

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY ISRAEL UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

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Abstract

Today, there are about 6.8 million Jewish Israelis (the population of Israel) and 6.8 million Palestinians (the population of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), which includes the Gaza Strip and the West Bank). There is no Palestinian self-rule in the majority of this territory, but there is some Palestinian self-rule in the remainder. Israeli authorities routinely favour Jewish Israelis and discriminate against Palestinians in these and other spheres of life. It is clear from Israeli legislation, regulations, and public statements that the country's officials are committed to preserving Jewish Israeli domination over the country's population, political power, and territorial holdings at any cost. Accordingly, Palestinians have been expelled from their homes and forcibly segregated from each other to various degrees of severity to achieve this purpose. Apartheid and persecution constitute crimes against humanity in some parts of the world, as this paper explains in detail. Assumptions such as that the occupation will end soon and that the "peace process" will end Israeli abuses as soon as possible, and that Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have meaningful control over their lives, obscure the reality of Israel's entrenched discrimination against



Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza Israeli military rule over Palestinians has been in place for the vast majority of Israel's 73-year existence. From 1948 to 1966, it ruled over the vast majority of Palestinians living in Israel. It has controlled the OPT since 1967, except in East Jerusalem, using military force. This is a far cry from the more rights-respecting civil law that has been applied to all Jewish Israelis from its inception, including the settlers in the OPT since the occupation began. We will examine Israeli human rights violations in light of international law in this research.

Keywords: Human Rights, Israel, International Law, Palestine, Gaza.

Introduction

While in Israel, the Israeli government has assisted Jewish Israelis in the OPT for the past 54 years by providing special civil rights, access to land, and movement freedoms. Israeli control over borders, airspace, movement of people and goods, security, and registration of the whole population impacts legal status and eligibility for identification cards even if Palestinians in the OPT enjoy some measure of self-rule.

This dominance has been declared by Israeli authorities and backed up by their actions, particularly the continuation of settlement development during the decades-long "peace process." Ex-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government would formalise Israeli tyranny and supremacy in the occupied West Bank if it unilaterally annexed further West Bank territory. International law recognises that the whole West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is occupied territory. (TOI, 2015)

It is recognised by international law that apartheid and persecution were committed in the context of oppression and systematic discrimination. Among the most heinous infractions of international law are crimes against humanity.

Detaching from its South African context, the international community has developed a universal legal prohibition against the practice of apartheid through the 1973 International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of Apartheid (the "Apartheid Convention") and the 1998 Rome Statutes of the International Criminal Court (the "ICC"), respectively (ICC). (Thrall, 2021)

Racism, ethnicity, or other forms of discrimination are among the world's most terrible crimes, ranking with apartheid. In both the Rome Statute and the Apartheid Convention, Palestine is recognised as a state party. International crimes, such as genocide and



persecution, perpetrated in the OPT, including East Jerusalem, were brought before the ICC in February 2021, when it announced that it had jurisdiction over the region. It was reported in March 2021 that the International Criminal Court's Office of Prosecutor has begun a formal inquiry into the situation in the Palestinian territories.

An increasing number of people are referring to the OPT and Israel as apartheid, albeit in a non-legal sense, and frequently as a warning that things are going the wrong way. Israeli policies and practices towards Palestinians have been compared by some to those of apartheid if they continue unabated. Officials from Israel, Palestine, the United States, and Europe, as well as well-known journalists and commentators, are all examples. It's being compared to apartheid, according to some people. According to international crimes like apartheid or persecution, few have done a thorough legal investigation. (ESCWA, 2022)

Background

As a result of the events surrounding Israel's establishment in 1948, 700,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled from their homes, and more than 400 Palestinian villages were entirely destroyed. The majority of Palestinians who remained within Israel's boundaries between 1949 and 1966 were under military administration, which restricted their rights and set rigorous limits on how and when they could leave their enclaves. During the Six-Day War in June 1967, Israel seized control of the Sinai Peninsula, East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and Jordan, all of which are now part of the OPT.

