

Apartheid-Free Pledge FAQs

WHAT IS APARTHEID?

[The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid](#) defines apartheid as “*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.*”

According to [international law](#), apartheid is a crime against humanity that meets three conditions: 1) a system of separation or segregation for domination (based on race, creed, or ethnicity) that is 2) legally enforced and 3) entails the commission of human rights violations, or inhumane acts.

WHO SAYS APARTHEID?

For decades Palestinian human rights organizations and activists, as well as South Africans, have described the situation in Palestine as apartheid. Over the last two years, consensus emerged in the human rights community, as Israeli and international human rights organizations including [Yesh Din](#), [B'tselem](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), and [Amnesty International](#) all agreed with their Palestinian counterparts, declaring that Israel's treatment of Palestinians constitutes apartheid.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN APARTHEID-FREE CHURCH?

Taking this pledge is an important step in your congregation's commitment to resisting racism and apartheid. Whether your community is committed to learning more about Israel's apartheid regime, is already advocating for justice, or is working to end complicity, signing this pledge connects you to a network of communities committed to the work of justice, freedom, and equality for Palestinians and all people. Check out our website for creative ideas for living out the pledge in your context.

WHY SHOULD MY CHURCH TAKE THIS PLEDGE?

Taking this pledge brings your congregation into solidarity with people suffering oppression, and is in direct response to calls made by [Palestinian Civil Society](#) and [Palestinian Christian leadership](#). They have asked for international support and action as they seek liberation. Clearly naming the truth of apartheid and pledging to work for its end are powerful acts of nonviolent resistance that can help bring change.



Apartheid-Free Congregations are faith communities joining in solidarity with Palestinians to end apartheid.

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In addition, U.S. Christians have particular responsibilities to address Israeli apartheid because of the ways our tax dollars provide direct and unconditional support to Israel and our religion has been co-opted to support Israel's ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. Congregations played a key role in naming South African apartheid in the 1980s, and they can play a similar role in naming the realities in Palestine/Israel today.

HOW CAN WE CLAIM TO BE APARTHEID-FREE?

The apartheid-free pledge is *aspirational*. It states our collective opposition to apartheid, settler colonialism, and military occupation, and clearly puts forth our commitment as a community to take action against these crimes. The term “apartheid-free” comes directly from [Palestinian civil society](#). This call prioritizes the voices of those most impacted, invites solidarity, and responds by taking action.

No one will ever be fully free of apartheid until there is freedom and equality for all people everywhere. Most people do not know the full extent of their ties to apartheid in Palestine and elsewhere. This is particularly true in North America, where our histories are marked by colonialism and its own forms of apartheid. Yet we can work together to draw connections, unmask, and work to end apartheid everywhere.

IS IT ANTISEMITIC TO ACCUSE ISRAEL OF APARTHEID?

Definitely not. Labeling Israel an apartheid regime is a reflection of the actions and policies of the *government* of Israel. Israel is a political entity, like any other state, and its policies, actions, and history can be judged and criticized, even harshly. Such criticism is not, by itself, antisemitic. Further, many Jewish communities themselves have called out Israeli apartheid.

The apartheid-free pledge includes opposition to “all forms of racism, bigotry, discrimination, and oppression.” This includes antisemitism.

ISN'T APARTHEID UNIQUE TO SOUTH AFRICA?

While the global understanding of apartheid developed based on the official legal policy by that name that existed in South Africa, apartheid can exist anywhere. The term is now used to describe other situations where a system is in place that seeks to establish and maintain domination by one racial group over another. The Jim Crow south, for example, also fits the definition and is often referred to as apartheid.

TO LEARN MORE AND SIGN THE PLEDGE - VISIT [APARTHEID-FREE.ORG](#)



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