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### **Holy Land visitors will find out the truth about Israel's 'apartheid' state**

THE economic infrastructure of the future state of Palestine is based on three pillars: human resources, tourism and agriculture.

These pillars have been the target of the Israeli occupying power since Israel conquered the Palestinian territories in 1967.

By acting in this manner, Israel aims to make it impossible for a Palestinian state to materialise.

I mention these facts in response to the Israeli Ambassador's letter of January 19.

At the outset, I would like to remind everyone that Israel lost its democratic nature in 1967, when it occupied Palestinian territories and forced Palestinians to live under a most oppressive occupation regime. Then, Israel became an apartheid state, in which Palestinians under occupation have had no democratic rights whatsoever. Given the wanton violence employed against Palestinians by the Israeli occupying forces, the word "apartheid" is tepid.

I agree fully with Mr Teegan (Letters, January 17) that "Israeli tourism has been an instrument of propaganda against the Palestinians". In order to achieve this, the Israeli government forbids Palestinians from guiding tourists in the Holy Land. The only advantage we Palestinians gain out of encouraging tourism to the Holy Land is for those tourists to find the truth about the apartheid nature of the state of Israel.

Israel's apartheid nature was recognised by former US President Jimmy Carter in his book, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*. It was also recognised by Ronnie Kasrils, the South African Minister of Intelligence for four years commencing 2004, the grandson of Jewish emigres to South Africa, who fought for decades against apartheid in his homeland.

He has said: "In its conduct and methods of repression, Israel came to resemble more and more apartheid South Africa at its zenith — even surpassing its brutality, house demolitions, removal of communities, targeted assassinations, massacres, imprisonment and torture of its opponents, collective punishment and the aggression against neighbouring states. (Media Monitors Network, March 17, 2009).

Israel will continue to be an apartheid state while it illegally occupies Palestinian territories and oppresses Palestinians in those territories. Twenty-two years ago, Palestinian leaders offered Israel an historic compromise, adopting a two-state solution with a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and Israel continuing to exist in its 1967 borders. This was a very generous offer, since the territory of the Palestinian state was only 22% of our historic homeland, with the Israeli state continuing to exist in the other 78%.

For the past 22 years, Israel has refused to take up our generous offer. Apparently 78% of historic Palestine is not enough for Israel.

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