

Join the movement to make our city, Sheffield an Israeli Apartheid-Free Zone

Apartheid is a crime against humanity of the greatest magnitude, whenever – and wherever – it is practised. Palestinians have long said that Israel is a settler colonial, apartheid regime. Major Western organisations have begun to address the Palestinian analysis. The UN's Falk and Tilley Report, B'Tselem (Israel's premier human rights organisation), Human Rights Watch and, most recently, Amnesty International have all denounced Israel as practising the crime of apartheid against the Palestinians. Major figures in the South African movement against apartheid in their land agree.

"I know first-hand that Israel has created an apartheid reality within its borders and through its occupation. The parallels to my own beloved South Africa are painfully stark indeed." Desmond Tutu



Now, Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur has said: *"Realizing the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination requires dismantling once and for all the Israeli settler-colonial occupation and its apartheid practices"*

The apartheid framing identifies the crime but not the politics that governs Israel's form of settler colonialism: an ethnic nationalist movement (Zionism) that is growing increasingly radical as it seeks to expand its territorial and economic base by the removal of the indigenous people of Palestine.

WE MUST ACT – AND WE ARE STRONGER ACTING TOGETHER

Israel's designation as an apartheid state by prominent international humanitarian organisations represents an important stage in mobilising public support for the Palestinian struggle.

As Desmond Tutu said: *"Those who turn a blind eye to injustice actually perpetuate injustice. If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."*

Sheffield: A South African Apartheid-Free Zone

1981 Sheffield became the first local authority to pledge that it would end all links with South African apartheid. It withdrew pension fund investments from companies with South African subsidiaries and barred South African sports teams from its playing fields.

The images below are taken from the Sheffield City Council's website.



Sheffield Anti-Apartheid Movement demonstration outside the Town Hall, Pinstone Street, Aug 1985 (Photographer: Sheffield Newspapers Ltd) (Picture Sheffield: s35356)



'Sheffield Forward' - paper of the Local Trade Union and Labour Movement, Report on 'Sheffield: Britain's first apartheid-free zone', Oct 1981 (Sheffield City Archives: LAAA/12; Sheffield Local Studies Library: 331.88 SF)



Anti-racism underpins opposition to Israeli Apartheid

The struggle against Israeli apartheid is inseparable from the wider struggle against all forms of racism. We oppose racism of all kinds, e.g. racism against Black and minority ethnic groups, people of the Islamic or Jewish faiths or any other group suffering discrimination.

The question of whether the state of Israel is constituted as an apartheid regime spring from the same body of international human rights law and principles that rejects anti-Semitism: that is the prohibition of racial discrimination.

Who says Israel is practising apartheid against the Palestinians? The Palestinians describe Israel as a settler colonial, apartheid regime. Now major western organisations echo this analysis.



Israeli Practices towards the Palestinian People and the Question of Apartheid

Palestine and the Israeli Occupation, Issue No. 1



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

ISRAEL'S APARTHEID AGAINST PALESTINIANS

CRUEL SYSTEM OF DOMINATION AND
CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY



A definition of Apartheid: The term “apartheid” was originally used to describe the system of white minority rule in South Africa, from 1948 until 1994. However, the crime of apartheid is not limited to that historic context. In international law, apartheid is defined as follows:

- *“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.”*
- *These acts are committed “in the context of an institutionalised regime . . . with the intention of maintaining that regime.”*

How Amnesty International describes Israeli apartheid:

Amnesty's report documents in detail the fact that the overriding goal of Israeli policies since 1948 has been to establish a Jewish demographic majority and to maximize Jewish-Israeli control over land in all areas of historic Palestine.

For this purpose, Israel discriminates against and restricts the rights of Palestinians by measures such as these:

- *the unequal allocation of resources between Israel's Jewish citizens and Palestinians in all areas under Israeli rule, whether that be in the provision of water, health or state investment*
- *enshrining in Israel's Basic Laws that the national status of Jewish citizens is distinct from citizenship and confers rights and resources which are denied to the Palestinian citizens of Israel*
- *discriminating in all areas of Israeli rule on the basis of ethnicity, to enable the confiscation of Palestinian land and property and to utilise these resources for the benefit Israel's Jewish population*
- *governing the West Bank on the basis of one legal system for the Palestinian population (a military system) and another for Jewish-Israeli settlers (a civil system)*
- *restricting access to agricultural land in the Gaza Strip and to fishing areas in the region's coastal waters*
- *drastically restricting the freedom of movement of the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza, which seriously impedes their access to work and medical services and, in many cases, forces partners and families to live apart.*

What does Israeli Apartheid look like on the ground?