In the intervening years, Israel has maintained authority over the occupied Palestinian territory. Palestinians residing in the West Bank are administered by the Israeli military, save for the annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967. The annexation of East Jerusalem does not alter its international legal position as occupied territory. Israel has made it easier for Palestinians to construct Israeli-only communities throughout the West Bank. The transfer of civilians from an occupying force to an occupied region is prohibited by the Fourth Geneva Convention, which governs military occupations. Israel withdrew its combat forces from the occupied Gaza Strip in 2005, but it maintains significant influence over the region in other ways. (Sultany, 2013). In 1981, Israel also seized the Golan Heights, which is still considered occupied by the international community. The Camp David Accords, signed in 1978 between Israel and Egypt, officially ended Israel's occupancy of the Sinai Peninsula. (Geneva Convention, 1949)

The Oslo Accords of 1993 and 1995 established a five-year transitional period for the Palestinian Authority (PA) to manage some Palestinian affairs in parts of the OPT until an



agreement on a long-term status could be reached between the Israeli government and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). As a result of the Oslo Accords and subsequent accords, the West Bank was substantially split into three different areas: Area A was allocated to the Palestinian Authority (PA), which would be in control of civil affairs and security; Area B was assigned to both the PA and Israel, and Area C was assigned completely to the State of Israel. Most of the West Bank's largest cities are located in Area A, while the bulk of towns and numerous villages are located in Area B. The Oslo Accords, on the other hand, did not bring an end to the Israeli occupation of the OPT. (Refugees, 2022)

Despite intermittent discussions mostly mediated by the United States, the parties failed to negotiate a definitive status agreement by 2000 and have failed to do so for the subsequent two decades. Despite Israel's overall control of the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority (PA) is in charge of certain things in Areas A and B. After more than a year of political unrest and months of violence between Fatah and Hamas, Hamas finally gained control of Gaza in June 2007 and has been in charge ever since. There will be an annexation of the Jordan Valley and other parts of Area C under Israel's "Peace To Prosperity" plan, which was revealed in January 2020. Although a Palestinian state is called for, it is constrained by the terms of the agreement.

Even though the so-called "peace process" has been ongoing for decades, little has changed in terms of human rights abuses in the occupied Palestinian territories (OPT) and Israel. But instead of promoting rights-based international action or accountability, the peace process is frequently used to undermine such efforts and to provide cover for Israel's longstanding oppression of Palestinians in the OPT. (Heaney, 2022) According to a 2020 coalition agreement, an Israeli government will be formed in May of that year, and an annexation mechanism will be developed to bring annexation to the government's attention. Prime Minister Netanyahu announced in August that Israel will postpone the move following an agreement with the UAE, but he claimed "there is no change in my strategy to expand sovereignty" on the West Bank. If Israel were to annex the West Bank, neither the reality of its occupation nor the rights of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation would be altered.

Israel's government is in charge of both the OPT and Israel, despite the fact that their abuses differ in their mechanics and ferocity. For example, the Israeli civil law (Israeli civil law) controls all Jewish Israelis in Israel, the OPT, and the West Bank under a single set of regulations and, in order to preserve their dominance, systemically discriminates against Palestinians on topics like legal status and access to land and resources. Throughout Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Israel gives Jewish Israelis advantages that



Palestinians cannot enjoy and denies Palestinians their most basic human rights just because they are Palestinians.

Israel's government, led by the prime minister, has jurisdiction over all Israeli state agencies operating in OPT. Among these are the Israeli military, which governs the West Bank and Gaza, and the Israeli civil authority, who govern East Jerusalem. Israeli policy toward the OPT has been repressive throughout the country's history. More than a dozen institutions in the West Bank, including the newly formed Ministry of Settlement Affairs, provide direct financial support for settlement-related programmes. As a result, the Knesset has adopted legislation and formed committees that solely apply to Israel. Finally, the Israeli Supreme Court rules on major matters that have influenced Israeli and occupied-territory policy in both areas. Zionist and Jewish quasi-state organisations such as the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish National Fund have provided financial support for both the OPT and Israel. (Peace Now, 2019)

