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## B'Tselem: 'This is apartheid'

On the 12th January, Israeli human rights organisation, B'Tselem, published [a position paper](#) in which it defined Israel as an apartheid state, with a regime 'of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea'. Contrary to the myth created by the Oslo Accords and perpetuated by the illusion of a peace process, there aren't 'two states', real or potential, just one!



Citing, among other evidence, the passing in 2018 of *The Basic Law: Israel – the Nation State of the Jewish People* and subsequent threats to formally annex around a third of the West Bank, the report concludes that the 'entire area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River is organized under a single principle: advancing and cementing the supremacy of one group – Jews – over another – Palestinians.'

The report analyses four discriminatory aspects of the regime that mark it as a form of apartheid: citizenship, land rights, freedom of movement and political participation. B'Tselem argue that Israel follows a policy of 'engineering space' such that Jewish citizens live as though the entire area (apart from Gaza) were a single space, while Palestinians live in a 'fragmented mosaic' in which they enjoy inferior rights that also differ depending on whether they live in 'Israel', the occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem or Gaza.

Since its founding in 1989 B'Tselem has carefully documented Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights. Its work in this area has gained widespread recognition and respect. It is highly significant that [it has now moved](#) from simply recording 'abuses' to treating them as evidence of a political structure characterised by 'systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over another' i.e 'apartheid'.

Although they discuss citizenship and immigration, B'Tselem say nothing directly about Palestinian refugees. This is a serious weakness in their analysis which may be due to their long-term focus on Israeli policy and practice in Gaza and the West bank. As the [2017 report by Richard Falk and Rima Khalaf](#) pointed out, Israel's form of apartheid cannot be properly understood unless we recognise its impact on Palestinians exiled outside the former 'Mandate Palestine'.

Moreover, as [Lana Tatour argues](#), it is not enough to identify Israel as an apartheid regime and condemn its breaches of international law. We have to recognise that this regime serves the interests of an ongoing settler-colonial project. Resistance to Israeli settler-colonialism, and the route to Palestinian self-determination, is a political struggle in which international law plays an important but secondary role.

Nevertheless, that a highly-regarded organisation like B'Tselem has adopted the position it has, is [a significant development in Israeli political discourse](#), albeit it is only just catching up with what Palestinians have known for a long time.