Middle East Apartheid Today

Neda Soltani
Killed on June 20, 2009, for opposing Ahmadinajad’s repressive regime

Produced by StandWithUs
Apartheid

Definition: Apartheid (“separation”) was the name for South Africa’s legal system of segregation, discrimination, and domination based on race.
These signs, in public spaces all over South Africa, were a constant reminder of white legal domination and control over South Africa’s black population.¹
Apartheid South Africa: 
Legally Enforced Segregation

By apartheid law, South Africans of color were segregated in every aspect of daily life—train stations, beaches, restrooms, schools, and restaurants—except for churches.
Apartheid law prohibited sexual relations and marriage between whites and non-Europeans in the “Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act” (1949) and the “Immorality Act” (1950).

Segregated seating at a sports event
A black South African displays his passbook. It designated him a “colored” and denied him access to white schools, hospitals, and even entire cities.²
Apartheid South Africa: Denial of Political and Civil Rights

South Africans of color were legally denied the right to vote and denied equality before the law.
South African blacks who protested and demanded equal political and civil rights met police violence, indefinite detention, torture, and even execution.
Apartheid Today:

**Definition:** Legal systems that institutionalize segregation, discrimination, and oppression on the basis of political views, race, gender, sexuality, or religion.

Women are the most vulnerable members of Palestinian society as the law and order in the region does not provide them with a safe and comfortable environment.³
Apartheid Today:

**Gender Apartheid**

**Definition:** A system of legally sanctioned segregation and/or oppression based on gender.

Women in Arab League countries “suffer from unequal citizenship and legal entitlements, often evident in voting rights and legal codes [and] from inequality of opportunity, evident in employment status, wages and gender-based occupational segregation.” Their “political and economic participation remains the lowest in the world.” –UN Human Development Report, 2002 p. 22

Saudi women and men walk on separate sidewalks. Women in Saudi Arabia are not allowed to drive. Iran, Jordan, Syria, and Egypt are some of the Middle Eastern countries that restrict women’s right to travel without “permission” from a male guardian.⁵

Women in many Islamic countries are forced to cover their faces.
Apartheid Today:

Gender Inequality

No laws protect women against domestic violence.

Rape is blamed on women, even if they are young children. Rapists can escape legal punishment by marrying their victims. In Iran and Saudi Arabia, the female victims are often punished for “immorality.”

Women’s court testimony is worth less than men’s, especially in cases of rape and domestic violence.

Family law requires wives’ “obedience” to husbands, who are legally “heads of the household.”

Women can be forced into arranged marriages.
Apartheid Today:

Honor Killings Under the Palestinian Authority

**Definition:** Sanctioned murder of women. When women are raped or suspected of flirtations or sexual relations with men who are not their husbands, they are often murdered by relatives to preserve family “honor.”

Fifteen-year-old Rofayda Qaoud from the Palestinian village of Abu Qash was raped and impregnated by her brothers. When she refused to kill herself to save her family’s honor, her mother Amira (left) suffocated, stabbed, and beat her to death the night of January 23, 2003. She received a light sentence, as “honor killing” is a mitigating factor in the Palestinian judicial system.
In Gaza, a 27-year-old mother of five was bludgeoned to death with an iron chain. According to police in Gaza, her father, Jawdat al-Najar, heard his daughter Fadia, who had divorced in 2005, speaking on the phone with a man. He believed she was having a relationship with him. Police say al-Najar became enraged and beat her to death.

Honor Killings
Outside of the Middle East

Banaz Mahmod was raped, tortured, and murdered, and her body was found buried in a suitcase in a garden in Birmingham, UK, three months after she contacted police.

Read more: www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-554588/Police-let-honour-killing-victim-face-sack.html#ixzz0fMUPYjFy
Sarah Said, 17, and her sister Amina, 18, were found dead in the back seat of a taxicab in Texas. The girls’ great-aunt, Gail Gartrell, says the girls’ Egyptian-born father killed them both because he felt they disgraced the family by dating non-Muslims and acting too Western, and she called the girls’ murders an honor killing from the start.

Source: www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,437502,00.html
Apartheid Today:

Sexual Apartheid

Definition: A system of legally and culturally enforced discrimination and/or persecution against people based on their sexual behaviors, with severe repression of sexual freedom.

Homosexuality is a crime punished by imprisonment, flogging, stoning, hanging, or beheading in Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, and others.
In Iran, practicing homosexuality is a capital offense. Those “convicted” of homosexuality are publicly executed, usually hanged. A reported 4,000 homosexuals were executed in Iran between 1979 and 1999.⁷
Apartheid Today: State-sanctioned Discrimination and Persecution of Homosexuals

In most Middle Eastern countries, no laws prevent anti-gay discrimination, and gays face severe ostracism. Though homosexuality is not illegal everywhere, gays are often arrested under laws against "lewd conduct" (Egypt) and experience police harassment and torture (Egypt and the Palestinian Authority). Recent reports indicate that murderers of gays may be prosecuted under the lenient category of "honor killings."
Apartheid Today: Religious Apartheid

**Definition:** A system of legal repression, segregation, and persecution based on religion.

**Public practice of non-Muslim religions prohibited:** Saudi Arabia.\(^9\)

**Conversion from Islam is punishable by death** (Iran, the Palestinian Authority, and Saudi Arabia) or by loss of civil and inheritance rights, imprisonment, or torture (Jordan, Egypt, Oman, and northern Sudan).\(^{10}\)

**Blasphemy of Islam prohibited or punishable by death:** Saudi Arabia and Oman.

**Special religious police persecute Muslims and non-Muslims:** Saudi Arabia and Iran.

**Legal, social, and economic discrimination against non-Muslims and minority Muslim sects:** Saudi Arabia,\(^{11}\) Egypt,\(^{12}\) and Iran.

