

Concept

Israel Apartheid Week

Definition

First launched in 2005, Israel Apartheid Week is an annual event organized by anti-Zionist groups primarily in university campuses across North America and Europe. Its mission is to create a link between the State of Israel and the former apartheid regime in South Africa in order to condemn Israel and lead a boycott against it.

Background

Israel Apartheid Week (IAW) takes place in the context of increased de-legitimization of Israel. In recent years, voices calling for the political isolation and boycotts against Israel have increased significantly and reflect a trend which is weakening Israel on the global stage and undermining its national security (see "[Memo to Winograd: Updating Israel's National Security Strategy](#)").

IAW promotes such tactics of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), in order to ultimately lead to the political isolation of Israel. Instigated by anti-Zionist forces, anti-Semitic organizations, radical leftist movements, or human-rights groups, IAW's stated goals are to end the "occupation and colonization" of all Arab lands, dismantle the security fence, advance the Palestinian right of return, and gain full equality for the Arab citizens of Israel. In reality, however, IAW has become one of the most important events in the trend of delegitimizing Israel.

There are several organizations – oftentimes Palestinian or Islamic – which sponsor IAW regularly.¹ However, IAW does not have a single sponsor, and the various events are organized by local groups.²

In 2009, IAW was held in more than 50 cities across the globe,³ with special emphasis on Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip.⁴

¹ Some of the organizations include: [The Right to Education Campaign](#); [Palestinian Campaign for the Academic & Cultural Boycott of Israel](#) (PACBI); [BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights](#); and [Stop the Wall](#).

² At the [University of Toronto](#), which is considered an important location for IAW, the groups that organized IAW 2009 were: Students Against Israeli Apartheid University of Toronto, Students Against Israeli Apartheid York, and Students for Palestinian Human Rights Ryerson

³ List of cities where IAW 2009 took place: Al Quds, Atlanta, Berkeley, Bethlehem, Birzeit, Boston, Cape Town, Caracas, Chicago, Copenhagen, Durban, Edmonton, Fredericton, Girona, Guelph, Halifax, Hamilton, Hebron, Jenin, Jericho, Johannesburg, Kingston, London, Madrid, Montréal, Nablus, New York, Oakland, Ottawa, Oxford, Peterborough, Pisa, Qalqilya, Salfit, San Francisco, St. Catherine's, Sudbury, Toronto, Tubas, Tulkarem, Vancouver, Waterloo. For more information see the [IAW Official Site](#).

⁴ Operation Cast Lead has given a tremendous boost to IAW (see for example the dispute which broke out at Canadian universities over the distribution of an anti-Israeli / anti-Semitic poster. See: Liphshiz, [Ha'aretz](#), 03/18/09).