



## Telltale Quotes about Israeli Apartheid



***Nelson Mandela (1997): “But we know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians...”***

Many prominent individuals and organizations, speaking from deep knowledge and personal experience, have called Israel’s policies towards the Palestinian people “apartheid” – beginning with the architect of South African apartheid himself, Hendrik Verwoerd. Excellent compilations can be found in Wikipedia<sup>1</sup> and Corrigan.<sup>2</sup> This factsheet contains a selection of comments on Israeli apartheid by South Africans, Israelis, Palestinians and others.<sup>3</sup>

### **South Africans:**

#### ***Hendrik Verwoerd (“architect” of South African apartheid)***

November 1961 – then prime minister of South Africa, and architect of its apartheid policies, noted...

“[Jews] took Israel from the Arabs after the Arabs had lived there for a thousand years. In that I agree with them, Israel, like South Africa, is an apartheid state.”<sup>4</sup>

#### ***Nelson Mandela***

December 1997 – then prime minister of South Africa, in his address at the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People...

“The choice is not between freedom and justice, on the one hand, and their opposite, on the other. Peace and prosperity; tranquility and security are only possible if these are enjoyed by all without discrimination. It is in this spirit that I have come to join you today to add our own voice to the universal call for Palestinian self-determination and statehood.” ...

“But we know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians; without the resolution of conflicts in East Timor, the Sudan and other parts of the world.”<sup>5</sup>

#### ***Desmond Tutu***

April 2002 – Anglican Archbishop and Nobel Peace Prize winner, in an opinion piece entitled *Apartheid in the Holy Land*, following a visit to the West Bank...

“I’ve been very deeply distressed in my visit to the Holy Land; it reminded me so much of what happened to us black people in South Africa. I have seen the humiliation of the Palestinians at checkpoints and roadblocks, suffering like us when young white police officers prevented us from moving about.”<sup>6</sup>

October 2007 – speaking at a conference on the theme *The Apartheid Paradigm in Palestine-Israel*...

“When I hear, ‘that used to be my home,’ it is painfully similar to the treatment in South Africa when coloureds had no rights.”<sup>7</sup>

#### ***Willie Madisha***

August 2006 – in a letter of support from the Congress of South African Trade Unions to the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Ontario for its Israeli boycott resolution, COSATU President Madisha stated...

“As someone who lived in apartheid South Africa and who has visited Palestine I say with confidence that Israel is an apartheid state. In fact, I believe that some of the atrocities committed against the South

Africans by the erstwhile apartheid regime in South Africa pale in comparison to those committed against the Palestinians.”<sup>8</sup>

### **Ronnie Kasrils**

September 2006 – then a Cabinet minister, but writing in his personal capacity, in an opinion piece following Israel’s assault on Lebanon...

“With the illegal Jewish Israeli settlements, security road network, and construction of the monstrous wall around the militarily occupied West Bank, the remaining Palestinians are ghettoized within 12% of their original territory. This dispossession is reminiscent of Apartheid and its 13% of Bantustan homelands. For many this is the fundamental cause of the conflict.”<sup>9</sup>

### **34 leading South African activists**

May 2008 – in an open letter published at their own expense in *The Citizen*...

“We, South Africans who faced the might of unjust and brutal apartheid machinery in South Africa and fought against it with all our strength, with the objective to live in a just, democratic society, refuse today to celebrate the existence of an Apartheid state in the Middle East.” ... “We who have fought against Apartheid and vowed not to allow it to happen again can not allow Israel to continue perpetrating apartheid, colonialism and occupation against the indigenous people of Palestine.”<sup>10</sup>

### **Mondli Makhanya**

July 2008 – Editor-in-Chief of *The Sunday Times of South Africa*, after touring the West Bank as part of a delegation of human rights activists from South Africa...

“When you observe from afar you know that things are bad, but you do not know how bad. Nothing can prepare you for the evil we have seen here. In a certain sense, it is worse, worse, worse than everything we endured. The level of the apartheid, the racism and the brutality are worse than the worst period of apartheid.

“The apartheid regime viewed the blacks as inferior; I do not think the Israelis see the Palestinians as human beings at all. How can a human brain engineer this total separation, the separate roads, the checkpoints? What we went through was terrible, terrible, terrible - and yet there is no comparison. Here it is more terrible. We also knew that it would end one day; here there is no end in sight. The end of the tunnel is blacker than black.”<sup>11</sup>

### **Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa**

May 2009 – The Council released a study indicating that Israel is practicing both colonialism and apartheid in the Occupied Palestinian Territories...

