

‘Apartheid’ Designation Ignored as Israel Kills Children in Gaza Again

By [Bryce Greene](#)

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*Israel’s recent [bombing](#) of the Gaza Strip from May 9–13 killed 33 Palestinians, including seven children. FAIR looked at coverage of these attacks from the **Washington Post**, **New York Times** and **CNN**, and didn’t find a single reference to Israel as an apartheid state, despite this being the consensus in the human rights community.*

Since apartheid is the overriding condition that leads to Israel’s violent outbursts, and since the US has vigorously supported Israel for the last 60 years, US media should be putting it front and center in their coverage. Omitting it allows Israel to continue to portray any violence from Palestinians as a result of senseless hostility, rather than emerging from the conditions imposed by Israel. For audiences, that distortion serves to justify Israel’s attacks on civilians and continued collective punishment of all Palestinians.

The term apartheid originated with the South African system of systematic racial segregation, which was [not unlike](#) Jim Crow in the United States. Apartheid is considered a crime against humanity—defined in the UN’s Apartheid Convention 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.”

The term has been increasingly applied to the Israeli apparatus of checkpoints, segregation, surveillance, arbitrary detentions and extrajudicial murders that it uses to oppress Palestinians. In particular, the [exclusion](#) of most Palestinians under Israeli control from participation in Israeli politics, under the pretense that Palestinian areas either are or someday will be independent, [mirrors](#) the disenfranchisement of Black South Africans through the creation of fictitious countries known as bantustans.

Human Rights Watch published a [report](#) in 2021 titled *A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution*. That same year, the leading Israeli human rights organization, B’Tselem, [labeled](#) Israel’s rule “a regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea.” Amnesty International published a [major](#)

[report](#) in 2022 on “Israel’s Apartheid Against Palestinians.”

After the biggest, most respected human rights organizations labeled Israel an apartheid state, much of the US political establishment erupted in [bipartisan indignation](#) in defense of Israel. The **New York Times** actually refused to even mention the Amnesty International report for 52 days (**Mondoweiss**, [3/24/22](#)).

‘Trading fire’

Israel and Gaza militants face off for fourth day amid scramble for truce



By Louisa Loveluck

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The **Washington Post** ([5/12/23](#)) depicts a “face off” between a society under siege and the besieging forces.

Gaza, the Palestinian enclave between Israel and the Mediterranean, is arguably the most abused territory under the apartheid regime. Most of the water in the enclave fails to meet international standards, and was even called “[undrinkable](#)” by the United Nations. The illegal blockade regularly prevents important medicine and other supplies from being widely available in the country.

Regular Israeli military attacks on the Gaza Strip are a key part of the repression, killing unarmed civilians, destroying neighborhoods, schools and hospitals—most notably in [2008](#), [2012](#), [2014](#) and [2021](#). These periodic attacks on the Palestinians, often crassly [referred to](#) as “mowing the grass,” have [killed](#) 5,460 Palestinians since 2007. International observers have often referred to Gaza as an “[open-air prison](#),” with 2 million people being crammed into 146 square miles.

The recent Gaza coverage fails to capture this context, and instead portrays the situation as a conflict between equals. The **Washington Post** ([5/12/23](#)) described it as a “face off” when (at that point) 30 Palestinians, including six children, were killed by Israeli airstrikes, along with one Israeli killed by Palestinian rocket fire; a **New York Times** article ([5/11/23](#)) described the conflict as Israel and Islamic Jihad “trad[ing] fire.” Another **New York Times** ([5/12/23](#)) headline vaguely referred to the attack as “A New Round of Middle East Fighting.”

CNN ([4/12/23](#)) used the classic whitewashing word “[clash](#)” in describing the attacks. **CNN**’s use of the term was even more striking because it appeared in a headline that included the incongruity between 30 dead Palestinians and one dead Israeli.

Outlets gave several “how we got here” pieces that purported to give context for the current escalation (e.g., **New York Times**, [5/9/23](#); **Washington Post**, [5/13/23](#)). Again, not a single article FAIR reviewed used the term “apartheid” or referenced the recent findings from human rights NGOs to describe the current situation in Palestine.

‘Consequences of territorial ambitions’

UN special rapporteur Francesca Albanese (Guardian, [5/12/23](#)): Israel “cannot justify the occupation in the name of self-defense, or the horror it imposes on the Palestinians in the name of self-defense.”

On a recent trip to London, Francesca Albanese, the UN special rapporteur for human rights in the Occupied Territories, criticized the the tendency to omit important context and trends in the discussions about Israel (**Guardian**, [5/12/23](#)):

Israel treats Palestinian territories like colonies, says UN rapporteur

Francesca Albanese says Israel is maintaining occupation to get as much land as possible for Jewish people



“For me, apartheid is a symptom and a consequence of the territorial ambitions Israel has for the land of what remains of an encircled Palestine.... Israel is a colonial power maintaining the occupation in order to get as much land as possible for Jewish-only people. And this is what leads to the numerous violations of international law.”

Member states need to stop commenting on violations here or there, or escalation of violence, since violence in the occupied Palestinian territory is cyclical, it is not something that accidentally explodes. There is only one way to fix it, and that is to make sure that Israel complies with international law.

The dominant and overriding context of anything that happens in Israel/Palestine is the fact that the state of Israel is running an apartheid regime in the entirety of the territory it controls. Any obfuscation or equivocation of that fact serves only to downplay the severity of Israeli crimes and the US complicity in them.

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