Children are subjected to military law while illegal settlers are supported by Israel's army



Life goes on in Gaza despite the blockade and frequent attacks

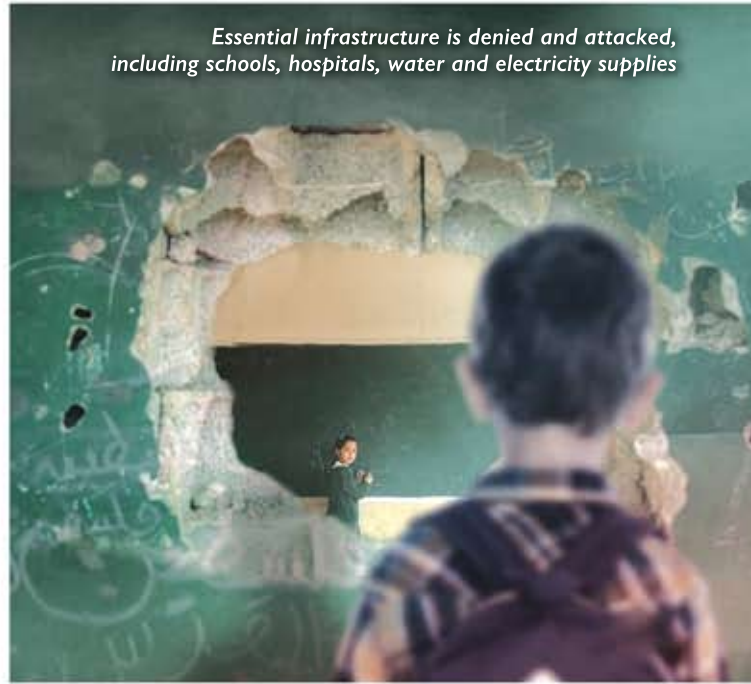


British firms are complicit in Israeli war crimes

The Apartheid Wall divides Palestinians



Essential infrastructure is denied and attacked, including schools, hospitals, water and electricity supplies



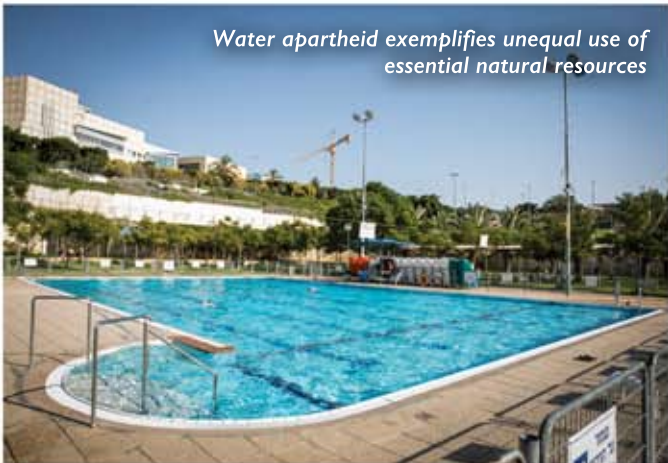
Shireen Abu Akleh was shot dead by an Israeli soldier. Mourners and even pall bearers were attacked at her funeral. Those who challenge the Israeli regime risk their lives



Because of many checkpoints, Palestinians are denied freedom of movement



Water apartheid exemplifies unequal use of essential natural resources



Ample water for illegal settlers means scarcity for Palestinians



Illegal colonies expand on Palestinian land, as does settler violence, with the support of the IDF



Join us to make our city an Israeli Apartheid-Free Zone

A coalition of four Sheffield-based organisations is working together to make Sheffield, once again, a leading light in the struggle against the crime of apartheid, as it once was in the South African Anti-Apartheid Movement.

The coalition currently comprises Sheffield Trades Union Council, Sheffield Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Sheffield Labour Friends of Palestine and Kairos Sheffield. We are an interim working group and welcome more people and groups to join us and campaign with us.



Kairos Sheffield



What does an Israeli Apartheid-Free Zone mean in practice?

