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Israel, apartheid and South Africa

Dr Derek O'Flynn (Letters, February 9) and other Israeli diplomats will eventually have to accept the apartheid nature of the regime which they serve. Many credible leaders in the world have done so; for example, former US president Jimmy Carter who wrote a book called 'Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid'. Archbishop Desmond Tutu said that "the situation here is worse than that of apartheid South Africa".

The architect of the South African apartheid itself, former prime minister Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, said in 1961: "The Jews took Israel from the Arabs after the Arabs had lived there for a thousand years. Israel, like South Africa, is an apartheid state."

In the Holy Land:

- Palestinians are forced to carry identification cards at all times when travelling from city to city.
- Palestinians must apply for a difficult-to-obtain permit to travel from city to city.
- Palestinian Christians and Muslims are not allowed to buy, rent or lease land in 93pc of the state of Israel because they are not Jewish.
- Israel takes 85pc of the Palestinian water resources and the remaining 15pc is divided between Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.
- In the West Bank, Palestinians are not allowed to drive on roads allocated for Jewish settlers.

In 2008, the Israeli Interior Ministry revoked the residency of 4,577 East Jerusalem Arabs. According to the same source, this "is just part of a general policy whose goal is to restrict the size of the Palestinian population and maintain a Jewish majority in Jerusalem.

"The Palestinians are natives of this city, not Johnny-come-latelys." ('Haaretz', December 2, 2009).

Israel will continue to be an apartheid state while it illegally occupies Palestinian territories and oppresses Palestinians in those territories.

The nature of the entity in the Holy Land is rightly perceived by intellectuals on both sides as a bi-national state ruled by an apartheid Israeli regime.

No wonder Nelson Mandela, the hero of South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle, said that we know as South Africans "that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians".

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