

Testimony for the Maryland General Assembly
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I am a retired foreign service officer. Starting in 1985 for the next four and a half years, I worked in the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel on health and education humanitarian programs funded by USAID. Conditions in the "occupied territories" were oppressive persecution, collective punishment, and extreme racism. I won't take the time to describe the horrors that I witnessed but believe me they were daily occurrences. Moving around Gaza and the West Bank in the 1980s, I remember distinctly thinking how the US programs felt ineffective against the concentration camp conditions under which the Palestinians were living.

As horrible as the situation was then, I have watched the West Bank and Gaza for 35 years as conditions have deteriorated well beyond what I witnessed.

Israel is an apartheid state that is engaged in ethnic cleansing and genocide on a mass scale. The Israeli government responds that they have no choice, given Palestinian violence. Israeli violence towards Palestinians is in no way proportional to Palestinian violence nor are Israeli actions designed to end the conflict and reach peace. The Israeli government has always had a choice and the choice they have made is for ethnic cleansing and genocide.

The state of Maryland should not be invested in Israeli bonds. It's time to stand against apartheid, ethnic cleansing and genocide. Maryland must do the right thing: divest from Israeli bonds. Be on the right side of history. As the title of a recent book says "One Day Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This."