“Regarding apartheid, the team found that Israel's laws and policies in the OPT fit the definition of apartheid in the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. Israeli law conveys privileges to Jewish settlers and disadvantages Palestinians in the same territory on the basis of their respective identities, which function in this case as racialised identities in the sense provided by international law. Israel's practices are corollary to five of the six 'inhuman acts' listed by the Convention. A policy of apartheid is especially indicated by Israel's demarcation of geographic 'reserves' in the West Bank, to which Palestinian residence is confined and which Palestinians cannot leave without a permit. The system is very similar to the policy of 'Grand Apartheid' in apartheid South Africa, in which black South Africans were confined to black homelands delineated by the South African government, while white South Africans enjoyed freedom of movement and full civil rights in the rest of the country.”<sup>12</sup>

### **Government of South Africa**

November 2009 – in an official statement condemning Israel’s approval of new housing units in Gilo...

“We condemn the fact that Israeli settlement expansion in East Jerusalem is coupled with Israel’s campaign to evict and displace the original Palestinian residents from the City.” ... “We call upon the Israeli government to cease their activities that are reminiscent of apartheid forced removals and resume negotiations immediately.”<sup>13</sup>

## **Israelis:**

### **Michael Ben-Yair**

March 2002 – former Attorney-General of Israel, in an opinion piece entitled *The war's seventh day...*

“Passionately desiring to keep the occupied territories, we developed two judicial systems: one - progressive, liberal - in Israel; and the other - cruel, injurious - in the occupied territories. In effect, we established an apartheid regime in the occupied territories immediately following their capture. That oppressive regime exists to this day.”<sup>14</sup>

### **B'Tselem (Israeli Human Rights Organization)**

May 2002 – in a publication entitled *Land Grab: Israel's Settlement Policy in the West Bank...*

“Israel has created in the Occupied Territories a regime of separation based on discrimination, applying two separate systems of law in the same area and basing the rights of individuals on their nationality. This regime is the only one of its kind in the world, and is reminiscent of distasteful regimes from the past, such as the Apartheid regime in South Africa.”<sup>15</sup>

### **Ehud Olmert**

November 2003 – then deputy prime minister in Ariel Sharon's Likud government, in an interview entitled *'Maximum Jews, minimum Palestinians'...*

“More and more Palestinians are uninterested in a negotiated, two-state solution, because they want to change the essence of the conflict from an Algerian paradigm to a South African one. From a struggle against ‘occupation,’ in their parlance, to a struggle for one-man-one-vote. That is, of course, a much cleaner struggle, a much more popular struggle – and ultimately a much more powerful one. For us, it would mean the end of the Jewish state.”<sup>16</sup>

November 2007 – then Prime Minister, in an interview entitled *Olmert to Haaretz: Two-state solution, or Israel is done for...*

“If the day comes when the two-state solution collapses, and we face a South African-style struggle for equal voting rights [also for the Palestinians in the territories], then, as soon as that happens, the State of Israel is finished.”<sup>17</sup>

### **Meron Benvenisti**

April 2004 – political scientist and former deputy mayor of Jerusalem, commenting on Israel's unilateral separation plan in an article in *The Guardian* entitled *Bantustan plan for an apartheid Israel...*

“And thus, with breathtaking daring, Sharon submits a plan that appears to promise the existence of a “Jewish democratic state” via “separation”, “the end of the conquest”, the “dismantling of settlements” – and also the imprisonment of some 3 million Palestinians in bantustans. This is an “interim plan” that is meant to last forever. The plan will last, however, only as long as the illusion is sustained that “separation” is a means to end the conflict. The day will come when believers in this illusion will realise that “separation” is a means to oppress and dominate, and then they will mobilise to dismantle the apartheid apparatus.”<sup>18</sup>

### **Ehud Barak**

February 2010 – then Israeli defense minister, addressing the Herzliya conference...

“As long as in this territory west of the Jordan river there is only one political entity called Israel it is going to be either non-Jewish, or non-democratic.” ... “If this bloc of millions of Palestinians cannot vote, that will be an apartheid state.”<sup>19</sup>

## **Palestinians:**

### **Jamal Zahalka**

June 2002 – Palestinian citizen of Israel and Member of the Knesset, in an analysis entitled *New Laws Legalize Apartheid in Israel...*

“An apartheid system has already taken shape... Israel has even now divided the West Bank and the Gaza Strip into several cantons and requires Palestinians to carry permits allowing them to travel between those cantons.”<sup>20</sup>

### **Ahmed Qureia**

January 2004 – then Palestinian Prime Minister, reacting to the building of Israel’s wall in the West Bank...

“This is an apartheid solution to put the Palestinians in cantons. Who can accept this? We will go for a one-state solution... There’s no other solution. We will not hesitate to defend the right of our people when we feel the very serious intention [of Israel] to destroy these rights.”<sup>21</sup>

### **Azmi Bishara**

May 2004 – Palestinian citizen of Israel and former Knesset member, in an opinion piece entitled *Searching for meaning...*

“The Palestinian cause is a case of colonialist apartheid. If a permanent and relatively just solution is not found, Israel will impose its own solution, which is to entrench its apartheid system through a unilateral disengagement that will leave the Palestinians in isolated cantons, without sovereignty over their land.” ...