Methodology

This research is about how Palestinians are treated in Israel and the OPT. Only a portion of institutional discriminating rules practises, and other aspects of repression are examined in this study. The human rights atrocities committed by Palestinian administrations and armed organisations, which we have exhaustively reported elsewhere, are not included in our analysis either. Instead, it focuses on policies, legislation, and regulations that favour Jewish Israelis over Palestinians in the region. Apart from assessing the possible criminal responsibility of certain Israeli leaders, the study looks at whether certain Israeli policies and actions, like apartheid and persecution, are crimes against humanity. Human Rights Watch and other international human rights organisations as well as Palestinian, and Israeli groups too have compiled years of research for this report. The Israeli legislation, government planning papers, testimonies from authorities and property records were also examined.

Legal Definitions of Persecution and Apartheid

According to international law, systemic discrimination, especially on the basis of race and ethnicity, is prohibited. Most governments have decided that persecution and apartheid are crimes against humanity. They have also given the International Criminal Court the power to prosecute these crimes when state powers are unable or unwilling to do so. There are two types of crimes against humanity: those that are perpetrated as part of a larger or more systematic attack, and those that are committed as part of an organisation or state's policy against a civilian population. (Cassese, 2002) It is defined as "inhuman acts undertaken for



the intention of establishing and maintaining dominance over any other racial group of individuals over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them" by the Apartheid Convention. For example, "inhuman acts... performed under an organised regime of systematic oppression and control by one racial group or groups over another racial group or groups and committed with the goal of preserving that regime" is defined as "inhuman acts." An "institutionalised regime" is not defined further in the Rome Statute.

As defined by the Apartheid Convention and its Rome Statute, apartheid is defined as the widespread or systematic execution of inhumane acts by one racial group against another with the intent to maintain a system of dominance. Apartheid is also defined as the systematic oppression of one racial group against another. (Booysen, 1976)

According to either the Convention or Rome Statute, cruel actions include "forcible transfer," "expropriation of land property," "creation of distinct reserve and ghetto," and denial of the "right of departure and return, [and] nationality," among others.

Persecution is defined in the Rome Statute as "the purposeful and serious denial of basic rights according to international law by reason of the identity of the group or collectivity," including on racial, national, or ethnic grounds, by the crime against humanity commission. There are two basic factors that make up a crime of persecution, according to customary international law. First, there must be widespread or systematic violations of fundamental rights, as well as discriminatory intent.

A paucity of case law has resulted in a lack of understanding of the meaning of essential phrases in the definitions of the crimes of persecution and apartheid. The paper says that it has been 20 years since international criminal courts started judging group membership based on the situation and how it was formed by local actors instead of physical traits. Human rights laws, especially the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), have defined race and racial discrimination to include differences based on nationality, ethnicity, and other things. (Arsanjani, 1999)

Analysing the Apartheid System

A system of apartheid has been constructed and maintained by the Israeli government for the benefit and convenience of Jewish Israelis, according to Amnesty International's study. According to the findings of the investigation, Israel views and regards Palestinians as a less-than-human non-Jewish race. There are laws, policies, and practices in place in Israel and the OPT that are designed to keep Palestinians from claiming equal rights with Jewish Israeli citizens in both territories, as well as to oppress and rule the Palestinian people in



both territories. Additionally, there is a legal framework that restricts the right of Palestinian refugees living outside Israel and the OPT to return to their homelands (by denying such rights). Long-term Israeli policies aim to preserve Jewish demographic dominance and maximise land ownership in favour of Jewish Israelis while restricting Palestinians' rights to prevent them from challenging this dispossession. With the goal of isolating and isolating the Palestinian people, Israel has systematically prevented them from enjoying their inalienable human rights in their various geographic regions. Because of this, Israel's oppressive and domineering rule over the Palestinian people is built on the legal division of the Palestinian people between Israel, East Jerusalem, the remainder of the West Bank, Gaza, and the refugee camps. Israel and the OPT cannot achieve full equality for Palestinians because of this legal splintering.

