

# The United Nations and Apartheid: 1948-1994



## The United Nations and Apartheid 1948-1994 (The United Nations Blue Books Series ; V. 1) by Jonathan Rieder

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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Apartheid, a system of racial segregation and discrimination, plagued South Africa from 1948 to 1994. It was a brutal and oppressive regime that subjected the majority Black population to systemic inequality and violence. The United Nations played a pivotal role in the international condemnation and eventual dismantling of apartheid. This article examines the UN's comprehensive efforts over four decades to combat this abhorrent system and promote equality and justice in South Africa.

## Condemnation and Resolutions

The UN General Assembly first denounced apartheid in 1946, long before it became the official policy of South Africa. In 1962, the Assembly adopted Resolution 1761, declaring apartheid a crime against humanity and urging member states to take action against the South African regime. Resolution

1881 (1963) established a Special Committee to investigate and monitor the situation in South Africa.

### **Security Council Sanctions**

In 1963, the UN Security Council imposed a voluntary arms embargo on South Africa. Resolution 418 (1977) expanded the embargo to include all military equipment and technology. In 1979, Resolution 465 mandated an oil embargo against South Africa. These sanctions were instrumental in isolating the apartheid regime and forcing it to reconsider its policies.

### **Diplomatic Pressure**

The UN played a crucial role in coordinating international diplomatic pressure on South Africa. The Security Council and the General Assembly adopted numerous resolutions condemning apartheid and calling for its end. These resolutions created a strong international consensus against apartheid and put pressure on governments around the world to take action.

### **Support for Liberation Movements**

The UN provided moral and material support to liberation movements fighting against apartheid, including the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). The Special Committee against Apartheid facilitated dialogue between liberation movements and the international community. The UN also provided humanitarian assistance to refugees and victims of apartheid.

### **Nelson Mandela and International Solidarity**

The imprisonment of Nelson Mandela became a powerful symbol of the struggle against apartheid. The UN General Assembly called for Mandela's release and demanded an end to apartheid. International solidarity rallies and campaigns increased awareness of Mandela's plight and galvanized support for the anti-apartheid movement.

## **Ending Apartheid**

By the late 1980s, the international pressure on South Africa had become overwhelming. The South African government was facing economic isolation, diplomatic ostracism, and internal unrest. In 1990, President F.W. de Klerk released Mandela from prison and began negotiations with the ANC and other anti-apartheid groups. The UN played a mediating role in the negotiations that led to the transition to a democratic South Africa.

## **Legacy of the United Nations**

The United Nations' unwavering opposition to apartheid was instrumental in its eventual dismantling. The organization's resolutions, sanctions, and diplomatic efforts created an international consensus against racial segregation and helped to isolate the South African regime. The UN's support for liberation movements and its recognition of Mandela's struggle played a vital role in mobilizing international solidarity and putting pressure on the apartheid government.

The UN's legacy in the fight against apartheid continues to inspire efforts to promote human rights, equality, and justice around the world. The organization's commitment to combating racism and discrimination remains a testament to its unwavering belief in the dignity and equality of all human beings.

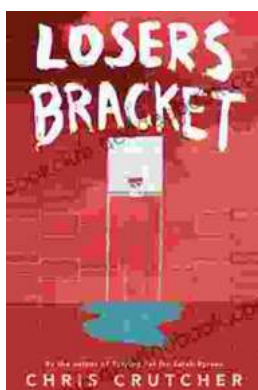
The United Nations' role in ending apartheid is a testament to the power of international cooperation and the unwavering pursuit of justice. The organization's comprehensive efforts, spanning four decades, helped to isolate the apartheid regime, support liberation movements, and create an international consensus against racial segregation. The UN's legacy in the fight against apartheid stands as a beacon of hope and inspiration for all who strive to build a just and equitable world.



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