

Palestinians call on ICC to probe Israeli war crimes in 2021 Gaza war



A demonstrator poses with a Palestinian flag outside the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, the Netherlands

The Hague, May 24 (RHC)-- Prominent Palestinian rights groups say they have provided the International Criminal Court (ICC) with a detailed description of the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the Israeli military aggression against the besieged Gaza Strip last year.

Palestinian human rights organizations, including al-Haq, al-Mezan, and the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), which monitor and document rights violations committed by the occupying entity, filed a submission to the Hague-based court to expedite an investigation into the crimes and violations of the Tel Aviv regime and bring the perpetrators to justice.

“The May 2021 attack on Gaza is just the most recent example of a series of highly destructive military operations aimed at causing disproportionate damage and suffering on the civilian population of the Gaza Strip, which is subjected to an unlawful 15-year-old closure,” said Raji Sourani, the Director of PCHR.

Tel Aviv launched a brutal bombing campaign against the besieged Gaza Strip on May 10, 2021, following Palestinian retaliation against violent raids on worshippers at al-Aqsa Mosque and the regime’s plans to force a number of Palestinian families out of their homes at the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of the occupied East al-Quds.

According to Gaza’s Health Ministry, 260 Palestinians were killed in the Israeli offensive, including 66 children and 40 women. At least 1,948 others were also wounded.

In response, Palestinian resistance movements, chief among them Hamas, launched Operation al-Quds Sword and fired more than 4,000 rockets and missiles into the occupied territories, killing 12 Israelis.

Apparently caught off guard by the unprecedented barrage of rockets from Gaza, Israel announced a unilateral ceasefire on May 21st, which Palestinian resistance movements accepted with Egyptian mediation.

Elsewhere in the submission, the rights groups said that grave crimes within the jurisdiction of the court have been committed on a wide scale by the Israeli authorities against Palestinian civilians and civil infrastructures of Gaza.

“The commission of these crimes needs to be seen in the context of Israel’s prolonged, belligerent occupation of the entire Palestinian territory, and of the widespread commission of systemic crimes against humanity, including apartheid, and grave war crimes,” wrote Shawan Jabareen, Director of al-Haq organization.

“Victims have already waited for too long. How much longer will Palestinians in Gaza need to wait, before the ICC holds Israeli officials to account?” said Issam Younis, the director-general of al-Mezan.

The submission concludes that only a prompt, concrete and comprehensive investigation and the opening of specific cases against Israeli authorities by the ICC can end the decades-long impunity for crimes committed against Palestinians.

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