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International legal experts submit new report to UN over Israel’s genocide in Gaza

March 15, 2024 — A group of international legal experts submitted a new report to the UN today after conducting the most comprehensive legal analysis to date of Israel’s military operation in Gaza since October 7, 2023, finding that the Israel has committed and continues to commit genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.

The 100-page report, *Genocide in Gaza: Analysis of International Law and its Application to Israel’s Military Actions since October 7, 2023*, was submitted to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide, and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel. The submission was made on May 15, the date commemorating the mass displacement of over 750,000 Palestinians during the establishment of the State of Israel. Palestinians call this the Nakba, Arabic for “catastrophe.”

The report comes as Israel invades Rafah, Gaza’s “last refuge,” where one million Palestinians were forced to flee from Israel’s attacks. It represents the research of lawyers, academics, and students from the University Network for Human Rights (UNHR), the International Human Rights Clinic at Boston University School of Law, the International Human Rights Clinic at Cornell Law School, the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria, and the Lowenstein Human Rights Project at Yale Law School.

The findings of this report put other States on notice that they have an obligation to not be complicit in, and work together to prevent and punish, Israel’s egregious violations of the prohibition on genocide. They also serve to strengthen the current legal cases against Israel in the International Court of Justice and against the Biden Administration in U.S. federal court.

The report finds that Israel has killed at least 34,568 Palestinians, 14,500 of whom are children, and injured 77,765 other Palestinians in Gaza, comprising more than 5 percent of Gaza’s population in total. The operation has destroyed up to 70 percent of homes in Gaza, as well as the majority of civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, universities, UN facilities, and cultural and religious heritage sites. A staggering 1.7 million civilians—over 75 percent of Gaza’s population—have been forcibly displaced by Israel’s military offensive, and civilians in Gaza face catastrophic levels of hunger and deprivation due to Israel’s restriction on, and failure to ensure adequate access to, basic essentials of life, including food, water, medicine, and fuel.

“This assault has been one of extremes: the deadliest conflict for journalists and aid workers ever recorded, the world’s fastest starvation rate ever, and more children killed in four months than all conflicts in the past four years combined. Simply put, the devastation in Gaza is unparalleled,” said Thomas Becker, Legal and Policy Director of UNHR.

These actions have taken place as representatives from all levels of the Israeli government have openly and repeatedly made statements evincing genocidal intent.
“What is unique about the situation in Gaza is that Israel’s rights abuses and its leadership’s candid genocidal discourse has been on full display for the world,” said Susan Akram, Director of the International Human Rights Clinic at Boston University School of Law.

The report builds on numerous experts and scholars who have likewise warned of imminent or ongoing genocide, including current UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories Francesca P. Albanese, who published her own report reaching similar conclusions in March.

“News of egregious abuses emerging from Israel’s latest incursion in Rafah underscore the urgent onus on the international community to act,” said Becker.