

Declaring the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont to be Apartheid Free

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RESOLVED, That the 191st Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont, as a follow-up to the resolution “Recognition of Apartheid in Israel/Palestine” approved in 2021 by the 188th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont, join other communities in the nation to declare itself an apartheid free community; to that end:

- We AFFIRM our commitment to freedom, justice, and equality for the Palestinian people and all people;
- WE OPPOSE all forms of racism, bigotry, discrimination, and oppression;
- WE DECLARE that we will strive to be an Apartheid-free community and,
- WE PLEDGE to join others in working to end all support to Israel’s Apartheid regime, settler colonialism, and military occupation.

EXPLANATION

1. The Apartheid Free campaign was developed by the American Friends (Quakers) to inform/educate the world on the meaning of apartheid and how it affects all aspects of the daily lives of Palestinians. The campaign also allows individuals, communities and institutions to declare themselves free of apartheid – free of all forms of racism and bigotry – and calls for an end to apartheid in Israel.
2. Recent reports from [B’Tselem Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories](#) (2021), [Human Rights Watch](#) (2021), and [Amnesty International](#) (2022), along with statements by United Nations officials, declare that the government of Israel practices apartheid against the Palestinian people under its authority.
3. Israeli apartheid is not a recent development. From the very beginning of its statehood, Israel passed laws to discriminate against its non-Jewish citizens. Beginning with the 1950 Absentees’ Property Law and 1953 Land Acquisition Law, [more than 65 laws](#) passed over ensuing decades result in displacement, dispossession, and discrimination against Palestinians in Israel in ways from citizenship rights to the right to political participation, land and housing rights, education rights, cultural and language rights, religious rights, and due process rights during detention.
4. According to the Amnesty International report (2022), the Israel apartheid regime manifests and is enacted through territorial fragmentation and legal segregation; use of military rule to control and dispossess; denial of nationality, residence and family life; restrictions on movement; restrictions on right to political participation; dispossession of land and property; discriminatory planning and zoning policies; and suppression of Palestinians’ human development.
5. Apartheid is not a matter of opinion, or a political position that one may choose or reject; it is a matter of law. Statutes and criteria are enshrined in the International Convention on the

Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (Apartheid Convention) and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Rome Statute). As stated by Amnesty International, “The crime against humanity of apartheid under the Apartheid Convention, the Rome Statute and customary international law is committed when any inhuman or inhumane act (essentially a serious human rights violation) is perpetrated in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over another, with the intention to maintain that system.”

6. Ending apartheid is not only a legal imperative, but also a moral imperative. Churches that proclaim to be followers of Jesus are obligated to set aside political expediencies of the moment and act against injustice wherever it occurs. Thus has the [225th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\) voted](#) in July 2022 to declare that the Israeli government’s actions against Palestinian people meets the legal definition of apartheid. Members of the United Church of Christ, the New England and Oregon-Idaho Conferences of the United Methodist Church, and Disciples of Christ have adopted similar statements or resolutions.