



Special edition of the UNIC South Africa Library newsletter: The role of the United Nations in the abolition of apartheid

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From its inception, the United Nations was involved in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. To reflect on this and learn more on the role of the UN in the anti-apartheid struggle, the UNIC South Africa Library has compiled a selected list of information resources including UN publications, photos, radio and UN website links on apartheid.



The United Nations:

Partner in the Struggle against Apartheid

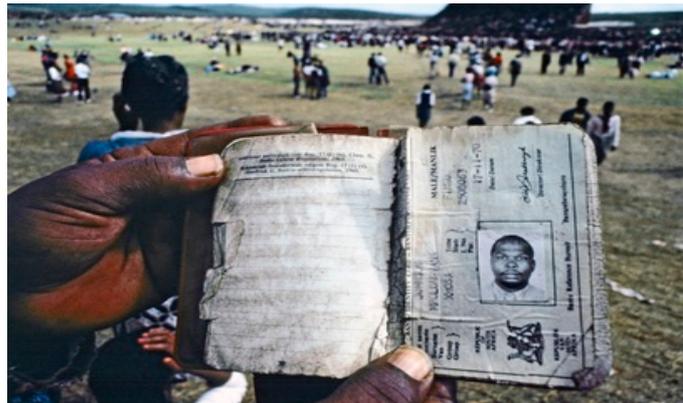
The elimination of South Africa's system of legalized racial discrimination known as apartheid ("apart-ness" in the Afrikaans language of the descendants of the first Dutch settlers) was on the agenda of the United Nations from its inception.

At the first UN gathering in 1946, South Africa was placed on the agenda. The primary subject in question was the handling of South African Indians, a great cause of divergence between South Africa and India.

In 1952, apartheid was again discussed in the aftermath of the Defiance Campaign, and the UN set up a task team to keep watch on the progress of apartheid and the racial state of affairs in South Africa

In the decades that followed the world body would contribute to the global struggle against apartheid by drawing world attention to the inhumanity of the system, legitimizing popular resistance, promoting anti-apartheid actions by governmental and non-governmental organizations, instituting an arms embargo, and supporting an oil embargo and boycotts of apartheid in many fields.

- [Key dates in the UN campaign against apartheid](#)



Selected UN Publications on apartheid available in the UNIC Library

1. United Nations (UN)

Apartheid in Practice

This study was prepared by Mr. Leslie Rubin at the request of the United Nations Unit on Apartheid. Mr. Rubin was formerly a Senator in South Africa representing African voters. The aim of the book was to provide a clear and accurate description of apartheid.

UN, New York, 1976. OPI/553-39323-January 1976-27M.

Sanctions against South Africa: The Peaceful Alternative to Violent Change

The Paris Declaration on Sanctions against South Africa is a succinct analysis of the case for the imposition of mandatory economic sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

UN, New York, 1988. ISBN: 92-1-100324-5.

The United Nations and Apartheid, 1948-1994: the United Nations Blue Books Series with an introduction by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations

The inauguration on 10 May 1994 of Mr. Nelson Mandela as President of the Republic of South Africa, signalled a historic transformation of the nation.

UN, New York, 1994. ISBN: 92-1-100546-9.

United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) (in co-operation with the United Nations Centre against Apartheid).

Poets against Apartheid

A compilation of poems contributed by leading poets in Bangladesh dedicated to the struggle of the people of Southern Africa against apartheid and colonialism.

UNIC, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1985.

2. World Health Organization (WHO)

Apartheid and Health

Consist of two parts: The first part discussed the report of an International Conference held at Brazzaville, People's Republic of Congo 16-20 November, 1981 and the second part discusses the health implications of racial discrimination and social inequality: An Analytical Report to the Conference.

WHO, Geneva, 1983. ISBN: 92 4 156079 7.

3. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Apartheid and Social Research

Commissioned by UNESCO as part of its contribution to the International Anti-Apartheid Year 1978. The book reflects not only the situation of the social sciences under the apartheid regime in South Africa but also the preoccupation of the international social science community.

