

UN rights experts say Israel will become a pariah state over Gaza genocide

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United Nations, September 17 (RHC)-- United Nations human rights experts have warned that Israel risks becoming an international "pariah" over its "genocide" in Gaza, suggesting that the country's UN membership could be called into question.

On Monday, several independent UN experts decried what they said was Israel's escalating violence and rights violations in Gaza and the occupied West Bank, its disregard for international court rulings and its verbal attacks on the UN itself.

The rapporteurs, who are appointed by the UN Human Rights Council but who do not speak on behalf of the UN, also slammed Western countries' "double standards" in the devastating war and said Israel needed to face consequences for its actions.

"I think it is unavoidable for Israel to become a pariah in the face of its continuous, relentless, vilifying assault of the United Nations, on top of millions of Palestinians," said Francesca Albanese, the UN special rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories, citing verbal and military attacks on UN facilities in Gaza.

"Should there be a consideration of its membership as part of this organisation, which Israel seems to have zero respect for?"

The humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza after more than 11 months of conflict has also prompted questions about Western states' longstanding political and military support for Israel, including from the United States and the United Kingdom, which both provide arms.

"Shockingly, in the face of the abyss reached in [occupied Palestinian territory] ... most member states remained inactive at best, or actively aiding and assisting Israel's criminal conduct," Albanese told a news conference in Geneva on Monday, repeating allegations of genocide. Albanese, an Italian lawyer, said she was referring to Western states as well as some Gulf nations and others.

Israel denies allegations of genocide and says that it takes steps to reduce the risk of harm to civilians and that at least a third of the 41,118 Palestinians killed in Gaza were fighters.

Israel's permanent mission to the UN in Geneva criticised Albanese after her comments. "She is not fit to hold any position at the United Nations, and this has been made clear by many," it said.

Albanese was joined by three other UN independent experts who accused Western countries of hypocrisy and double standards, for example by being more vocal about human rights violations by Russia since its invasion of Ukraine than about Israel's actions in Gaza.

George Katrougalos, the UN special rapporteur on the promotion of democratic and equitable international order, also called for Israel to be held to the same standards as all countries. He condemned its repeated attacks on critical UN officials or agencies.

"We cannot anymore stand this kind of double standards and hypocrisy," Katrougalos told reporters. "I hope that it is not going to continue ... I trust that the progressive and democratic citizens of Israel would not let their country become a pariah like South Africa had become during the times of apartheid."

The experts are among dozens of independent human rights specialists mandated by the UN to report and advise on specific themes and crises. Their views do not reflect those of the global body as a whole.

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