

We fought apartheid; we see no reason to celebrate it in Israel now!

We, South Africans who faced the might of an 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. While Israel and its apologists around the world will, with pomp and ceremony, celebrate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the state of Israel this year, we who have lived with and struggled against oppression and colonialism will, instead, remember six decades of catastrophe for the Palestinian people. Some 60 years ago, 750,000 Palestinians were brutally expelled from their homeland, suffering persecution, massacres, and torture. They and their descendants remain refugees. This is no reason to celebrate. When we think of the Sharpeville massacre of 1960, we also remember the Deir Yassin massacre of 1948. When we think of South Africa's Bantustan policy, we remember the bantustanisation of Palestine by the Israelis. When we think of our heroes who languished on Robben Island and elsewhere, we remember the 11,000 Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails. When we think of the massive land theft perpetrated against the people of South Africa, we remember that the theft of Palestinian land continues with the building of illegal Israeli settlements and the Apartheid Wall. When we think of the Group Areas Act and other such Apartheid legislation, we remember that 93% of the land in Israel is reserved for Jewish use only.

When we think of Black people being systematically dispossessed in South Africa, we remember that Israel uses ethnic and racial dispossession to strike at the heart of Palestinian life. When we think of how the SADF troops persecuted our people in the townships, we remember that attacks from tanks, fighter jets and helicopter gunships are the daily experience of Palestinians in the Occupied Territory. When we think of the SADF attacks against our neighbouring states, we remember that Israel deliberately destabilises the Middle East region and threatens international peace and security, with its powerful army and hundreds of nuclear warheads. We who have fought against Apartheid and vowed not to allow it to happen again cannot allow Israel to continue perpetrating apartheid, colonialism and occupation against the indigenous people of Palestine. We dare not allow Israel to continue violating international law with impunity. We will not stand by while Israel continues to starve and bomb the people of Gaza. We who fought all our lives for South Africa to be a state for all its people demand that millions of Palestinian refugees must be accorded the right to return to the homes from where they were expelled. Apartheid was a gross violation of human rights. It was so in South Africa and it is so with regard to Israel's persecution of the Palestinians!

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| 4. Alec Erwin, former Minister of Public Enterprises | 56. Joan Brickhill, human rights activist | 104. Spencer Hodgson, architect |
| 5. Alexander Moumbaris, Umkhonto we Sizwe veteran | 57. Judy Favish, higher education planner | 105. Stephanie Kemp, ANC veteran |
| 6. Allan Horwitz, Jewish Voices | 58. Kay Moonsamy, Member of Parliament | 106. Steven Friedman, academic |
| 7. Andile Mngxitama, land rights activist | 59. Kgalema Mollanthe, President of the R S A | 107. Stiaan van der Merwe, Palestine Solidarity Committee |
| 8. Andre Zaaiman, academic | 60. Laurence Dworkin, film maker | 108. Sue Rabkin, defence specialist |
| 9. Angela Godfrey-Goldstein, Advocacy Officer, Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions | 61. Laurie Nathan, Research Fellow, University of Cape Town | 109. Suraya Bibi Khan, Palestine Solidarity Alliance |
| 10. Arnold Tsunga, Chair, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition | 62. Lechesa Tsenoli, ANC Member of Parliament / SACP Central Committee member | 110. Sydney Mufamadi, former Minister of Provincial and Local Government |
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| 13. Barry Levinrad, civil servant | 65. Lubna Nadvi, University of Kwazulu Natal | 113. Virginia Setshedi, Coalition Against Water Privatisation |
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