UNESCO, Switzerland, 1981. ISBN 92-3-101898-1.

Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification

Apartheid: Power and Historical Falsification constitutes part of UNESCO's programme of studies undertaken for the International Year against Apartheid, declared by the United Nations on 21 March 1978.

UNESCO, France, 1980. ISBN 92-3-101769-1

Apartheid: A teacher's guide

Comprises six main chapters, furnishes 17 'Apartheid Exercises' presenting essential facts concerning apartheid and its effect, and concerning international and national efforts to eliminate it.

UNESCO, Switzerland, 1981. ISBN 92-3-101896-5

4. United Nations Centre against Apartheid

Prisoners of Apartheid: A biography list of prisoners and banned persons in South Africa

A biography list of all the prisoners and activists that were banned in South Africa for fighting for freedom and equality.

United Nations Centre against Apartheid, 1978. ISBN 0 904759 24 5.

Apartheid: The Facts

Covers the historical background of apartheid.

United Nations Centre against Apartheid. New York, 1983. ISBN 0 90475949 0

Women under Apartheid: In photographs and text

Shows how South African woman under apartheid were oppressed as black people, as workers and as women. It shows also their role in the struggle for freedom.

United Nations Centre against Apartheid. London, 1981. ISBN 0 904759 45 8

5. UN Special Committee against Apartheid

Apartheid: The United Nations and the international community

United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid. New Delhi, 1986.

The book includes a collection of speeches and papers as a record of the growing commitment of the United Nations in support of the liberation struggle in South Africa.

<http://sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/Apartheid,%20United%20Nations%20etc.%20Vikas%20book,%20full%20-%20to%20format.pdf>

UN Websites on apartheid

The Struggle against Apartheid: Lessons for Today's World

Written By: Enuga S. Reddy

<http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/chronicle/home/archive/issues2007/thesolidarityofpeoples/thestruggleagainstapartheid>

General Assembly: Declaration on Apartheid and its destructive consequences in Southern Africa

<http://www.un.org/documents/qa/res/spec/aress16-1.htm>

Combating South Africa's 'blight'

Africa Recovery, Vol.13#4 (December 1999), page 10

<http://www.un.org/en/africarenewal/subjindx/134corr2.htm>

UN Audio links on apartheid

ANC leader Nelson Mandela Addresses General Assembly

Language: English, Genre: Speech, Date: 1990

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/library/classics/detail/870.html>

Stevie Wonder Press Conference

Language: English, Genre: Interview, Date: 1985

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/library/classics/detail/867.html>

Towards Liberation - Part 1 (Life under Apartheid and Colonialism)

Language: English, Genre: Report, Date: 1970

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/library/classics/detail/908.html>

Ceremony Naming Nelson and Winnie Mandela's Corner in New York

Language: English, Genre: Speech, Date: 1984

Available [Online]: <http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/library/classics/detail/975.html>

Desmond Tutu Addresses UN Special Committee

Language: English, Genre: Speech, Date: 1985

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/library/classics/detail/923.html>

UN Photos on Apartheid

Apartheid in South Africa

http://www.flickr.com/photos/un_photo/3311468609/

Apartheid - A Crime against Humanity

Houses in Soweto: A black township. 01 January 1985

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/photo/detail.jsp?id=322/32249&key=3&query=apartheid%20in%20south%20africa&sf>

What is to be done? Struggle : Apartheid

<http://andrelevy.net/photos/struggle/apartheid/>

Apartheid photos

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/photo/gallery.jsp?query=apartheid+photos>

Field Coverage: South Africa, Date: 01 January 1985, South Africa

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/photo/detail.jsp?auto=1&id=732/73297&key=79&query=subject:Apartheid>

UN Videos on Apartheid

Nelson Mandela's life story (United Nation's upload)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9xtS57534Y&feature=plcp>

