

Amnesty International accuses Israel of committing genocide in Gaza



London, December 5 (RHC)-- The Human rights group Amnesty International has concluded that Israel's war on Gaza meets the legal threshold for genocide in a damning new report.

The report published on Thursday, titled, "You Feel Like You Are Subhuman": Israel's Genocide Against Palestinians in Gaza, is the culmination of months of research by Amnesty, including extensive witness interviews, analysis of "visual and digital evidence", including satellite imagery, and statements made by senior Israeli government and military officials.

Amnesty said the Israeli military has committed at least three of the five acts banned by the 1948 Genocide Convention, including indiscriminate killings of civilians, causing serious bodily or mental harm, and "deliberately inflicting on Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction".

“Month after month, Israel has treated Palestinians in Gaza as a subhuman group unworthy of human rights and dignity, demonstrating its intent to physically destroy them,” said Agnes Callamard, secretary-general of Amnesty International.

“Our research reveals that, for months, Israel has persisted in committing genocidal acts, fully aware of the irreparable harm it was inflicting on Palestinians in Gaza,” Callamard said.

“It continued to do so in defiance of countless warnings about the catastrophic humanitarian situation and of legally binding decisions from the International Court of Justice [ICJ] ordering Israel to take immediate measures to enable the provision of humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza,” she said.

“Our damning findings must serve as a wake-up call to the international community: this is genocide. It must stop now,” she added.

Callamard said that taking into “account the pre-existing context of dispossession, apartheid and unlawful military occupation” in which the Israeli military’s crimes against the civilian population of Gaza have been committed, “we could find only one reasonable conclusion: Israel’s intent is the physical destruction of Palestinians in Gaza”.

‘Seismic, shameful failure’

The Israeli military’s argument that it is lawfully targeting Hamas and other fighters who are located among the civilian population of Gaza – and that it is not deliberately targeting the Palestinian people – does not stand up to scrutiny, Amnesty said.

“The presence of Hamas fighters near or within a densely populated area does not absolve Israel from its obligations to take all feasible precautions to spare civilians and avoid indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks,” the rights group said.

“Regardless of whether Israel sees the destruction of Palestinians as instrumental to destroying Hamas or as an acceptable by-product of this goal, this view of Palestinians as disposable and not worthy of consideration is in itself evidence of genocidal intent,” it said.

Amnesty also said that it found “no evidence” that the reported diversion of humanitarian aid by armed groups in Gaza “could explain Israel’s extreme and deliberate restrictions on life-saving humanitarian aid” to the civilian population of the war-torn territory.

Officials in Israel have consistently rejected allegations of committing genocide in Gaza, claiming they are acting in self-defence following the Hamas-led October 7 attacks and that criticising their war is anti-Semitic.

The Amnesty report, however, also states that the crimes documented in Gaza were often “preceded by officials urging their implementation.”

More than 100 statements by Israeli military and government officials were reviewed in the report that “dehumanised Palestinians, called for or justified genocidal acts or other crimes against them.”

Of those statements, 22 were made by senior officials in charge of managing the war on Gaza and “appeared to call for, or justify, genocidal acts, providing direct evidence of genocidal intent.”

“This language was frequently replicated, including by Israeli soldiers on the ground” who made calls to “erase” Gaza and celebrated “the destruction of Palestinian homes, mosques, schools and universities”, Amnesty said.

Amnesty's Callamard said the international community was also guilty of a "seismic, shameful failure" in Gaza by failing to "press Israel to end its atrocities".

By delaying calls for a ceasefire in Gaza and continuing to send weapons to Israel, the international community's failure "will remain a stain on our collective conscience", Callamard said. "Governments must stop pretending they are powerless to end this genocide, which was enabled by decades of impunity for Israel's violations of international law," she said.

"States need to move beyond mere expressions of regret or dismay and take strong and sustained international action, however uncomfortable a finding of genocide may be for some of Israel's allies."

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