‘We do not agree’: UK rejects Amnesty report accusing Israel of apartheid

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<https://www.timesofisrael.com/we-do-not-agree-uk-rejects-amnesty-report-accusing-israel-of-apartheid/>

The United Kingdom on Thursday rejected an Amnesty International report accusing Israel of apartheid.

“We do not agree with the use of this terminology,” a spokesperson for the UK’s Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office told The Times of Israel.

“Any judgment on whether serious crimes under international law have occurred is a matter for judicial decision, rather than for governments or non-judicial bodies,” they said.

The spokesperson added: “As a friend of Israel, we have a regular dialogue on human rights. This includes encouraging the government of Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and do all it can to uphold the values of equality for all.”

Amnesty International is headquartered in London.

Amnesty alleged in a [major report](https://www.timesofisrael.com/amnesty-accuses-israel-of-apartheid-both-inside-country-and-in-west-bank-gaza/) released Tuesday that Israel has maintained “a system of oppression and domination” over the Palestinians going all the way back to the establishment of the state in 1948, a system the group said meets the international definition of apartheid.

The UK joins Israel, the US and Germany, in addition to a range of Jewish organizations around the world, in rejecting the 278-page report.

The [Biden administration](https://www.timesofisrael.com/absurd-us-rejects-amnesty-accusation-of-israeli-apartheid-against-palestinians/), as well as US lawmakers from both sides of the aisle, were quick to condemn the document.

US Ambassador to Israel Tom Nides rejected the report, calling its central accusation “absurd.”

“That is not language that we have used and will not use,” he said.

Senator Robert Menendez, who heads the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, said, “By identifying Israel’s very establishment as the foundation for this accusation, Amnesty International has joined a growing chorus of vicious voices intent on denying Israel’s right to exist through slander, misinformation, and ignoring that both Israelis and Palestinians are responsible for their own fates.”

State Department spokesman Ned Price said the US does not generally comment on reports by outside groups, but it rejects the view that Israel’s actions constitute apartheid.

Though the administration of US President Joe Biden has consistently spoken out against Israeli settlement activities and on other issues, it has also defended Jerusalem in international fora against what it sees as anti-Israel bias.

Germany[said](https://www.timesofisrael.com/germany-rejects-amnestys-description-of-israel-as-an-apartheid-state/) on Wednesday it rejects the use of the term “apartheid” to describe Israel.

“We reject expressions like apartheid or a one-sided focusing of criticism on Israel. That is not helpful to solving the conflict in the Middle East,” Germany’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Christopher Burger said, according to Reuters.

[Amnesty’s accusation](https://www.timesofisrael.com/amnesty-accuses-israel-of-apartheid-both-inside-country-and-in-west-bank-gaza/) was leveled against Israel within its borders, in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and “beyond” those territories. In the report unveiled in Jerusalem, the group did not directly compare Israel to apartheid South Africa, but said it was evaluating Israel’s policies based on international conventions.

“The USA, the European Union and its member states and the UK, but also those states that are in the process of strengthening their ties — such as some Arab and African states… must recognize that Israel is committing the crime of apartheid and other international crimes,” read the report.

Amnesty called on those actors to “use all political and diplomatic tools to ensure Israeli authorities implement the recommendations outlined in this report and review any cooperation and activities with Israel to ensure that these do not contribute to maintaining the system of apartheid.”

Ahead of the report’s release, the Israeli government called it “false, biased and antisemitic” and accused the organization of endangering the safety of Jews around the world. The rights group released the document despite calls from Israel to not do so.