolfe’s idea, saying that many situations involve both getting rid of the native population and using them for gain.

The idea of settler colonialism centres around the lasting settlement and uprooting of native communities by settlers. This has played a consequential role in the histories of North America, as well as other countries such as Australia and South Africa. Lorenzo Veracini, an Associate Professor of History at Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, has authored multiple books including *Israel and Settler Society* (2006), *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (2010), *The Settler Colonial Present* (2015), and *The World Turned Inside Out* (2021). Numerous scholars and activists contend that the formation of Israel and its subsequent expansion into the occupied territories of Palestine can be interpreted through the lens of settler colonialism. This approach posits that by integrating the colonial settlers into the existing population, they are regarded as the authentic inhabitants of the land, thereby displacing the original inhabitants who previously occupied it.

The racial nature of Israel's settler colonialism and its apartheid-like modalities in the treatment of Palestinians have been underlined as interlinked phenomena, bolstering the Jewish nationals' spatial and temporal dominance and systematically oppressing Palestinians to maintain it. Critics emphasize that the determinant factor in the conflict lies in the extreme maldistribution of power and the international community's role in applying necessary pressure to dismantle Israel's racist regime.

The existing landscape raises pertinent questions about the efficacy of international law in safeguarding the individual and collective rights of indigenous minorities, particularly in the context of Palestinian Arabs. While international law enshrines the entitlement of Indigenous minorities to preserve their distinct culture, language, and religion within the framework of individual and collective citizenship rights, the Israeli government's denial of their classification as an "Indigenous minority" in favour of privileging Jewish identity challenges the efficacy and enforcement of international legal standards.

This study does not seek to provide a comprehensive review of human rights violations against Palestinians because human rights

organizations have extensively documented such issues over the years. Instead, it emphasizes the lack of literature addressing the applicability of the apartheid framework to the overall experience of the Palestinian people under Zionist settler colonialism.

This study aims to thoroughly analyze the historical and current context of Israel’s ethnocratic dynamics, particularly regarding discriminatory policies against Palestinian Arabs. It seeks to explore the legal, social, and human rights consequences of Israel’s governance and its treatment of indigenous minorities, addressing existing literature gaps and offering insights that could influence perceptions of Israeli policies and governance. Additionally, the research intends to critically assess how international law addresses the rights of indigenous minorities within the framework of settler colonialism to unravel the complexities of Israel’s ethnocratic system. The research employs a qualitative analysis of archival data and reports from Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations, including Al Haq, B’Tselem, and Adala, to ensure objectivity, while also analyzing primary documents such as the Rome Statute, the Apartheid Convention, and relevant international laws.

ISRAELI APARTHEID AND SETTLER COLONIALISM

The term “apartheid” refers to a system of policies and practices that promote legal discrimination, political exclusion, and social marginalization based on racial, national, or ethnic origins. Notably, Ilan Pappé, in his book, *The Many Faces of Apartheid*, argues that Israel adopted some of the tools and mechanisms used by the South African Apartheid regime. It is noteworthy that both Israel and the Apartheid government in South Africa were established in the same year, 1948. Furthermore, both countries exhibit significant economic power imbalances, with Black South Africans and Palestinian people facing severe economic hardships. However, while black labour was necessary and respected in some ways in

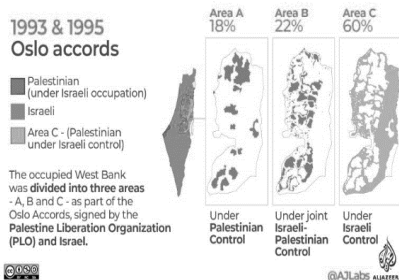
South Africa, Israel does not depend on Palestinian labour to function. As a result, Palestinians may be viewed as dispensable.

The term “apartheid” has become used by widely respected human rights organizations. For instance, on April 27, 2021, Human Rights Watch, one of the world’s credible rights groups, released an extensive report concluding that Israel is an apartheid state. A similar conclusion has been reached by B’tselem, a leading Israeli rights group, in its report, entitled “A Regime of Jewish Supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: this is Apartheid.” These two recent documents have assisted the vast literature classifying Israel as such. Apartheid is a crime against humanity that involves brutal acts against a racial group such as murder, persecution, torture, elimination, or enslavement. These behaviours are the product of a systematized regime of systematic oppression and dominance by one racial group over another.

