

The Apartheid Slander

In recent years the label “apartheid” has been used by extremists to demonize Israel, the only liberal democracy in the Middle East. This label is offensive, false, and an insult to the millions of black South Africans and others who have suffered under true apartheid regimes.

“I am shocked by the claim that the free, diverse, democratic state of Israel practices apartheid. This ridiculous accusation trivializes the word apartheid, minimizing and belittling the racism and suffering endured by South Africans of color.”¹
—Rev. Dr. Kenneth Meshoe, Member of the South African Parliament

Many who accuse Israel of apartheid do not understand what it really is and was.

- Apartheid was the South African system under which a small minority of whites subjected the majority black population to severe political, economic, and social discrimination. They could not be citizens, vote, or participate in the government, and they were segregated in every aspect of daily life.
- International law defines apartheid as establishing and maintaining an institutionalized regime of oppression by one racial group over another.²

Israel is the opposite of an apartheid regime. It is a multicultural liberal democracy whose legal system upholds equal rights, liberties, and protections for all of its citizens.

- Israel is a diverse society of people from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East. Their liberty, equality, freedom from discrimination, and freedom of religion are protected by law.³
- Israel's founding document states that Israel, “will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture.”⁴
- Israel's 25% non-Jewish minority has always had equal voting and political rights. Arab Israelis were elected to the first Knesset (parliament) in 1949 and have won as many as 14 seats in a single election. Some hold important positions in the government, court system, and military.⁵
 - Arabs and other non-Jews have attained high positions in the government including Deputy Speaker, Acting President, member of the Prime Minister's cabinet, Ambassador, and Consul General.⁶
 - In 2011 Arab-Israeli Supreme Court Justice Salim Joubran sat as judge in a case against former Israeli president Moshe Katsav and convicted him of misconduct.⁷
 - Israeli Druze, Bedouins, and Arabs fight in the Israeli Defense Forces and have attained ranks as high as Major General.⁸

Israel fights discrimination.

- Like all multi-ethnic democracies, Israel struggles with discrimination and the disadvantages its minorities face, but its laws are meant to eradicate—not institutionalize—these problems.⁹
- There are many Israelis, both in the government and in the thriving NGO sector, who devote their lives to ending discrimination and helping Israel's minorities.¹⁰
- Israeli universities have enacted effective affirmative action programs to help Arab citizens overcome the educational disadvantages they face.¹¹

The Palestinians are not citizens or residents of Israel and do not wish to be. They are a separate national movement with their own governments.

Israel implemented security policies only to separate Palestinian terrorists from their intended victims, Israeli Jews.

- When Palestinians launched the 2nd Intifada and the suicide bombing campaign against Israeli civilians in 2000, Israel had to protect its citizens. Checkpoints, bypass roads, and the security barrier were put in place to prevent terrorists from attacking Israeli civilians, not to oppress or dominate the Palestinians. When the Palestinians make peace with Israel these measures will be lifted.

Palestinians suffer under real apartheid conditions in Arab countries.

- Palestinians are oppressed and discriminated against by law in Arab countries. In Lebanon they are denied access to education, property ownership, medical care, and many forms of employment.¹²

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- ¹ Kenneth Meshoe, "Pro-Palestinian ads misrepresent apartheid," *SF Examiner*, May 15, 2013, at <http://www.sfexaminer.com/sanfrancisco/pro-palestinian-ads-misrepresent-apartheid/Content?oid=2339168>
- ² UN, "Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court," July, 2002, at <http://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%202187/v2187.pdf>
- ³ Jewish Virtual Library, "Human Rights in Israel," n.d., at http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/Human_Rights/human_rts_in_Israel.html
- ⁴ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Declaration of Establishment of State of Israel," May 14, 1948, at <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Guide+to+the+Peace+Process/Declaration+of+Establishment+of+State+of+Israel.htm>
- ⁵ Embassy of Israel London, "Minority Rights in Israel," n.d., at <http://www.embassyofisrael.co.uk/discover-israel/iw/minority-rights-in-israel/>
- ⁶ Embassy of Israel London, "Minority Rights in Israel," n.d., at <http://www.embassyofisrael.co.uk/discover-israel/iw/minority-rights-in-israel/>; The Israel Project, "Israel's Leaders: Religious and Ethnic Diversity in Action," 2010, at <http://www.theisraelproject.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=hsJPK0PIJpH&b=5118555&ct=6957337>
- ⁷ Joanna Paraszczuk, "Katsav to serve 7 years for rape conviction," *Jerusalem Post*, November, 10, 2011, at <http://www.jpost.com/NationalNews/Article.aspx?id=245059>
- ⁸ Na'ama Rak, "First Druze is Chief Logistics Officer," *IDF*, November 13, 2009, at <http://dover.idf.il/IDF/English/News/today/09/11/1300.htm>
- ⁹ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2012, Israel and the Occupied Territories," *U.S. Department of State*, 2013, at <http://www.state.gov/i/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>
- ¹⁰ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2012, Israel and the Occupied Territories," *U.S. Department of State*, 2013, at <http://www.state.gov/i/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>
- ¹¹ Qanta Ahmed, "The Poverty of Boycotting Israel," *Haaretz*, July 25, 2013, at <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/premium-1.537930>
- ¹² Khaled Abu Toameh, "Where is the Outcry Against Arab Apartheid?" *Gatestone Institute*, March 11, 2011, at <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/1953/arab-apartheid>; Human Rights Watch, "Lebanon: Seize Opportunity to End Discrimination Against Palestinians," June 18, 2010, at <http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/06/17/lebanon-seize-opportunity-end-discrimination-against-palestinians>