“There are only two ways to end the apartheid. The first is to establish an independent Palestinian state in a manner that can be considered a truly historical settlement and not just a translation of the current balance of power. To produce this, the principles of relative justice and fairness based on the repercussions of the nakba must be taken into account. The second alternative is to work towards a democratic state that embraces two national identities. This solution is achievable in the long run if the pursuit of the first option fails to prove fair and realistic.”<sup>22</sup>

## **Other International Figures:**

### **Michael Ignatieff**

April 2002 – then Director of the Carr Centre for Human Rights Policy, Harvard University, in an opinion piece in *The Guardian...*

“When I looked down at the West Bank, at the settlements like Crusader forts occupying the high ground, at the Israeli security cordon along the Jordan river closing off the Palestinian lands from Jordan, I knew I was not looking down at a state or the beginnings of one, but at a Bantustan, one of those pseudo-states created in the dying years of apartheid to keep the African population under control.”<sup>23</sup>

### **John Dugard**

October 2004 – professor of international law, Judge on International Court of Justice, then UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories, in a statement to the UN...

“There are both similarities and differences between apartheid South Africa and the situation in the Palestine Occupied Territory (OPT). But one similarity is clear. Israel's conduct in the OPT poses the same kind of challenge to the credibility of international human rights that apartheid did in the 1970's and 1980's.” ...

“This permit system may be likened to the “pass laws” of apartheid, but unlike the apartheid system – which was administered in a brutal but uniform manner – the Wall regime is characterised by its arbitrariness and lack of consistency.”<sup>24</sup>

February 2007 – then UN Special Rapporteur, after submitting another report to the UN...

“Can it seriously be denied that the purpose of such action is to establish and maintain domination by one racial group [Jews] over another racial group [Palestinians] and systematically oppressing them? Israel denies that this is its intention or purpose. But such an intention or purpose may be inferred from the actions described in this report.”<sup>25</sup>

### **Colin Powell**

January 2004 – then U.S. Secretary of State, speaking about Israel’s unilateral separation plan...

“I don't believe that we can accept a situation that results in anything that one might characterize as apartheid or Bantuism.”<sup>26</sup>

### **Jimmy Carter**

December 2006 – former U.S. President and Nobel Peace Prize winner, speaking at the Atlanta Press Club after the launch of his book, *Palestine Peace Not Apartheid*...

“When Israel does occupy this territory deep within the West Bank, and connects the 200-or-so settlements with each other, with a road, and then prohibits the Palestinians from using that road, or in many cases even crossing the road, this perpetrates even worse instances of apartness, or apartheid, than we witnessed even in South Africa.”<sup>27</sup>

### **Miguel d’Escoto**

November 2008 – UN General Assembly President Miguel d’Escoto, in an address to the General Assembly, said the fact that Palestinians still had no statehood represented the “*single greatest failure*” of the UN, and noted...

“It has been 60 years since some 800,000 Palestinians were driven out of their homes ... becoming refugees and an uprooted and marginalized people.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Israel and the apartheid analogy,” *Wikipedia*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel\\_and\\_the\\_apartheid\\_analogy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_and_the_apartheid_analogy), retrieved 2010.04.02

<sup>2</sup> Corrigan, Edward C. “Israel and Apartheid: Is It a Fair Comparison?” *Dissident Voice*, 1 March 2010, <http://dissidentvoice.org/2010/03/israel-and-apartheid-is-it-a-fair-comparison/>, retrieved 2010.04.02

<sup>3</sup> Quotations are taken directly from the primary sources, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Ashmore, Robert B., “Israel and South Africa: A Natural Alliance,” *The Link*, Volume 21, Issue 4 (October - November 1988), Americans for Middle East Understanding., <http://www.ameu.org/page.asp?iid=105&aid=149&pg=11>, retrieved 2010.04.02

<sup>5</sup> *Address by President Nelson Mandela at the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People*, December 4, 1997, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/1997/sp971204b.html>, retrieved 2010.03.30

<sup>6</sup> Desmond Tutu, “Apartheid in the Holy Land,” *The Guardian*, Monday 29 April 2002, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/apr/29/comment>, retrieved 2010.03.30

<sup>7</sup> “Desmond Tutu Likens Israeli Actions to Apartheid,” *Inter Press Service*, 28 October 2007, Quoted in *Common Dreams*, <http://www.commondreams.org/archive/2007/10/29/4872>, retrieved 2010.04.03 [original at <http://domino.ips.org/ips/eng.NSF/vwWEBMainView?SearchView&Query=%28tutu%29++and+Y%2E2007x++and+M%2E10x&SearchMax=100&SearchOrder=3>]