It is essential to highlight that Israel exemplifies settler colonialism. Unlike colonialism, settler colonialism prioritizes the land itself rather than the surplus value derived from combining native labour with it. As stated by Wolfe (1999), “The primary goal of settler-colonization is the land itself, rather than the surplus value derived from combining native labour with it” (p. 163).

The Oslo Agreements signed between 1993 and 1995 made it easier for Israel to establish an apartheid state against the Palestinians. According to Pappé, the Oslo Accords did not benefit the Palestinian people; instead, they rendered them subservient to Israeli authority, as shown in the following chart released by

Aljazeera Labs.



Furthermore, international law was not used to oppose Israeli Apartheid since Israeli law was superior in this case. As a result, Israel maintains control over the occupied regions. It is noteworthy that

Israel is considered a sovereign state with absolute authority over everything within its recognized boundaries. Therefore, whatever occurs is beyond the control of the international community (Tilley 2015, 2).

INTERNATIONAL LAW TO MINORITY GROUPS

The concept of safeguarding human rights can be traced back to the seventeenth century, specifically to the 1763 Treaty of Paris. This treaty was signed between France, Spain, and Great Britain, and it granted protection to religious minorities of Roman Catholics in Canadian territories ceded by France. The notion of protecting human rights gained further momentum in the aftermath of the atrocities committed during World War II. Since then, international law has been enriched with declarations that recognize individual and collective rights, which enable people to live with dignity. However, these declarations are not accompanied by enforceable legal obligations for states, making them “soft international law.” Moreover, international law lacks a precise definition of the term “minority.” Although widely accepted definitions, such as Article 27 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, exist, they are ambiguous. The article suggests that the individuals who are to be protected are those who collectively share a culture, religion, and language that are distinct from the majority. Nonetheless, an agreement on defining national minorities has not been achieved at either the international or domestic level, which some states exploit to claim that they have no minorities. As a result, legal measures are necessary to safeguard the collective rights of minority groups.

Collective rights, unlike individual rights, apply to group differentiation within a state. They are essential for protecting the unique identity of indigenous minorities from the pressures exerted by the majority. In other words, indigenous minorities are often marginalized because ruling states tend to view them as a potential threat to their legitimacy. As a result, these minorities are forced to

remain subjugated or expelled, as is the case with the Arab minority living in Israel.

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination is the result of international efforts to secure the rights of minorities, indigenous people, and caste groups. It requires states to use legislation to eradicate racial discrimination and to put an end to inequality. Moreover, the UN Declaration on Minority Rights emphasizes the need to preserve and protect minority cultures to ensure social, cultural, economic, and political equality.

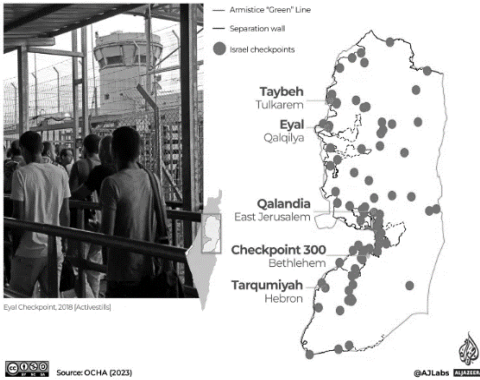
In addition to the global system of the United Nations, there are several mechanisms for protecting minorities, such as the joint efforts of the Council of Europe, the limited activities of the European Union, the European Court of Human Rights, the European Commission for Democracy Through Law, and the High Commissioner on National Minorities. These international instruments promote equality and non-discrimination through a range of impressive rules. However, their effectiveness in protecting minorities is uncertain, particularly when examining the status of indigenous minorities living in states that claim to be democratic despite being involved in ethnic conflicts.

