

UN report confirms Israel is persecuting Palestinian people

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United Nations, October 20 (RHC)-- A United Nations human rights expert has slammed Israel's "apartheid practices" in the occupied Palestinian territories, saying the Tel Aviv regime's actions against Palestinians amount to "persecution."

Francesca Albanese, the UN special rapporteur for the occupied Palestinian territories, made the remarks in a report released this week, which details Israeli efforts to stamp out the Palestinian collective identity and sovereignty. "Realizing the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination requires dismantling once and for all the Israeli settler-colonial occupation and its apartheid practices," she said.

Albanese also documented the use of lethal force against journalists and humanitarian workers critical of Israel, as she pointed to the recent detention order against French-Palestinian human rights defender Salah Hammouri, who has been held in Israeli jails under the policy of so-called administrative detention since March.

According to the report, almost 4,500 Palestinians are currently detained, 730 under the practice of administrative detention, in which Israel keeps the detainees without charge for up to six months, a period that can be extended an infinite number of times.

Children as young as 12 have been victims of arbitrary arrest and detention, the report said, adding that 500 to 700 minors were arrested by the Israeli regime every year. Albanese further pointed to the closure of seven Palestinian civil society rights groups' offices by Israeli forces in the West Bank in August, calling the move an abuse of counter-terrorism legislation.

"This appears to be an attempt to further shrink, if not outright ban, space for human rights monitoring and legal opposition to the Israeli occupation in the Palestinian territory," she said, arguing that it was time for a "paradigm shift" in Israel's relations with the international community.

The UN special rapporteur also criticized efforts by some regional states to normalize ties with Israel, calling the peacemaking attempts "ineffective" due to the fact that "they have not focused their approaches on human rights, particularly the right to self-determination, and have overlooked the settler-colonial underpinnings of the Israeli occupation."

She also called on the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to release an updated database of businesses involved in Israeli settlements.

Albanese further urged all countries to demand an immediate end to Israel's illegal occupation of the West Bank and a return of all land and resources from and of which the Palestinian people have been displaced and dispossessed, independent of any negotiations between Israel and Palestine to settle the conflict.

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