

What can we do about Palestine?

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1. What can I do about Palestine?

1. Join Leeds Palestine Solidarity Campaign: leedspsc@gmail.com
2. Join National Palestine Solidarity Campaign: <https://www.palestinecampaign.org/get-involved/join-renew-membership/>
3. Support the Leeds Palestinian Film Festival: <https://leedspff.org.uk/>
4. If you are a woman, join Leeds Women in Black: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/womeninblackleeds/>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_Black
5. If you are a Labour Party member, join Labour and Palestine: <https://labourandpalestine.org.uk/>
6. If you are a Labour Party member, perhaps join Labour Friends of Palestine and the Middle East (though I don't believe that all the Labour members involved in this really are committed to Palestinian rights): <https://www.lfpme.org/>
7. If you are a Green Party member, join the Green Party BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions group): <https://www.facebook.com/greenpartybds>
8. If you are a Liberal Democrat Party member, join Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine: <https://www.libdems.org.uk/ldfp>
9. If you are a Christian, join Sabeel-Kairos: <https://www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk/>
10. If you are a Muslim, join Friends of Al Aqsa: <https://www.foa.org.uk/>
11. If you are Jewish, join Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP): <https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/> JVP is an American-based organisation, but has a British branch. JVP also accepts non-Jewish associate members.
12. If you are a Jewish Labour Party member, join Jewish Voice for Labour (JVL): <https://www.jewishvoiceforlabour.org.uk/> JVL also accepts non-Jewish associate members.

2. The facts

Israel is an apartheid state, according to:

1. Harvard Law School: <https://mondoweiss.net/2022/04/harvard-law-school-apartheid-report-leaves-israels-defenders-speechless/>
2. United Nations: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1114702>
3. Amnesty International: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/02/israels-apartheid-against-palestinians-a-cruel-system-of-domination-and-a-crime-against-humanity/>
4. Human Rights Watch: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>
5. B'Tselem (Israel's largest human rights organisation): <https://www.btselem.org/topic/apartheid>
6. Yesh Din (leading Israeli legal rights organisation): <https://www.yesh-din.org/en/the-occupation-of-the-west-bank-and-the-crime-of-apartheid-legal-opinion/>

7. Former Israeli Attorney General, Michael Benyair: https://www.thejournal.ie/readme/israel-apartheid-5678541-Feb2022/?fbclid=IwAR0WVzY9jwfUN8E6-YmBSr3mH-Dvir0necj2FIKUIF7_kkNY9fs5OuxrA54
8. Former Israeli Deputy Attorney General, Yehudit Karp: <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2021-10-11/ty-article-opinion/.premium/the-time-has-come-to-admit-israel-is-an-apartheid-regime/0000017f-ebbf-d4a6-af7f-ffff18820000>

- and many more. See Canadians for a Just Peace in the Middle East: *Who is talking about Israeli apartheid*: https://www.cjpme.org/apartheid_list

What this means is not that Israel is a bit like apartheid South Africa, but, rather, that Israel meets the legal criteria of an apartheid state as established by the United Nations: “Whether they live in Gaza, East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank, or Israel itself, Palestinians are treated as an inferior racial group and systematically deprived of their rights. We found that Israel’s cruel policies of segregation, dispossession and exclusion across all territories under its control clearly amount to apartheid”, Agnès Callamard, Amnesty International’s Secretary General (2022).

3. The current situation

Pre-1967 Israel: Palestinian Israelis are second-class citizens, with inferior (and segregated) school education, housing and social services (receiving, I believe, about one third of the money given by Jewish Israelis in each of these areas). Palestinian Israelis are forbidden to live in 100s of towns in Israel: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/05/12/israel-discriminatory-land-policies-hem-palestinians>. Israel is currently trying to force the 80,000 Palestinian Israelis in the Negev off their land and into ‘development towns’, where there are virtually no services, to make way for Israeli settlers: <https://electronicintifada.net/content/unrecognised-villages-negev-expose-israels-apartheid-policies/5819>.

Gaza: Home to c. 2,000,000 Palestinians, Gaza is an “open air prison camp” (former Prime Minister, David Cameron) which has been under Israeli siege since 2006. Most Gazans are unemployed, and over 50% live below the poverty line: <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/news/more-half-gazans-live-under-poverty-line-report>. 97% of Gaza’s water is unfit to drink: <https://www.euromedmonitor.org/en/article/4644/Euro-Med-Monitor-at-HRC-Gazans-are-slowly-poisoned-as-97%25-of-Gaza%25E2%2580%2599s-water-is-undrinkable> In 2012, the UN said Gaza would be unliveable by 2020. In 2017, Save the Children declared that Gaza was already unliveable: <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/news/media-centre/press-releases/gaza-1-million-children-suffering-unlivable-conditions>

East Jerusalem: Home to 400,000 Palestinians, who lack citizen rights, even though Israel claims sovereignty over the whole of Jerusalem. Israel discriminates massively against East Jerusalem Palestinians in education, social welfare, etc: <https://azvsas.blogspot.com/2018/10/israels-education-system-teachers.html>. Israel is progressively forcing Palestinians out of East Jerusalem, by destroying their homes, or allowing settlers to expel them from their homes and take over their property: <https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/18442.html> Israel has completely surrounded East Jerusalem with illegal Jews-only settlements, with over 220,000 inhabitants.

Remainder of West Bank

Through home demolitions and settler and army attacks on people, property and agriculture (olive trees, wheat crops, etc.), Israel is progressively forcing Palestinians out of Area C (60% of the West Bank), and into areas A and B (the green areas on the map above) – c. 105 disconnected, desiccated fragments of land. Israel has planted over 456,000 settlers in the West Bank in Jews-only settlements. While settlers each have access to 280 litres per day of water, Palestinians have access to only 73 litres per day (below the 100 litres UN recommended minimum) and in areas where Israel is working to expel the Palestinians, the entire water supply is often cut off.

4. Long-term Israeli policy

Israel’s long-term policy is one of ongoing progressive degradation and dispossession of the Palestinians. “When we have settled the land, all the Arabs will be able to do about it will be to scurry around like drugged cockroaches in a bottle” (Raphael Eitan, Israel Chief of Staff and subsequently Deputy Prime Minister, 1983). “This land is ours. All of it is ours” (Tzipi Hotovely, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister, 2015 – now Israeli Ambassador to the United Kingdom).