

# *UN secretary-general says decisions of International Court of Justice at The Hague are binding*

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United Nations, February 1 (RHC)-- UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres says decisions of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) are binding, after the top court last week ordered all states to cease funding and facilitating Israel's military actions in Gaza.

"Int'l humanitarian law, including the principles of distinction, proportionality [and] precautions in attack, must always be upheld," Guterres said in his recent post on X platform on Thursday. No party to an armed conflict is above international law.

"No party to an armed conflict is above international law," he said, adding that "the binding decisions of the International Court of Justice must be complied with."

The ICJ last week called on Israel to prevent genocidal acts in its ongoing war in Gaza but stopped short of ordering a ceasefire. It also ordered the regime to ensure humanitarian assistance reaches the population in Gaza.

The order by the UN's top court was part of its interim ruling on the emergency measures requested by South Africa in its genocide case against Israel over its war on the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, a group of UN experts in a statement released on Wednesday praised the ICJ's order, saying that it is a "significant milestone in the decades-long struggle for justice by the Palestinian people."

"The court order is urgently needed to protect the very existence of the Palestinian people from potentially genocidal actions the Court has ordered Israel to halt and prevent," the statement said.

The WHO's emergencies director Michael Ryan said the risk of famine was already high and on the rise. The experts said the ruling, in which the court ordered Israel to commit to preventing genocide in Gaza, "tilts the balance toward a global order based on justice and international law."

Guterres said in his recent remarks on Tuesday that "nothing can justify the collective punishment of the people in Gaza," adding that the death, destruction, displacement, hunger, loss, and grief in Gaza over the past 120 days are a scar on the world's shared humanity and conscience.

The UN chief stated that the ongoing conflict and relentless bombardment by Israeli forces across Gaza have resulted in civilians being killed and destruction "at a pace and scale unlike anything we have witnessed in recent years."

Once more, Guterres warned that the humanitarian system in Gaza is collapsing, as over two million people living in Gaza are facing inhumane conditions, as they struggle to survive without any of the basics.

The remarks come as nine Western countries, including the United States, have stopped their funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), due to false allegations. Guterres has called UNRWA's aid as "the backbone of all humanitarian response in Gaza."

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