PALESTINIAN RIGHTS AND SETTLER COLONIALISM

Over the past decades, a series of discriminatory laws and policies have operated to subjugate Arab citizens of Israel, solidifying their status as second-class citizens. The mistreatment of this vulnerable minority and the persistent human rights violations have led to the characterization of Israel as an “apartheid” state.

The term “apartheid” is indeed contentious, commonly associated with the discriminatory system of segregation between whites and blacks in South Africa. However, in this context, it is deliberately used to bring attention to the unequal treatment of Arabs residing in Israel. For instance, within Jerusalem, most Israeli

and Arab neighbourhoods are segregated. Furthermore, beyond Jerusalem, the dividing wall and the blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip isolate Arab communities not only from the Jewish population but also from the outside world, unmistakably echoing an apartheid regime, as demonstrated in the following chart on Israeli checkpoints:



In Israel, being a citizen doesn't necessarily mean being part of the national identity (Zreik 2008). Even though the Zionist state was created specifically for the Jewish people, it claims to be a democracy. However, Israeli citizenship is based more on ethno-

nationality (being Jewish or not) rather than just on citizenship, resulting in rights being determined by factors beyond citizenship. Palestinian citizens in Israel see their citizenship as colonial, tied to institutional discrimination, vulnerability, and control. From their perspective, citizenship mainly implies accepting the state's authority in exchange for basic services (Zreik, 140). Critics argue that the 1980 law declaring Jerusalem as the capital of a Jewish nation-state and the law of return were deliberate moves to ensure ethnic superiority.

The aggressive land laws aimed at transferring land from Palestinian ownership to the authority of the Zionist state serve to prevent the return of Palestinian refugees to their land or properties. To legitimize this forceful displacement, Israel enacted several complementary laws, including The Absentees' Property Law, The State Property Law, and The Land Acquisition Law. Through these laws, the Israeli military was able to demolish over 80 per cent of Palestinian towns and villages, resulting in the Israeli state owning

more than 93 per cent of the land, while Palestinian Arab citizens have ownership of only about 3 per cent. Even this minimal portion is not secure, as the Israeli state could find legal grounds to transfer it under its control, exemplified by the Right to Residency law, which is mirrored in the following chart proposed by Human Rights Watch:



According to AIHaq, which is a human rights organization, Palestinians who have a “permanent” residency status to live in Jerusalem do not have an inherent right of entry, it is rather a revocable privilege. For example, since 1967 more than

15000 Palestinians from East Jerusalem have had their residency rights revoked. Most revocations were justified by the claim that Jerusalem wasn’t their “centre of life.” In other words, Palestinians who stayed away from Jerusalem for a while can lose their right to residency. However, the truth, according to Human Rights Watch, is that revocations are used to punish Palestinians as the Interior Minister revokes the residency status of any Palestinian who is considered a threat. Such policies do not apply to Jewish citizens, as shown in the table below, which is based on information from Human Rights Watch’s 2021 report:

Jewish Americans born in the US	Palestinian Refugee Born in Lebanon
-Can visit Israel and most of the West Bank and can find programs that may fund the trip.	-Is barred from entry to Israel, the West Bank, or Gaza.
-Can move to live in Israel because of being Jewish. The 1950 Law of Return can guarantee will afford him/ her a free flight.	-Is barred from returning and denied residency rights, even if he/ she has family living there.

<p>-Is entitled to automatic citizenship even if he/ she has never set foot in Israel before, due to the 1952 Citizenship Law.</p>	<p>-Is ineligible if his/her family became refugees between 1947 and 1949, even if they had lived there for generations before.</p>
<p>-Can pass along legal status and even citizenship to his/ her spouse (except if they’re Palestinian from the OPT or several Arab countries).</p>	<p>-He/She has no legal status and cannot gain one, even by marrying a citizen or resident of Israel.</p>

The Nakba Law, enacted in 2011, restricts the free political expression of the Arab community, hindering their ability to collectively express and preserve their shared historical memory. Palestinians traditionally describe the date of the creation of the Zionist state as the “Nakba”, which means the worst or most massive catastrophe because of the disaster experienced by more than 700,000 Palestinians who were expelled. The Nakba Law gives authority to the Finance Minister to reduce funding to any institution that mourns the establishment of Israel. Therefore, this law hampers the ability of Arab educational, cultural, and political organizations to collectively express and preserve their shared historical memory. Similarly, the Anti-Boycott Law violates the rights of Arabs to express their political views peacefully without using violence.