Laws that deny Palestinian nationality and residence, violate their right to reunite families and return to their country or homes, and severely restrict freedom of movement are all part of the system of oppression and dominance. Other aspects include military rule, restrictions on political participation and popular resistance, and the confiscation of land and property, including through a discriminatory allocative process. They all facilitated and resulted in serious abuses of human rights in areas such as access to decent living conditions; access to healthcare; food security; water and sanitation; employment; and education. Individual Palestinians' human rights have been repeatedly and cruelly violated by these legal frameworks, wherever Israel has authority over their rights.

As a racial group, Palestinians are subjected to systematic segregation and discrimination in all regions under Israeli rule, which amounts to apartheid and breaches Israel's human rights commitments. There is a system of apartheid in place in Israel that is implemented by practically all of Israel's civilian and military institutions, as well as by many governmental and quasi-governmental organisations. The goal of retaining Jewish Israeli dominance by excluding, separating, and removing Palestinians has been clearly stated by successive Israeli political leaders. As a result of the 2018 nation-state bill, Israel and the OPT now have legally protected racial discrimination against non-Jews. Numerous public statements and directives by senior civilian and military officials have revealed, maintained and enforced the institutionalised regime of systematic oppression and dominance of Palestinians, knowing full well and being fully responsible for the atrocious consequences that the regime has for Palestinian lives. (Amnesty International, 2022)

Implementation of Israel's Palestine Policy



In modern-day Israel and the OPT, there are primarily two populations: Palestinians and Jewish Israelis. They are ruled by a single basic absolute entity, which is the government of Israel.

1. Desire to Retain Control

The Israeli government has made it clear that it wants to maintain Jewish Israeli supremacy in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Israeli parliament in 2018 proclaimed Israel as the "nation-state of the Jewish people," announced that self-determination is a "unique right" for Jews, and defined "Jewish settlement" as a national value in that territory with constitutional significance. A demographic "threat" that Israeli officials have explicitly identified as a "risk" for Jewish Israeli sovereignty has been reduced by the authorities in Israel. According to certain of these rules, only those Palestinians who resided within Israeli boundaries from 1948 to June 1967 were granted the right to vote and were restricted from moving between the OPT and Israel as well as between the OPT and any other portion of Palestine. It is also hard for persons or products to move freely between the West Bank and Gaza Strip because of the Israeli government's imposed "separation" of Palestinians. Areas with significant Palestinian populations, such as Jerusalem and Israel's Galilee and Negev regions, are also being "Judaized." These policies attempt to increase Jewish Israeli control over property by limiting Palestinians' access to land and housing in dense, under-served enclaves outside of Israel's major, primarily Jewish towns; at the same time, they encourage the expansion of surrounding Jewish communities. (Goldstone, 2011)

2. Institutional Bigotry and Systemic Repression

The Israeli government treats Palestinians unfairly as a means of achieving dominance. Discrimination varies in severity depending on where you are in the OPT and how strict the Israeli government's policies are there, as well as where you live in Israel. Despite Israel's recognition of the OPT, which includes the West Bank and Gaza, as a unified area, Israeli authorities treat Palestinians unequally and differently from Jewish Israeli residents. Israel imposes repressive military rule and maintains segregation in the occupied West Bank, primarily barring Palestinians from visiting settlements. Despite Egypt's efforts, Israel maintains a severe blockade of the beleaguered Gaza Strip, making it difficult for people and products to travel freely. Palestinians in annexed East Jerusalem, which Israel deems its sovereign territory but remains occupied territory under international law, are given the legal status that diminishes their resident rights among other things by the Israeli government. This is the ultimate manifestation of social oppression.