**Christian numbers have dwindled as a result of religious persecution:** Palestinian Authority.
Persecution, violence, property expropriations, and intimidation of Christians, Ba’hai, or other minority religions: the Palestinian Authority, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran.\textsuperscript{13}

Anti-Jewish persecution, discrimination, and/or incitement: Palestinian Authority, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan, UAE, and the Gulf States.\textsuperscript{14}

“Muslim only” roads

“Christians are being persecuted not only in Iraq, but in most Arab countries…. They are subjected to every possible kind of discrimination, as well as expulsion.”
–\textit{Abd Al-Nasser Al-Najjar, Palestinian daily Al-Ayyam, October 25, 2008.}

A Christian in Saudi Arabia is publicly flogged after being “convicted” of practicing Christianity, 2007.\textsuperscript{15}
In 2002 fifteen girls burned to death when Saudi police refused to allow them to evacuate because their clothes violated the Kingdom’s “decency” laws (no headscarves/black robes).

One witness said he saw three policemen “beating young girls to prevent them from leaving the school because they were not wearing the abaya.”

The Governor of Mecca looks at the charred remains of the school fire.
Apartheid Today: 

Racism

Definition: A system of legally or culturally enforced discrimination and/or persecution based on a person’s race or national or ethnic identity.

“I’m sad to say that we Arabs are the epitome of racism….If Obama was in an Arab country…under no circumstances … would they have given him citizenship. They’d say to him: You are a slave, you are black, you need a ‘guarantor,’ you are a Kenyan, and your origins are unknown.”


Enslavement of blacks: Sudan.

Persecution and discrimination against native Berber tribes and their culture: Morocco and Libya.
Persecution of Jews

In 1948, 850,000 Jews lived in Arab lands. Today only a few thousand remain because of persecution, discrimination, and expulsions.

Selling land to Jews was a capital offense in Jordan until 1995. It remains illegal in Jordan and in the Palestinian Authority.

Clerics and government-controlled schools and media continually demonize Jews and recycle in print and film anti-Semitic forgeries such as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.*

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**Examples of Declining Jewish Population in Middle Eastern Countries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1948</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>Less than 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td>Less than 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>38,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Map of origins of Jewish refugees who were forced to flee to Israel from Middle Eastern countries after 1948.
Apartheid Today: Based on National Identity

**Definition:** A system of legally or culturally enforced discrimination and/or persecution based on a person’s race or national identity.

Arab League states continue to discriminate and exclude Palestinians because of their national identity.

Palestinian refugees have been denied citizenship for two generations or more (Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq).

Palestinians have been expelled from many Middle Eastern countries (Kuwait, Jordan, Libya, and Iraq).

Palestinians must live in designated areas, cannot own homes, and are barred from 70 occupations (Lebanon).
Misuse of the Term “Apartheid”

Israel and the Palestinians do not have an apartheid relationship.

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are self-governing. The Palestinians have never been Israeli citizens and do not wish to be. They have their own national movement and formed their own government, the Palestinian Authority (PA), after signing the Oslo Accords with Israel in 1993. The PA has its own elections and legislative council and runs all aspects of civil society, from education to police forces, law courts, and health care.

Unfortunately, the PA still uses many of the apartheid practices described in the booklet on their own people.

Palestinian honor guard escorts Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority. The Palestinian police force.
Apartheid Today:

Enforcing Inequality Through Violent Repression

Peaceful demonstrators opposed to the regime face imprisonment, torture, and execution.

2009: Baton-wielding Iranian police fired tear gas and arrested protesters mourning Neda Soltani, the young woman (pictured on the cover of this booklet and to the right) who was killed in post-election violence and has become a symbol for the opposition to Iran’s hardline leaders.
Neda Soltani
Killed on June 20, 2009, for opposing Ahmadinajad’s repressive regime. Neda has become a symbol of the struggle for human rights in Iran.
The Struggle to End Apartheid in the Middle East

Today, many groups throughout the region are trying to end this system of oppression and apartheid and embark on a future of freedom and human rights.

Palestinian women demonstrate against violence directed at women.

Copts demonstrate in the US against repression in Egypt.
Copts demonstrate in Cyprus against Egyptian persecution.

First Lady Suzanne Mubarak at Cairo conference to protect children.
Apartheid in the Middle East Causes Untold Suffering.

Here are ways you and your friends can help:

Educate yourself and others about apartheid in the Middle East.

Publicize the little-known facts about conditions in the region.

Encourage the US to support the courageous few who challenge the oppression.

Support policies that encourage reform.

Start activist campaigns that educate the public and demand reforms.

Learn more at various Web sites, including www.freedomhouse.org, www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/mid.html www.nohonor.org
Sources

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18. Palestinian Media Watch: www.pmw.org.il
Order more of these booklets:
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Teachers! Get curricula at:
www.learnisrael.org and at
www.standwithus.com/TEACHINGTOOLS/ il101lp.asp

Students! Check out the StandWithUs student community at:
www.standwithusCampus.com

Learn more at various websites, including
www.Freedomhouse.org
www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/mid.html
www.nohonor.org

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