

Identifying and Opposing Apartheid in the Holy Land

WHEREAS, in most of the region between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, Israel is the sole governing power, and, in the remainder, Israel maintains primary control over Palestinians' lives, and

WHEREAS Israeli authorities have demonstrated a clear intent to maintain domination over Palestinians by enacting a system of laws and policies that grant full self-determination exclusively to Jewish Israelis and enforce systematic oppression of Palestinians, which is the essence of an apartheid system, and

WHEREAS apartheid is not defined by the conditions that existed in South Africa, but by the United Nations Convention on Apartheid of 1973 and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998,¹ and

WHEREAS apartheid is named as a "crime against humanity" under international law and the primary features of apartheid include:

- codifying into law a preferred group of people and giving that group preferential access to resources, benefits and services,
- segregating the population into geographic areas based on identity, and
- establishing laws and policies designed to suppress opposition to the regime and enforcing domination through arbitrary imprisonment, torture, cruel and inhumane treatment, and other violations of human rights, and

WHEREAS within Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), the Israeli government has established its control over the lives of Palestinians with discriminatory laws and policies specifying where they can live, whom they can marry, where and when they can travel short distances, which roads they can drive on, how much water they can use, when they can access their own farms, what land they can purchase, which justice system they are subject to, whether they will receive due process, and the kinds of punishment they will receive, and

WHEREAS Israel has seized more than three-quarters of the land of its Palestinian citizens and continues their dispossession today, and Palestinians in the OPT have lived under Israeli military law for generations, without any protected civil rights, and

WHEREAS Israel has blatantly codified a racist governing principle in the Nation State Basic Law of 2018, which grants self-determination exclusively to the Jewish citizens of Israel, and

WHEREAS many authoritative scholars and organizations have conducted in-depth investigations and issued reports regarding Israeli apartheid, including:

- In 2009, a thoroughly documented, 302-page report on the OPT by an international group of legal scholars, commissioned by the South African government,
- In 2017, the 74-page report commissioned by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA): "Israeli Practices towards the Palestinian People and the Question of Apartheid,"
- In 2020, a 58-page report published by the Israeli human rights organization Yesh Din: "The Occupation of the West Bank and the Crime of Apartheid;"
- In January 2021, a strong indictment of the Israeli government from Israel's most

eminent human rights center, B'Tselem: "A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This Is Apartheid,"

- In April 2021, another extensively documented report, this from the world-renowned Human Rights Watch: "A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution," and
- In February 2022, the powerful and comprehensive report from the global leader in human rights advocacy, Amnesty International: "Israel's Apartheid Against Palestinians,"² and

WHEREAS these commissions, legal scholars, and human rights organizations have all come to the same unavoidable conclusion: that the Israeli government is committing the crime against humanity known as apartheid, and

WHEREAS, if apartheid is to be opposed and abolished, it is essential for the international community to recognize and name apartheid where it exists, and

WHEREAS Kairos Palestine, the Palestinian Christian movement endorsed by all the major Christian denominations in Palestine, in their "Cry for Hope" of 2020 has called upon the Church around the world to nonviolently oppose both "apartheid and occupation" in the Holy Land and to "uphold a vision of inclusivity and equality for all peoples of the land,"³ and

WHEREAS the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state that United Methodists "commend and encourage the self-awareness of all racial and ethnic groups and oppressed people that leads them to demand their just and equal rights as members of society," and furthermore "call the Church to challenge any hierarchy of cultures or identities,"⁴ and

WHEREAS The United Methodist Church has forcefully declared its opposition to the crime of apartheid, calling it a "heresy" and "a sin" that must be "condemned unequivocally – within Southern Africa and neighboring countries and throughout the world,"⁵

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the _____ Conference of The United Methodist Church affirms that apartheid is antithetical to the Gospel message and that we recognize and oppose Israeli apartheid as we strive to "resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves," and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference calls on the U.S. government to condition U.S. funding to Israel upon Israel's willingness to dismantle its apartheid system and implement all the rights due to Palestinians under international law, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference urges all United Methodist clergy and laity to listen to the voices of Palestinians regarding their situation, by meeting with them in their homeland, by seeking opportunities to hear from them at online events, and through the study of the Palestinian Christians' landmark 2020 document entitled "Cry for Hope: A Call for Decisive Action."

1. The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, United Nations –

<https://legal.un.org/avl/ha/cspca/cspca.html>

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court –

<https://www.icc-cpi.int/resource-library/documents/rs-eng.pdf>

2. Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa report –

“Occupation, colonialism, apartheid? A re-assessment of Israel's practices in the occupied Palestinian territories under international law”

<https://repository.hsra.ac.za/handle/20.500.11910/4619>

2. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) report-

“Israeli Practices towards the Palestinian People and the Question of Apartheid,”

https://www.kairosresponse.org/it_is_apartheid.html

2. Yesh Din Report –

“The Occupation of the West Bank and the Crime of Apartheid”

<https://www.yesh-din.org/en/the-occupation-of-the-west-bank-and-the-crime-of-apartheid-legal-opinion/>

2. B'Tselem Report –

“A Regime of Jewish Supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: It is Apartheid”

https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid

2. Human Rights Watch report –

“A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution”

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/07/19/israeli-apartheid-threshold-crossed#>

2. Amnesty International report –

“Israel's Apartheid against Palestinians: A Look into Decades of Oppression and Domination”

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/israels-system-of-apartheid/>

3. Kairos Palestine Statement –

“Cry for Hope: A Call for Decisive Action”

<http://www.cryforhope.org>

4. Social Principles: The Social Community

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016

<https://www.umc.org/en/content/social-principles-the-social-community>

5. “Southern Africa,” Book of Resolutions, adopted 1988; “Web of Apartheid. South Africa and the destabilization of its neighbors,” Book of Resolutions, adopted 1992