By virtue of Israel's two-tiered citizenship structure and the division of nationality and citizenship along pre-1967 territorial lines, Palestinian citizens are legally subordinate to Jewish citizens. For much that they are able to vote and stand for Israeli elections, Israeli Palestinians in Israel are nonetheless subjected to institutional discrimination by the same Israeli government that is responsible for house demolitions and effective bans on family reunions for Palestinians in the OPT. Due to Israel's restrictions on movement and residency, the same Israeli government suppresses the same Palestinian people in diverse places to varying degrees for the same Jewish Israeli dominant group. (Varghese, 2019)

3. Human Rights Violations and Other Violations of Human Dignity

In the OPT, Israeli authorities have done many cruel things because of these policies. There are a lot of restrictions on the movement of the 4.7 million Palestinians who live there, and much of their land has been taken away. Many Palestinians have been compelled to flee their homes because of the difficult conditions, such as the categorical refusal of building licences in wide portions of the West Bank. Many Palestinians and their family have been refused residence privileges because they live outside of the country. Many of these rights abuses, like denying building permits outright, revoking or limiting residency for a large number of people, or taking large amounts of land, have nothing to do with security. There is no realistic way to balance security considerations with the severity of human rights abuses, such as limits on mobility and civil liberties.

Since Israel became a country, its government has also treated Palestinians unfairly and violated their rights inside the country's borders before 1967. That is why Palestinians are unable to reclaim the millions of dunams (100 hectares, or 250 acres, or one square kilometre) of land that was illegally seized from them. It is nearly difficult for tens of thousands of Palestinians to continue to reside lawfully in the same towns where they have been for decades, mostly in the Negev. The Israeli government, on the other hand, does not allow more than 700,000 Palestinians who fled or were expelled in 1948 to return to Israel or the Palestinian territories. They also have strict rules about legal residency, which makes it hard for many Palestinian couples and families to live together in Israel. (Uma, 2021)

4. Institutional Confiscation of Territory

A key goal of Israeli policy is to design and maximise the number of Jews living in Israel and the OPT that the Israeli government want to be settled by Jews. At the same time, Israeli policy aims to reduce the number of Palestinians living in certain regions and the amount of land accessible to them by restricting their residence rights. Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) face the most severe levels of repression, although Israel's





own policies can be just as oppressive. For more than one-third of the West Bank, Israeli authorities have taken more than 2 million dunams, including many dunams that they admit to being privately held by Palestinian citizens. As a regular practice, they have declared private Palestinian property as "state land," even if it is privately held. State land has been recognised on 1.4 million dunams of West Bank land by the Israeli government according to a report by the Israeli nonprofit Peace Now. Moreover, 30 per cent of the land used for settlements is privately owned by Palestinians, according to the Israeli government. More than 675,000 dunams of state land in the West Bank have been designated by Israeli authorities for use by Israeli citizens, according to official data. (Rouhana, 2015) In the West Bank, land grabs for settlements and infrastructure that solely benefits Israelis have essentially reduced Palestinians to "165 non-contiguous 'territorial islands,'" according to B'Tselem.

For Palestinians living in Area C, roughly 60 per cent of the West Bank under Israeli control under the Oslo Accords, as well as in East Jerusalem, the Israeli authorities have made it difficult to get building permits. There will be almost 23,696 new dwellings in Area C built by the Israeli government between 2009 and 2020. The Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits the transfer of civilians from an occupied region to that of the occupying force. The Israeli government has long planned to implement these programmes. Because of this, the Drobles Plan of 1980 recommended that the Israeli government build settlements in areas where Arab minority populations live because it would make it "difficult for Palestinians to create territorial contiguity and political unity" and because it wanted to "remove any trace of doubt about [Israel's] intention to control Judea and Samaria fore" (Erakat, 2009).

