

UN committee asks International Court of Justice opinion on Israeli occupation



United Nations, November 13 (RHC)-- A United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) committee asks the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for its advisory opinion on the Israeli regime's decades-old occupation of Palestinian territories.

The UNGA's Special Political and Decolonization Committee voted in favor of a resolution on referring the case to the ICJ. Ninety-eight countries supported the resolution, 52 abstained, and 17 voted against. The resolution asks that the court, which is the UN's legal arm, "urgently" weigh in on the Israeli regime's "prolonged occupation, settlement, and annexation of the Palestinian territory," which it said were violating the Palestinians' right to self-determination.

The Israeli regime claimed existence in 1948 after occupying huge swathes of Palestinian territories during a Western-backed war. It occupied more land, namely the West Bank, including East al-Quds, and the Gaza Strip, in another such war in 1967.

Ever since, it has built hundreds of settlements upon the overrun territories and deployed the most aggressive restrictions on the movements of Palestinians there. Tel Aviv withdrew from Gaza in 2005, but has been keeping the coastal territory under an all-out land, aerial, and naval siege since a year after it left the enclave.

The West Bank-based Palestinian Authority's Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki called the resolution a "diplomatic and legal breakthrough" that would "open a new era for holding Israel accountable for its war crimes."

The resolution, however, drew fire from the regime and its biggest and oldest ally, the United States. Washington has almost invariably shielded Tel Aviv in the face of punitive measures that have been put to vote at the United Nations.

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