The Sectarian Representation Law, passed in 2014, reclassifies Christian citizens as non-Arab, employing the divisive “divide and rule” strategy. This legislation illustrates the formal separation between Christians and Muslim Arabs, deepening inequalities and isolating Muslim Arabs, potentially fueling continuous chaos in the region. Sponsor of the law and leader of the Lukud Party Yariv Levin explained that Christians are the allies of Jews and their counterweight to the Muslims and they deserve recognition and separate representation (The Jerusalem Post). As a result, they shouldn’t be called Arabs even if they share the same culture, language, and history. As it was explained by the director of public policy for the Abraham Fund, Aya Ben Amos, this legislation is the first formal separation between Christians and Muslim Arabs.

These examples of discriminatory legislation provide insight into the interconnected dynamics of Israeli apartheid and settler colonialism, highlighting the institutionalized discrimination and erasure of Palestinian identity and culture within the legal framework of Israel. These aforementioned instances elucidate only a fraction of the discriminatory manifestations within Israeli law against marginalized groups. A comprehensive account of the remaining apartheid laws, which are either currently operational or in the process of enactment, would require extensive research.

Since its establishment in 1948, Israel has characterized itself in its declaration of independence as a Jewish and democratic state. However, to maintain its Jewishness, Israel has avoided every commitment to the principles of democracy. Israel is an ethnocracy since it has a bias in favour of one ethnic group and grants that group privileges. For instance, the “Bill of Rights of Israel” excludes specific rights to equality, deepening discrimination against the Arab minority. This characterization is not only unrepresentative but also undemocratic, particularly when a significant portion of the population is not Jewish. Therefore, the major aim of such inhuman practices is to dominate, as highlighted in the following chart released by Human Rights Watch:



The Arab community in Israel constitutes a minority compared to the Jewish majority. This non-dominant group has a different culture, religion, language, and ethnicity. However, before the establishment of the Zionist state in 1948, they used to constitute the majority and they represented the indigenous people of

that land. This historical context is critical as international law provides specific protections for indigenous minorities. Thus, Arab citizens of Israel should have been acknowledged as sovereign people, entitled to self-determination and autonomy as recognized in the UN Declaration on Indigenous Rights in Article 4.

Prominent human rights activists and organizations, including the Mossawa Center and Adala, advocate for the recognition and promotion of indigenous rights for Palestinian Arabs in Israel to foster peace and stability in the region, especially given the history of discriminatory policies, underscoring the broader context of settler colonialism.

THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF ISRAELI APARTHEID AND SETTLER COLONIALISM

Several countries, including Australia, the United States, New Zealand, South Africa, and Canada, have experienced settler colonialism, which led to the displacement of indigenous populations and the replacement of their symbols with those of the settlers. In the case of Israel, this erasure of Palestinian identity and culture is comparable to the treatment of indigenous cultures in the United States and Australia.

Apartheid, in the context of settler colonialism, encompasses various discriminatory strategies employed against Palestinians, forming a distinct form of colonialism. Settler colonialism, unlike traditional colonialism, operates within the boundaries of a settler political entity, prioritizing the acquisition and control of land over the utilization of Indigenous labour.

Israel's classification as an apartheid state aligns with the objectives of settler colonialism, aiming to erase the identity of the native population while assimilating the colonialists as the new natives. This process leads to the progressive disappearance of indigenous and exogenous groups through various methods such as

extermination, expulsion, imprisonment, containment, and assimilation.

The institutional framework in the context of apartheid as a strategy of settler colonialism in Israel encompasses the legal, political, and socio-economic systems that perpetuate differential treatment between Israeli Jews and Palestinians. This framework is characterized by a set of laws, policies, and practices that prioritize the rights and resources of Israeli Jews while marginalizing Palestinians.

