

*South Africa calls for
investigation into assassination of
Ismail Haniyeh*

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Pretoria, August 2 (RHC)-- South Africa has strongly condemned Israel's assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, head of the political bureau of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, in Tehran. In a statement released on Thursday, the South African Foreign Ministry said it is concerned that the assassination of Haniyeh and the continuous targeting of civilians in Gaza will further spiral the already tense situation in the entire region.

"South Africa urges that a thorough investigation be conducted and calls on all parties to exercise the utmost restraint to avoid any acts that would escalate tensions in the particularly fragile region," the

statement read.

South African Foreign Minister Ronald Lamola also said Haniyeh's assassination was extrajudicial killing and violated the international law. "Such acts of extrajudicial killings violate international law and the principles of human rights, undermining global efforts to promote peace and stability in the Middle East," the top diplomat said.

"Any form of extrajudicial killing is a blatant violation of these principles and extra judicial killings of this nature have a destabilizing effect. It is crucial that the perpetrators of such actions must be brought to justice."

Lamola said Haniyeh's assassination occurred in the context of the months-long slack in Gaza, where the ongoing Israeli onslaught has killed more than 39,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children. He said Haniyeh was an integral member of the negotiating team, working with mediators to secure a permanent ceasefire and bring the war to Gaza to an end.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Lamola said Israeli's continued occupation, destruction of infrastructure, collective punishment and extrajudicial assassinations would make the realization of a peaceful solution in West Asia much more difficult to achieve.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also strongly denounced Israel for flagrantly violating international laws in the "extra-territorial killing" of Haniyeh. "I believe the entire world has condemned it [Haniyeh's killing] in the strongest words," Sharif said while chairing a meeting of the parliamentary members of his ruling coalition government on Thursday.

"An extra-territorial killing was conducted in which Ismail Haniyeh was martyred through a rocket," he said, regretting that international laws were violated in the act. The premier regretted the world's "silence" over the incident, saying that it was a time for reflection for the international community. Sharif also strongly criticized Israel for committing acts of barbarity in Gaza. He said Israel had violated United Nations Security Council resolutions repeatedly since last year, lamenting that the entity was not stopping its military offensive in Palestine despite the International Court of Justice describing its actions as "genocide."

Separately, Pakistan's Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch on Thursday denounced Israel's act of assassinating Haniyeh, saying that it was an act of "dangerous escalation." Baloch said Israel had unleashed a "campaign of terror" against the Palestinian people since October 2023. "Its war on Gaza and the inhumane siege in violation of international human rights and humanitarian law have resulted in misery, death and destruction."

"These acts constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. We call upon the United Nations to uphold international law and to bring an end to the genocide of the people of Gaza," she added.

Pakistan's said on Wednesday the killing of Hamas's political leader was a "reckless act".

Describing the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh as "terrorism", Islamabad's foreign ministry said in a statement that "Pakistan views with serious concern the growing Israeli adventurism in the region."

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