

Brazilian court orders probe against vacationing Israeli soldier over Gaza war crimes



A child walks through the destruction left by Israeli attacks on Khan Yunis, in the Gaza Strip, on September 12, 2024. (Photo by AP)

Brasilia, January 6 (RHC)-- A Brazilian court has directed police to investigate an Israeli soldier, currently vacationing in Brazil, over war crimes in the Gaza Strip, where the regime's genocide has killed a shocking number of Palestinians over the past 15 months.

The Hind Rajab Foundation (HRF) -- named after the six-year-old Palestinian girl who was tragically killed last year along with half a dozen relatives and rescue workers by Israeli troops -- announced in a statement on Saturday that the probe order followed a complaint by the Belgium-based advocacy group.

It said Brazil's Federal District Court ordered the police to take action against Yuval Vagdani, who is currently in Brazil on vacation, saying he had participated in "massive demolitions of civilian homes in Gaza during a systematic campaign of destruction."

In a follow-up statement, the HRF said it had received reports that the Tel Aviv regime was seeking to smuggle Vagdani out of Brazil. "We call on Brazilian authorities to fulfill their responsibilities, protect their judicial process, and ensure justice prevails," it added.

"This is a historic moment," said Dyab Abou Jahjah, the group's chair. "It sets a powerful precedent for holding war criminals accountable."

Riad Abu Badwia, a professor of international law, explained that Brazil, as a signatory to the Rome Statute, has the legal authority to prosecute individuals involved in war crimes.

The Brazilian court's decision could inspire other countries to follow suit and open the door for broader international accountability for Israeli military officials, Abu Badwia added.

On January 29, 2024, Hind had been traveling in a car with her uncle, his wife, and their four children, fleeing fighting in the neighborhood of Tel al-Hawa in Gaza City, when they came under Israeli fire.

Trapped in the bullet-ridden vehicle and surrounded by her dead relatives, the little girl phoned emergency services and, over more than three hours begged for help, saying that an Israeli tank appeared to be closing in.

First responders were deployed in a bid to save Hind, but the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) soon lost contact with them, along with Hind. Twelve days later, the bodies of Hind and her relatives were found lying in the car. Just meters away, a burned-out ambulance was found with the remains of the two paramedics who tried to save the girl.

Israel launched its brutal Gaza onslaught on October 7, 2023, after the Palestinian Hamas resistance group carried out a historic operation against the usurping entity in retaliation for its intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people.

So far, the occupying regime has killed at least 45,717 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured 108,856 others, in the besieged territory.

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