Understanding apartheid as a strategy of settler colonialism in Israel involves considering the notion of separation, exemplified by laws designed to treat Israeli Jews and Palestinians differently. Key legislation, such as the Law of Return and the Nation-State law and the provision of separate education systems for Palestinians and Jews, underscores the disparities in resource allocation and support for education, effectively illustrating the impact of settler colonialism in Israel.

The institutional framework also encompasses the broader societal and economic structures that sustain differential treatment and segregation. It influences housing policies, employment opportunities, access to healthcare, and other essential services, perpetuating disparities between the two communities. One aspect of socio-economic marginalization is disparities in access to resources and opportunities. Palestinian communities in Israel often face challenges in land ownership, employment, and economic development. This can be attributed to historical land confiscation, discriminatory housing policies, and unequal access to economic resources, which have contributed to entrenched socio-economic disparities. Furthermore, restrictions on freedom of movement, limitations on trade and commerce, and challenges in obtaining building permits contribute to the socio-economic marginalization of Palestinians. These factors hinder economic development and perpetuate dependence, contributing to the broader cycle of marginalization, as summed up in the following table:

Citizen of Israel Born in an Israeli Town	Palestinian Citizen of Israel Born in Unrecognized Bedouin Village
-Israel recognizes his community and actively nurtures the development of Jewish communities.	-Israel does not recognize 35 Palestinian Bedouin communities, making it impossible for 90.000 or so residents to live lawfully in their homes.
-Can access basic services without any obstacles due to billions of shekels Israel has invested in major infrastructure projects to attract Jewish residents to the area.	-Israel refuses to connect his unrecognized village to national electricity or water grids or provide basic services like paved roads, sewage systems, and schools.
-Israel continues to make more and more land available to Jewish communities to encourage them to stay and raise their family there.	-Israel seeks to concentrate Bedouins in government-planned townships. As a resident of an unrecognized village, they live under constant threat of home demolition.
-Can move to a big city or other towns across Israel.	-Jewish towns have admissions committees that have power by law to exclude Palestinian citizens.
-Can build a home since Israel has allocated large swaths of the West Bank to settlements, where plans have been approved to build thousands of homes.	-It’s virtually impossible to build a home because 60% of the West Bank is under exclusive Israeli control (Area C) and may have the home demolished rather than get a permit to build.
-Can drive on roads designed to bypass Palestinian communities.	-Even with a rarely issued Israeli permit, they’ll face checkpoints, causing delay and humiliation.

In conclusion, the comparison between the treatment of Israeli citizens born in recognized towns and Palestinian citizens born in unrecognized Bedouin villages vividly illustrates the deep-seated disparities, institutionalized marginalization, and unequal access to resources and opportunities. This stark contrast emphasizes the pervasive impact of discriminatory policies and practices on the lives of Palestinians, highlighting the urgent need for a comprehensive and equitable approach to addressing these systemic challenges within Israeli society.

ISRAELI APARTHEID WEEK

Two British academics, Hilary Rose and Steven Rose, proposed an academic boycott of Israel in 2002, citing the academic and cultural boycotts imposed on apartheid South Africa as a model for opposing Israeli policy. The initiative inspired Omar Barghouti, founder of the Boycott Divestment and Sanction (BDS) movement, to title the third chapter of his book, *The South Africa Strategy for Palestine*. Also, former President Jimmy Carter's 2006 book, *Palestine: Peace not Apartheid*, introduces the apartheid parallel. Similarly, Professor Noam Chomsky suggests, in an interview, that "Israel's actions in Palestine are much worse than apartheid in South Africa". This description goes hand in hand with the findings of the Israeli historian, Ilan Pappé, that have exposed the oppressive Zionist policies against Palestinians and classified them as ethnic cleansing.

Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) began in 2004 in Toronto and is currently celebrated in 25 locations throughout the world, including Palestine and South Africa. IAW was organized with titles such as "60 Years of Nakba: End Israeli Apartheid" (Hartman 2010). The apartheid analysis, presented during IAW, has played a significant role in increasing awareness and distributing information about Zionism, the Palestinian liberation fight, and its parallels with the South African anti-Apartheid movement. As a symbolic gesture, the introductory talk of IAW was delivered in Soweto, South Africa.

