UN inquiry concludes Israeli army is “one of the most criminal armies in the world”

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An official United Nations inquiry into violations of international law by Israel in Palestine submitted its findings yesterday, accusing Israeli leaders of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the “extermination” of Palestinians in the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

Navi Pillay, the chairperson of the inquiry and former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and a former judge of the High Court of South Africa, called the scale of Israeli war crimes “unprecedented.”

She said that the commission has submitted 7,000 pieces of evidence to Karim Khan, the lead prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), who has accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Answering claims by Benjamin Netanyahu that the Israel Defense Forces is the “most moral army in the world,” commission member Chris Sidoti declared, citing the report, “the only conclusion you can draw is that the Israeli army is one of the most criminal armies in the world.”

It found that Israel was responsible for crimes against humanity. According to the report, “extermination; murder; gender persecution targeting Palestinian men and boys; forcible transfer; and torture and inhuman and cruel treatment were committed.”

The report noted that the massive civilian death toll is due to the fact that, in the words of the commission, the “Israeli government has given [the Israeli military] blanket authorization to target civilian locations widely and indiscriminately in the Gaza Strip.”

The commission noted statements by Israeli authorities intending “to hold the population of the Gaza Strip hostage to achieve political and military objectives,” actions that aim to carry out “the collective punishment of the entire population for the actions of a few, a clear violation of international humanitarian law.”

Notably, the commission placed a significant portion of the blame for the death toll of the October 7 attack on the Israeli government and military, both due to the still-unexplained withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza border ahead of the attack, and the deliberate targeting of Israeli hostages and civilians by Israeli forces.

The report stated:

> The Commission also verified information indicating that, in at least two other cases, [Israeli security forces (ISF)] had likely applied the Hannibal Directive, resulting in the killing of up to 14 Israeli civilians. One woman was killed by ISF helicopter fire while being abducted from Nir Oz to Gaza by militants. In another case, the Commission found that Israeli tank fire killed some or all of the 13 civilian hostages held in a house in Be’eri.

The commission concluded:

> Israeli authorities failed to protect civilians in southern Israel on almost every front. This included failing to swiftly deploy sufficient security forces to protect civilians and evacuate them from civilian locations on October 7. In several locations, ISF applied the so-called “Hannibal Directive” and killed at least 14 Israeli civilians.

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In her remarks, Pillay made clear that the “root cause” of both Hamas’s attack on Israel of October 7 and the subsequent war crimes committed by the IDF was the “unlawful” occupation of Gaza by Israel.

She added, “With this occupation, based on all the information we gathered, it’s pretty stark to us that there is a very clear intention of forcible displacement of people just to force them out.”

She pointed to an “attitude of not caring for the lives, destruction, and displacement. That’s what I would say that this particular conflict, yes, has brought out sharply the issue of occupation itself as the root cause.”

While the report alleged that Hamas carried out criminal attacks against Israeli civilians on October 7, Pillay made the following revealing remark:

> Nelson Mandela was classified as a terrorist, including by the United States until he was freed and they had to quickly lift that terrorist tag. So he could join the ticker-tape parade in New York’s streets, and everybody embraced him overnight as a freedom fighter. So one person’s freedom fighter could be another terrorist.

Asked about the role of “third parties” such as the United States in facilitating war crimes in Gaza, Pillay replied, “had it not been for the help of powerful countries, Israel would not have been able to carry out this perpetual occupation as aggressively as it has.”

The conclusion that inescapably follows is that it is not only Netanyahu and Gallant who stand accused of war crimes and genocide, but also US President Joe Biden and leading members of his administration, who have systematically funded, armed, and politically defended Israel’s bloody massacre.

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