Israel's discriminatory land laws enclose Palestinian communities within the country, preventing them from growing as naturally as Jewish communities. Most Palestinian residents, who make up 19 per cent of Israel's population, reside in these towns, that have authority over less than 3% of Israel's area. (Rouhana, 2015)

5. Discrimination in Citizenship and Residency Permits

In the OPT and Israel, Palestinians experience discriminatory residence and nationality restrictions. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been denied the right to call the West Bank and Gaza their home because of Israeli control over overpopulation registration. Around 250,000 Palestinians had their residency annulled by Israeli authorities because they had been away for too long, while Israeli officials refused to register at least 270,000 of them. As far back as 2000, Israeli officials have mostly refused to process West Bank and Gaza family reunions and address change requests. To put it



another way: The Israeli army claims that hundreds of Gaza residents who crossed the West Bank on temporary licences and now dwell there are breaking Israeli law since they are not registered as Palestinians. As a result, the Palestinian population in the West Bank is constrained. (Tatour, 2019) It is common to practice to refuse admittance to non-registered Palestinians and their non-registered wives and family members who have temporarily departed the West Bank (for example, to attend school, work, or marry).

There are two paths to citizenship for Jews and Palestinians in Israel, notwithstanding the declaration of "complete equality" in Israel's Declaration of Independence. Israel's 1952 Citizenship Law grants citizenship to Jews without any effort on their part. Jewish citizens have the right to live in Israel under the 1950 Law of Return. Proof of prior Israeli residency, registration with the population register in 1952, and continuous Israeli presence or authorised entry between 1948 and 1952 are all required for the Palestinian path. (Salhab, 2015)

Allows naturalization-based citizenship under the 1952 Citizenship Law, an order signed into law by the Knesset in 2003 that prevents Palestinians from marrying Israelis from the West Bank and Gaza from receiving Israeli citizenship or long-term legal status. It is against Israeli law for Jewish or Palestinian citizens or residents who marry Palestinians to dwell in Israel, a regulation that is maintained by the Israeli Supreme Court each year. Israelis can marry non-Jewish foreign nationals without violating this restriction, which is based solely on the spouse's location in the West Bank or Gaza. They can petition for citizenship after several years. International human rights law allows states extensive immigration policy discretion. Israel can promote Jewish immigration under international law. Thousands of Jewish Israelis moved to Mandatory Palestine or Israel to avoid anti-Semitism, and they now want protections and privileges guaranteed by international law. It does not provide the state with the power to discriminate against those already in the country, including family reunification rights, or against those who have a right to return. Palestinians have safety and rights, too. (Jefferis, 2012)

Findings

According to our findings, the Israeli government is committed to maintaining Jewish Israelis' superiority over Palestinians in the OPT and Israel. Palestinians in the OPT, particularly in East Jerusalem, have been subjected to systematic oppression and heinous atrocities. When all three of these qualities are present, apartheid has been committed. Similarly, Israeli authorities' persecution of Palestinians is a war crime. On the basis of Israel's discrimination against Palestinians and the serious violations in the OPT, this judgement is based on the widespread expropriation of privately-owned property, the facto



prohibition on constructing or dwelling in many regions, and the wholesale denial of residence rights. As a result of these policies and practices, millions of Palestinians are routinely deprived of their most basic rights, such as access to land, private property, basic services and resources, and the right to residence, just because they are Palestinians.

Conclusion

As a result of their status as Palestinians, the Israeli government has denied millions of people their fundamental rights. Palestinians are subjected to long-standing policies and practise that encircle, evict, forcefully divide, isolate, and inflict pain. Limits on migration, expropriation of land, coercive relocation and denial of residency and nationality constitute "inhumane behaviour" in the OPT, according to the Apartheid Convention and the Rome Statute. Both legal and moral grounds characterise apartheid as a violation of human rights if harsh acts are undertaken as a means to maintain control in the context of systemic oppression. Overall, OPT laws and policies deny Palestinians their most fundamental human rights, such as the right to a permanent abode, the capacity to own property, and the freedom to utilise land, services, and resources as they choose It is a crime against humanity, according to the Rome Statute and customary international law, to persecute an individual solely because of their affiliation with another group. Many Palestinian Bedouins in the Negev are unable to live legitimately because of Israeli policies, including the denial of hundreds of thousands of acres of land plundered from them in the past and an effective restriction on citizens' rights. Authorities appear to have done little to stop the abuses, and there is no evidence that any of those responsible have been investigated or held accountable.



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