

# *Iranian foreign minister says systematic human rights violations taking place against Palestinians*

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**Iran's foreign minister has denounced Israel's systematic human rights violations and disregard for international law**

Tehran, May 17 (RHC)-- Iran's foreign minister has denounced Israel's systematic human rights violations and disregard for international law as the regime's relentless bombardment of the besieged Gaza Strip enters its seventh consecutive day.

“Innocent men, women and children are being massacred by the deadliest and most sophisticated weapons. Homes are being demolished while their residents are trapped inside. Whatever remains of the infrastructure in Gaza—including power and water supply—is effectively destroyed,” Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Sunday, addressing an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) that was held virtually.

Zarif said the massacre followed the purported “normalization” of ties between certain Arab countries and Israel. The minister argued that “friendly gestures” are proven to aggravate the criminal and genocidal regime’s atrocities against Palestinians. He maintained that the sole aim of Israel’s hypocritical gestures is to divide Muslims and isolate the people of Palestine.

“Make no mistake: Israel only understands the language of resistance and the people of Palestine are fully entitled to the right to defend themselves and to defy the bullying of this racist regime,” the foreign minister stated.

Israel’s continued aerial bombardment of Gaza has so far killed at least 188 Palestinians, including 55 children and 33 women. According to Gaza’s Health Ministry, some 1,230 people have also been injured.

Yousef Abu al-Rish, the deputy minister of health in Gaza, said Israel’s Sunday bombardment targeted and blocked roads leading to hospitals in Gaza, including al-Shifa Hospital. He added that the attacks “impede regular patient movements, and prevent the wounded from obtaining health services.”

The top Iranian diplomat urged the international community to condemn the Israeli regime in the strongest terms and force it to end the destruction and siege of Gaza, calling on the OIC member states to press the UN to urgently convene an emergency session of the General Assembly to address the issue.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Zarif stressed that “the Islamic Republic of Iran, as always, extends its hand of friendship to all of you,” adding that Tehran is ready to set aside all differences and unite in defending the rights of the people of Palestine.

He said the abhorrent approach of some Western governments to equate victims and culprits “compels us to look at our shortcomings in pressuring our common cause.” He then presented a number of plans to uphold the Palestinian cause, such as devising an “institutionalized” legal and political campaign against this “apartheid Zionist regime” at regional and international levels, and establishing a professional international watchdog to monitor and report on the crimes committed against Palestinians in order to bring the culprits to justice.

“We should also pass domestic legislation and a resolution by this organization recognizing that Israel is an apartheid regime,” Zarif said, adding that Israel’s criminal acts should be recognized as genocide and crimes against humanity by both domestic legislation and OIC resolutions.

The Iranian minister also said the OIC member states should extend the jurisdiction of their national tribunals to include the prosecution of criminals perpetrating war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity in the occupied territories.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, among others, also addressed the virtual meeting. He condemned Israel’s “flagrant violations” of Palestinian rights and called on the international community to act urgently to put an end to the hostilities.

The UN Security Council is scheduled to meet on Sunday to discuss the issue, after the US objected to a request by China, Norway and Tunisia for a public, virtual meeting of the Council two days earlier, on Friday, despite the continued onslaught adding to the death toll in Gaza each day.

The United States, the closest ally of Israel, has repeatedly backed the apartheid regime’s acts of brutality as its “right to self-defense.” Washington has failed to even criticize Israel’s bombardment of Al Jalaa

tower in Gaza, which housed offices of Al Jazeera, the Associated Press, along with Arab and local press.

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