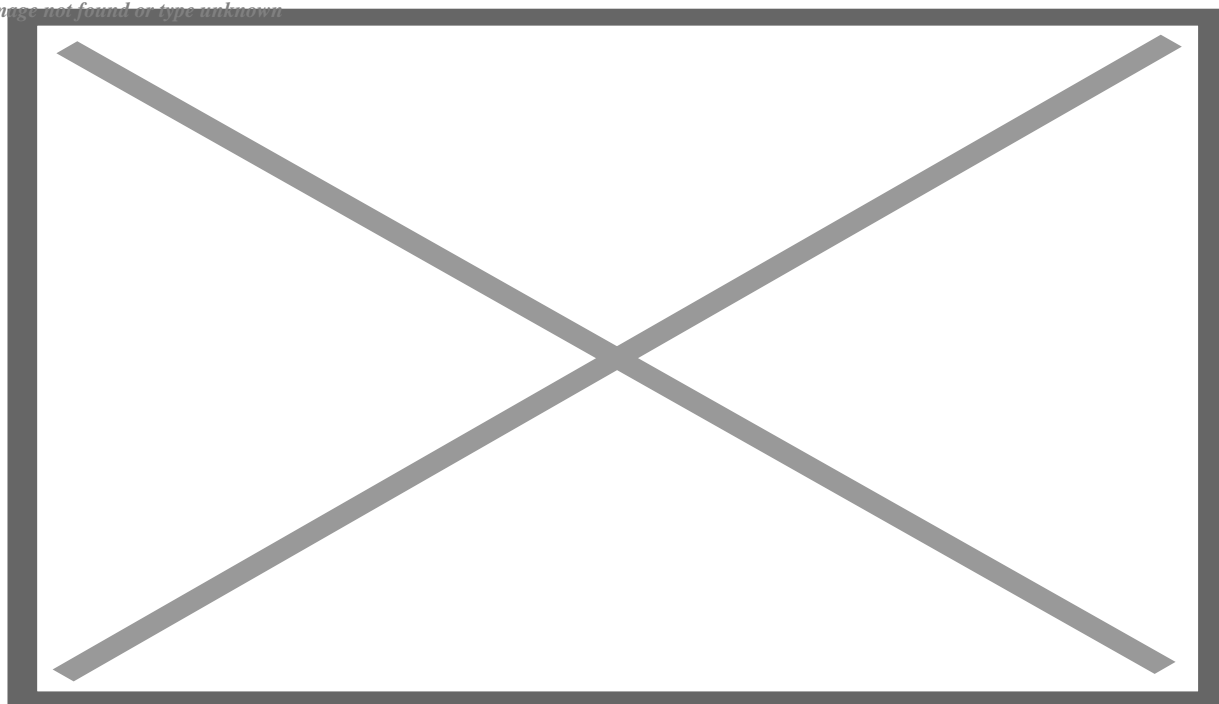


United Nations Human Rights Council resolution demands that Israel be held accountable for war crimes

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Geneva, April 6 (RHC)-- The United Nations Human Rights Council has adopted a resolution, calling for a halt to all arms sales to Israel, and for the regime to be held accountable for possible war crimes in the Gaza Strip. The resolution was passed on Friday with 28 votes in favor, six against, and 13 abstentions. Israel's staunch allies, the U.S. and Germany, were among those opposed to the resolution.

The strongly worded text urged countries to "cease the sale, transfer and diversion of arms, munitions and other military equipment to Israel... to prevent further violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights." It also highlighted that the International Court of Justice ruled in January "that there is a plausible risk of genocide" in Gaza.

The resolution, which was brought forward by Pakistan on behalf of all Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states except Albania, stressed "the need to ensure accountability for all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in order to end impunity."

It also expressed "grave concern at reports of serious human rights violations and grave breaches of international humanitarian law, including of possible war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory." The resolution also called for "an immediate ceasefire" and "for immediate emergency humanitarian access and assistance." It also demanded Israel to end its occupation of all Palestinian territories and "immediately lift its blockade on the Gaza Strip and all other forms of collective punishment."

Gaza, home to over two million Palestinians, has been under Israeli siege since June 2007. Since last October, Israel has tightened what was already a crushing siege, ordering a "complete siege".

The Friday's resolution warned in particular "against any large-scale military operations in the city of Rafah" where nearly more than half of Gaza's population have sought shelter from Israeli strikes elsewhere in the strip, and called on countries to "prevent the continued forcible transfer of Palestinians within and from Gaza."

The resolution also decried "the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare in Gaza", where the UN has warned of a looming famine.

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