

Colombia seeks to join Gaza genocide case against Israel at International Court of Justice

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Bogota, April 6 (RHC)-- Colombia has asked the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to allow the country to join South Africa's case accusing Israel of genocide in the Gaza Strip. In its application to the court on Friday, Colombia called on the ICJ to ensure "the safety and, indeed, the very existence of the Palestinian people."

“Colombia is deploying efforts directed at fighting the scourge of genocide and, as a result, making sure Palestinians enjoy their right to exist as a people,” the document said.

“Colombia’s ultimate goal in this endeavour is to ensure the urgent and fullest possible protection for Palestinians in Gaza, in particular such vulnerable populations as women, children, persons with disabilities and the elderly,” the Colombian declaration added.

The ICJ, the highest United Nations court, may allow states to intervene in cases and give their views. Several states, such as Ireland, have said they would also seek to intervene in the case, but so far, only Colombia and Nicaragua have filed a public request.

“Colombia is seeking to actively intervene in the process, supporting South Africa. It’s hoping to offer tangible support to the Palestinian cause while also sending a message to Israel that it cannot continue with its actions in Gaza,” said Al Jazeera’s Alessandro Rametti, reporting from Bogota on Friday.

“This is not a surprising stance given what we have heard from the president of Colombia, Gustavo Petro ... Since the start of the war, he has denounced Israel; he was the first South American president to talk about genocide, denouncing the actions in Gaza by Israel.”

Last week, ICJ judges ordered Israel to take all necessary and effective action to ensure basic food supplies arrive without delay to Palestinians in Gaza. In January, The Hague-based ICJ, also known as the World Court, ordered Israel to refrain from any acts that could fall under the Genocide Convention and ensure its troops commit no genocidal acts against Palestinians in Gaza.

Israel’s offensive in Gaza has killed at least 33,091 people, mostly women and children, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have also been displaced, and aid organisations warn that the strip is on the brink of famine.

Israel’s military campaign in Gaza has brought “relentless death and destruction” to Palestinians, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said earlier on Friday in a speech marking six months since the war in Gaza started.

Israel denies targeting Palestinian civilians, saying its sole interest is to annihilate the group Hamas.

South Africa brought its case accusing Israel of state-led genocide in Gaza in December. Lawyers for Israel have dismissed it as an abuse of the Genocide Convention.

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