

Top UN court to hear South Africa's call to halt Israel's Rafah offensive

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A man waves a Palestinian flag as people protest on the day of a public hearing held by The

International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, Netherlands (Photo by Reuters)

The Hague, May 16 (RHC)-- South Africa will urge the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to order Israel to halt its Rafah offensive as part of further emergency actions in response to the war in Gaza.

The ICJ is set to hear South Africa's two-day petition on Thursday and Friday at the Peace Palace in The Hague, after the country last week asked for additional emergency measures to protect Rafah.

"As the overwhelming evidence demonstrates, the very manner in which Israel is pursuing its military operations in Rafah, and elsewhere in Gaza, is itself genocidal," threatening the "very survival of Palestinians," South Africa said in its submission.

Earlier this month, Pretoria submitted a request to the ICJ for three urgent orders, known as "provisional measures," as it probes into Israel's violations of the 1948 UN Genocide Convention.

The first order seeks an immediate cessation of Israel's military offensive in Rafah.

The second order demands that the Israeli regime grant the ICJ unrestricted access to Gaza for UN officials, humanitarian organizations, journalists, and investigators. The UN says that Israel has disregarded and breached previous court rulings.

Lastly, South Africa has asked the court to ensure that Israel provides a report on the actions taken to comply with these orders.

The court was also asked to order Israel to implement all necessary actions to ensure "unimpeded" access of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

In the ongoing case brought by South Africa, which accuses Israel of acts of genocide against Palestinians, the ICJ in January ordered Israel to refrain from any acts that could fall under the 1949 Genocide Convention and to ensure its troops commit no genocidal acts against Palestinians.

The Israeli regime will issue a response on Friday. It has previously described South Africa's case as "wholly unfounded" and "morally repugnant." In previous filings, the regime claimed it had stepped up efforts to get humanitarian aid into Gaza as the ICJ had ordered.

The orders of the International Court of Justice are legally binding, yet lack significant enforcement mechanisms.

Several countries, including Egypt, Turkey and Colombia, have now formally requested to join the case against Israel.

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