At its simplest level, it means pledging that you/your group/society/place of worship/shop/cultural or educational space will not knowingly engage with the Apartheid State of Israel until it abides by all international laws and UN resolutions affecting the rights of Palestinians, including the refugees' right of return.

Getting to this outcome will need discussion, persuasion and campaigning, a process which is itself valuable.

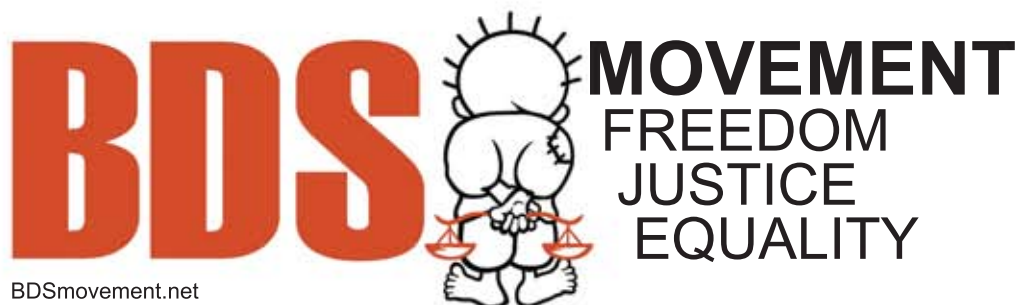
IMPORTANT NOTE:

The Apartheid-Free Zones campaign does not apply to people who happen to be from Israel and who are not acting on behalf of their state. The campaign is focused on the State of Israel, not ordinary civilians.

I'm interested, but what can I do in practice?

In the South African Anti-Apartheid movement, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign (BDS) was very effective. BDS in support of Palestinians is a powerful and peaceful tool against Israel's apartheid regime. The call for BDS comes from Palestinian civil society under the umbrella of the Boycott National Committee (BNC).

BDS is now a world-wide movement, offering something for everyone to do, as an individual citizen or within a group.



BDSmovement.net



- *As individuals, we can avoid buying items from apartheid Israel. We can spread the word to families, friends and shop keepers.*
- *Any shop/bar/cafe we work in or use can decide not to source or sell produce from the state of Israel, letting customers know of the decision.*
- *In educational establishments, we can build alliances to persuade fellow students and management to examine links and investments, ultimately severing connections with Israel.*
- *We all have local Councillors who listen to their electorate. We can lobby them to push for pension funds to divest from companies complicit in Israeli oppression. We can all press our MPs to call for meaningful sanctions against the state of Israel.*
- *If we are working in cultural spaces, again we can look closely at the links between any film/performer and the State of Israel, avoiding such links.*

All these actions can build the campaign, especially if we make them visible with stickers/posters or signs.



If you want to join us, please read these aims. Speak to someone you know in the interim committee or email us

The Aims of the Sheffield Palestine Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid:

The Coalition is committed to supporting the Palestinian people's struggle against Israeli apartheid, and the injustice and oppression they experience. It will coordinate the work of organisations in Sheffield committed to this objective and seek the support of citizens, trade unions, political, community, environmental, faith and student groups.

The Coalition pledges to:

- *oppose all forms of racism e.g. racism against Black and minority ethnic groups, antisemitism and Islamophobia*
- *raise Sheffield citizens' awareness of the Palestinian people's struggle against injustice imposed by Israeli apartheid, settler colonialism and occupation*
- *make Sheffield into an Israeli Apartheid-Free Zone by campaigning for businesses, local governmental, educational, sporting and cultural institutions to renounce all ties that support the Israeli apartheid system, in line with the Palestinian led BDS campaign*
- *oppose the arms trade and all forms of military collaboration with Israel and call for the end of the Israeli occupation and the siege of the Gaza Strip*
- *call for sanctions against Israel until it abides by all international laws and UN resolutions affecting the rights of Palestinians, including the refugees' right of return*
- *support Palestinian grassroots organizations which promote equality for women, workers' rights and the improvement of conditions for children*
- *encourage Palestinian cultural activity in Sheffield*
- *oppose measures aimed at shutting down public criticism of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians*

Get in touch:

- **Sheffield Trades Union Council:** tucsheffield@gmail.com
- **Sheffield Palestine Solidarity Campaign:** enquiries@sheffieldpsc.org.uk
- **Sheffield Labour Friends of Palestine:** chair@slfp.org.uk
- **Kairos Sheffield:** kairossheffield@gmail.com