<sup>8</sup> Madisha, Willie. Letter from President, Congress of South African Trade Unions to President, Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Ontario. 6 June 2006, Quoted in Summerville Divestment Project, <http://www.divestmentproject.org/foreign/COSATU.shtml>, retrieved 2010.04.04 [Note that the most commonly cited source, *YNet News*, misquotes Madisha’s statement: “South African union joins boycott of Israel,” *YNet News*, 6 August 2006, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3260201,00.html>, retrieved 2010.04.01

<sup>9</sup> Ronnie Kasrils, “Rage of the Elephant: Israel in Lebanon,” *The Mail and Guardian*, Johannesburg. 1 September 2006. Quoted in *Al-Jazeera*, <http://www.aljazeera.com/Opinion%20editorials/2006%20Opinion%20Editorials/September/5%20o/Rage%20of%20the%20Elephant%20Israel%20in%20Lebanon%20By%20Ronnie%20Kasrils,%20MP.htm>, retrieved 2010.04.01

<sup>10</sup> “We fought apartheid; we see no reason to celebrate it in Israel now!,” *The Citizen*, 15 May 2008, Quoted in *PACBI*, <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=737>, retrieved 2010.04.03

<sup>11</sup> “Twilight Zone / ‘Worse than apartheid,’” *Haaretz*, 10 July 2008, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1000976.html>, retrieved 2010.04.01

<sup>12</sup> *SA academic study finds that Israel is practicing apartheid and colonialism in the Occupied Palestinian Territories*, Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa, 29 May 2009, [http://www.hsra.ac.za/Media\\_Release-378.phtml](http://www.hsra.ac.za/Media_Release-378.phtml), retrieved 2010.04.02

<sup>13</sup> *South Africa's response to latest Israeli settlement activities in East Jerusalem*, South African Government Information, 24 November 2009, <http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2009/09112415151001.htm>, retrieved 2010.04.03

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- <sup>15</sup> *Land Grab: Israel's Settlement Policy in the West Bank*, B'Tselem, May 2002, [http://www.btselem.org/English/Publications/Summaries/200205\\_Land\\_Grab.asp](http://www.btselem.org/English/Publications/Summaries/200205_Land_Grab.asp), retrieved 2010.04.03
- <sup>16</sup> “Maximum Jews, minimum Palestinians,” *Haaretz*, 13 November 2003, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=360533&contrassID=2&subContrassID=1&sbSubContrassID=0&listSrc=Y>, retrieved 2010.04.01
- <sup>17</sup> “Olmert to Haaretz: Two-state solution, or Israel is done for,” *Haaretz*, 29 November 2007, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=929439>, retrieved 2010.04.01
- <sup>18</sup> “Bantustan plan for an apartheid Israel,” *The Guardian*, 26 April 2004, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/apr/26/comment>, retrieved 2010.04.01
- <sup>19</sup> “Barak: make peace with Palestinians or face apartheid,” *The Guardian*, 3 February 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/feb/03/barak-apartheid-palestine-peace>, retrieved 2010.04.01
- <sup>20</sup> “New Laws Legalize Apartheid in Israel,” *The Jerusalem Fund*, 11 June 2002, <http://www.thejerusalemfund.org/ht/d/ContentDetails/i/2448>, retrieved 2010.04.01
- <sup>21</sup> “Qureia: Israel's unilateral moves are pushing us toward a one-state solution,” *Haaretz*, 9 January 2004, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=381153>, retrieved 2010.04.02
- <sup>22</sup> “Searching for meaning,” *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 13-19 May 2004, <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2004/690/sc4.htm>, retrieved 2010.04.01
- <sup>23</sup> “Why Bush must send in his troops,” *The Guardian*, 19 April 2002, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/apr/19/israel3>, retrieved 2010.04.02
- <sup>24</sup> *Statement by Mr. John Dugard, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967*, 59th Session of the General Assembly, Third Committee, Item 105 (c), 28 October 2004, <http://www.pchrgaza.org/Library/Dugard.pdf>, retrieved 2010.04.01
- <sup>25</sup> “Occupied Gaza like apartheid South Africa, says UN report,” *The Guardian*, 23 February 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/feb/23/israelandthepalestinians.unitednations>, retrieved 2010.04.02
- <sup>26</sup> “PMO rejects Palestinian assertion on right to declare state,” *Haaretz*, 11 January 2004, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=381733>, retrieved 2010.04.02
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- <sup>28</sup> “UN: Support Palestinians' rights to self-determination, statehood,” *YNet News*, 24 November 2008, <http://www.ynet.co.il/english/articles/0,7340,L-3628055,00.html>, retrieved 2010.04.01