UN celebrates Nelson Mandela Day in honour of exemplary global citizens

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iIsBmqYoz8M&feature=plcp>

"Nelson Mandela changed the world" (UN Secretary-General)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h112IM0ZyOE&feature=plcp>

Invictus: Screening of the movie at the UN to commemorate fight against racial discrimination

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eIBggBIOZQ&feature=plcp>

Other selective UN Audio links on apartheid

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/library/classics/genre/speech1.html>

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/library/classics/genre/speech.html>

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/library/classics/language/english8.html>

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/library/classics/language/english12.html>

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/library/classics/index9.html>

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/library/classics/index7.html>

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/english/2011/09/more-needs-to-be-done-to-redress-racism-south-africa/index.html>

Key dates in the UN campaign against apartheid:

- **2 December 1950** — The General Assembly declared that "a policy of 'racial segregation' (apartheid) is necessarily based on doctrines of racial discrimination". (Resolution 395(V))
- **1 April 1960** — The Security Council, in its first action on South Africa, adopted Resolution 134 deploring the policies and actions of the South African government in the wake of the killing of 69 peaceful African protesters in Sharpeville by the police on 21 March. The Council called upon the government to abandon its policies of apartheid and racial discrimination.
- **2 April 1963** — First meeting of the Special Committee on the Policies of Apartheid of the Government of the Republic of South Africa, It was later renamed the "Special Committee against Apartheid".
- **7 August 1963** — The Security Council adopted Resolution 181 calling upon all States to cease the sale and shipment of arms, ammunition and military vehicles to South Africa. The arms embargo was made mandatory on 4 November 1977.
- **13 November 1963** — The General Assembly, in Resolution 1899 (XVIII) on the question of Namibia, urged all States to refrain from supplying petroleum to South Africa. It was the first of many efforts by the UN to enact effective oil sanctions against apartheid.
- **23 August-4 September 1966** — International Seminar on Apartheid, Brasilia, organised by the UN Division of Human Rights, the Special Committee against Apartheid and the government of Brazil - the first of scores of conferences and seminars on apartheid organised or co-sponsored by the United Nations.
- **2 December 1968** — The General Assembly requested all States and organisations "to suspend cultural, educational, sporting and other exchanges with the racist regime and with organisations or institutions in South Africa which practice apartheid.
- **30 November 1973** — International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid approved by the General Assembly (Resolution 3068(XXVIII)). The convention came into force on 18 July 1976.
- **1 January 1976** — The UN Centre Against Apartheid was established.
- **17 August 1984** — In Resolution 554 the Security Council declared null and void the new racist constitution of South Africa.
- **16-20 June 1986** — World Conference on Sanctions against Racist South Africa, organised by the United Nations in cooperation with the OAU and the Movement of Non-aligned Countries
- **14 December 1989** — The General Assembly adopted by consensus the "Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa," calling for negotiations to end apartheid and establish a non-racial democracy (Resolution A/RES/S-16/1).
- **22 June 1990** — Nelson Mandela addressed the Special Committee against Apartheid in New York -- his first appearance before the Organisation.
- **30 July 1992** — With political violence escalating and negotiations at risk, Nelson Mandela requested the United Nations to send observers to South Africa. On the following day the Secretary-General announced that he would send a small group of UN monitors. The United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa was established by the Security Council on 17 August 1992.
- **8 October 1993** — The General Assembly requested States to restore economic relations with South Africa immediately, and terminate the oil embargo when the Transitional Executive Council in South Africa became operational (Resolution 48/1).
- **10 May 1994** — South Africa's first democratically elected non-racial government took office following the general elections of 26-29 April.
- **23 June 1994** — The General Assembly approved the credentials of the South African delegation and removed the item of apartheid from its agenda. The Security Council removed the question of South Africa from its agenda on 27 June.
- **3 October 1994** — The first democratically elected president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, addresses the General Assembly.

NOTE: Please send your questions and feedback to the UNIC Library at hope.kabamba@unic.org