South Africans have spoken out in support of the BDS campaign. A pertinent description of the analogy between the two movements was offered by Desmond Tutu who wrote:

The solution is more likely to come from that nonviolent toolbox we developed in South Africa in the 1980s, to persuade the government of the necessity of altering its policies. The reason these tools – boycott, sanctions and divestment – ultimately proved effective was because they had a critical mass of support, both inside and outside the country (Tutu 2021).

Archbishop Desmond Tutu's direct comparison of Israel's treatment of Palestinians to apartheid South Africa found widespread approval, except from Zionists who charged him with anti-Semitism, even after his death. This South African support has benefited the campaign's popularity in other countries that have played a key role in supporting solidarity activities against apartheid South Africa.

Palestinian intellectuals in exile, such as Edward Said, and social justice groups, such as BDS, have succeeded in branding Zionism as apartheid, colonialism, and ethnic cleansing. With this accomplishment in mind, Israeli Intelligence Officer Einat Wilf claims that Israel's present battle is being fought with words and ideas rather than missiles and weaponry (Wilf 2014).

During Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW), awareness of Israel's violations of Palestinian human rights is raised on an annual basis. Student activists choose when and what causes to focus on. IAW initiatives include information sessions, the recreation of apartheid walls, and other events to educate and raise awareness of Israel's settler-colonial practices among students. IAW enables the Palestinian liberation movement to network and build relationships with other campaigns against racism, injustice, and discrimination (BDS).

IAW has organized activities in many locations across the world, making it harder for Israel to conceal or whitewash its apartheid tactics. The IAW helped the emergence of the BDS movement and the extension of the Palestinian liberation struggle, particularly with the advent of the digital media era. As a result, the ability to narrate is no longer restricted to institutionalized elites; rather, it has been available to regular people, notably BDS activists and dispersed organizations without the money and capacity to effect social change.

This comparison to apartheid South Africa has contributed to weakening the myth that Israel is a democratic and special state. Consideration of Israel as an oppressive system of settler colonialism can be viewed as a triumph of social justice movements,

including the BDS. The direct participation of South African activists has been critical in growing civil society support for the BDS campaign, particularly among student groups. By framing Israel within the context of settler colonialism and apartheid, these efforts aim to dismantle oppressive systems and promote equality and justice for the Palestinian people.

CONCLUSION

Though Israel purports to be a democracy, its treatment of its population has been deeply influenced by ethnicity, leading to its evolution into an ethnocracy. This transformation is due to Zionist colonialism, which prioritizes “racial elimination” to secure property with minimal Palestinian presence, often consolidating them in small areas through civil law, military law, administrative law, and efforts such as systematic warfare in Gaza.

Apartheid in Israel is a direct consequence of Zionist settler colonialism, resulting in Palestinian displacement, settlement installation, and a marked increase in privileges for Jewish communities at the expense of increasing discrimination against Palestinians over time. This discrimination is not only perpetuated through societal hostilities but also through the continuous enactment of laws that obstruct the Palestinians’ ability to lead a normal life. The need to expose such systemic discrimination and a state that privileges one community at the expense of marginalizing others is an urgent humanitarian call, not to be misconstrued as anti-Semitism.

There is a pressing humanitarian need to recognize Palestinian Arabs in Israel as an “indigenous minority”, affording them the right to self-determination. The recent enactment of discriminatory laws against the Arab minority by the Zionist state calls for urgent international attention to address violations that impede the peace and stability of the entire region. Objective criteria for the recognition of minority status, independent of state influence, are

crucial to address state passivity towards minorities and uphold international law.

This call emphasizes the potential for optimism in the robust alliances that brought apartheid to an end in South Africa, serving as a model for a seemingly hopeless situation. The pressure for the abolition of apartheid must be applied by the international community to eliminate the systemic discrimination in Israel. Palestinians will persist in their fight for independence, seeking a future of shared liberty rather than exclusive sovereignty and eternal dominance.

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