

United Nations committee finds Israeli war on Gaza “consistent with genocide”

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A standing UN committee investigating human rights violations by Israel said in a report issued Thursday that Israeli actions in Gaza “are consistent with the characteristics of genocide.”

The body that issued the report, the United Nations Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, was formed in 1968 after the illegal Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank. It has never before used the term “genocide” to refer to the actions of Israel in Gaza. It consists of representatives from three member states: Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Senegal.

“Since the beginning of the war, Israeli officials have publicly supported policies that strip Palestinians of the very necessities required to sustain life - food, water, and fuel,” the Committee said. “These statements, along with the systematic and unlawful interference of humanitarian aid, make clear Israel’s intent to instrumentalize life-saving supplies for political and military gains.”

The report constitutes a devastating indictment of the Israeli war of extermination in Gaza, waged with weapons and political support from the United States, which has given Israel over 14,000 block-destroying 2,000-pound bombs. More than 25,000 tons of explosives, which is the equivalent of two Hiroshima-size nuclear bombs, have been dropped on Gaza, systematically destroying the vast majority of its residential buildings alongside schools, universities, hospitals, and virtually all other socially necessary facilities.

“By destroying vital water, sanitation, and food systems, and contaminating the environment, Israel has created a lethal mix of crises that will inflict severe harm on generations to come,” the report concluded.

“Through its siege over Gaza, obstruction of humanitarian aid, alongside targeted attacks and killing of civilians and aid workers, despite repeated UN appeals, binding orders from the International Court of Justice, and resolutions of the Security Council, Israel is intentionally causing death, starvation, and serious injury, using starvation as a method of war and inflicting collective punishment on the Palestinian population,” the Committee said.

Significantly, the Committee condemned internet censorship around the world by major technology companies targeting opposition to the genocide. The report noted that “such posts displaying a ‘pro-Palestinian standpoint’ were disproportionately removed by social media companies compared with posts containing hate speech and incitement to violence against Palestinians, including those by Israeli officials, soldiers, and security personnel.” The report condemned the “deliberate silencing of reporting” by the Israeli government and its enablers in the imperialist powers.

The report was published the same day as Human Rights Watch published a separate report accusing Israel of carrying out “ethnic cleansing” in Gaza.

That report found that as “multiple acts of forced displacement were carried out with intent, it amounts to war crimes.” It revealed, “Statements by senior officials with command responsibility show that forced displacement is intentional and forms part of Israeli state policy and therefore amounts to a crime against humanity.” It further concluded, “Israel’s actions appear to also meet the definition of ethnic cleansing.”

It declared, “The intention of Israeli forces appears likely to ensure they remain permanently emptied and cleansed of Palestinians and, in their place, occupied and controlled by Israeli forces.”

In a press briefing Thursday, US State Department spokesman Vedant Patel denied the conclusions of both reports and condemned them. “We think that that kind of phrasing and those kinds of accusations are certainly unfounded,” he said, responding to the UN report’s claims that Israel is carrying out genocide in Gaza.

Responding to the Human Rights Watch report, Patel declared that the United States has not seen “any kind of specific forced displacement,” despite the fact that 1.9 million Palestinians in Gaza have been forcibly displaced. “It is wholly consistent and acceptable to ask civilians to evacuate a certain area while they are conducting certain military operations, and then for them to be able to go home,” Patel said.

The United States is openly endorsing the Netanyahu government's deliberate starvation of the population of Gaza. Last month, the Netanyahu government began to implement the so-called “Generals’ Plan,” entailing the total cutoff of food to northern Gaza, and the declaration that all those who remain in the area are enemy combatants and therefore liable to be killed.

On Tuesday, the US State Department determined that Israel is not violating international human rights law by withholding food to Gaza.

On October 13, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin sent a letter to the Israeli government warning that unless Israel massively increases the provision of food to Gaza “these measures may have implications for US policy under NSM-20,” implying that Israel was in danger of being deemed to have violated human rights law and would not receive further military aid.

Pressed by reporters, State Department spokesman Patel declared, “We have not made an assessment that the Israelis are in violation of US law,” and by implication, international law.

As of October 2024, about 1.95 million out of Gaza’s 2.2 million people were projected to suffer “catastrophic,” “emergency,” or “crisis” levels of food insecurity, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification.



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