

Non-Aligned Movement blasts Israel's war on Gaza at Kampala summit



Foreign ministers within the 120-member bloc have adopted a resolution at the summit, calling for a ceasefire in Gaza

Kampala, January 19 (RHC)-- Leaders of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) countries have denounced Israel's military campaign on the Gaza Strip and demanded an immediate ceasefire during a summit of

the 120-member bloc.

“Since October 7, we have witnessed one of the cruellest genocidal acts ever to be recorded by history,” Cuba’s vice president, Salvador Valdes Mesa, said in a speech to delegates on Friday in Uganda’s capital, Kampala.

“How can the Western countries, who claim to be so civilised, justify the murder of women and children in Gaza, the indiscriminate bombings of hospitals and schools and deprivation of access to safe water and food?” he questioned.

Moussa Faki Mahamat, chairperson of the African Union Commission, called for an immediate end to what he called the “unjust war against the Palestinian people.” Nearly all African countries belong to the NAM, comprising nearly half its members, but its membership includes countries around the globe, from India and Indonesia to Saudi Arabia, Iran, Chile, Peru and Colombia.

The organization was founded in 1965 by countries opposed to joining either of the two major Cold War-era military and political blocs and is the largest global bloc after the UN. It is expected to grant membership to South Sudan, the world’s youngest nation, on Friday.

Uganda currently heads NAM after a handover to President Yoweri Museveni from Azerbaijani leader Ilham Aliyev, the outgoing chairperson, at the start of the summit. Museveni will chair the organisation until 2027.

The Kampala summit, which began on January 15, runs until January 20. Dozens of heads of state and senior officials of NAM members are attending the gathering, including South Africa’s President Cyril Ramaphosa, Algerian Prime Minister Nadir Larbaoui and his Eswatini, formerly known as Swaziland, counterpart Russel Dlamini.

Riyadh Mansour, the Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations, has called the summit a “summit of solidarity.” Al Jazeera’s Catherine Soi, reporting from Kampala, said UN reforms and other issues globally including the ongoing war in Gaza are on the agenda at the summit.

Already, foreign ministers within NAM have adopted a resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and unhindered humanitarian assistance for Palestinians caught in the conflict. The resolution also supports South Africa’s genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice.

“The foreign ministers struggled to find the right language to address the killings in Gaza, but agreed genocide is now a legal issue that needs to be decided by the International Court of Justice,” said Soi.

Speaking at the summit, Ramaphosa said the war in Gaza had demonstrated the UN’s inadequacy, particularly its Security Council, where the United States has vetoed several resolutions critical of Israel. “We should establish a system of global governance that is fair and equitable, and has the capacity to respond to the needs of all persons in situations of threat and harm,” the South African president said.

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