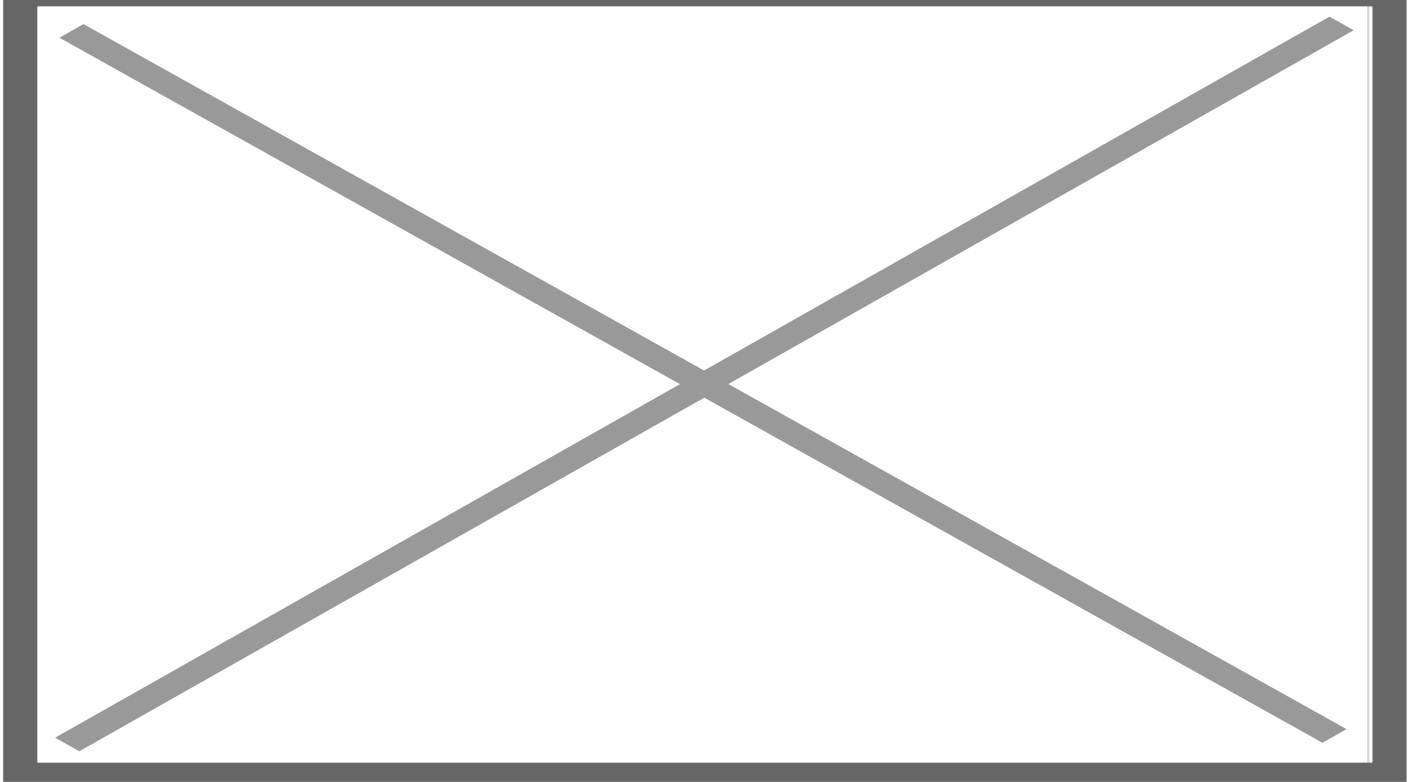


Israel slams UN probe on deliberate attacks to destroy Gaza's health system

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Wounded Palestinians, including children, are brought to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah.

United Nations, October 11 (RHC)-- Israel has slammed as "outrageous" a United Nations inquiry which concluded it was deliberately seeking to destroy the healthcare system in the Gaza Strip, accusing the investigators of bias. The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry (CoI) on Thursday released a report in which it found Israel "perpetrated a concerted policy to destroy Gaza's healthcare system".

In a statement from its mission in Geneva, Israel on Friday firmly rejected the allegations. “This latest report is another blatant attempt by the CoI to delegitimise the very existence of the State of Israel and obstruct its right to protect its population, while covering up the crimes of terrorist organisations,” the statement said.

Israel has claimed that Palestinian armed group Hamas uses hospitals for military purposes. Israeli forces have repeatedly attacked medical facilities in Gaza with the health sector already overwhelmed and infrastructure destroyed.

“This report shamelessly portrays Israel’s operations in terror-infested health facilities in Gaza as a matter of policy against Gaza’s health system,” the Israeli statement said. Israel also rejected the report’s findings pointing to widespread and systematic abuse of Palestinian prisoners amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Multiple UN officials and reports have said that Israel has arrested thousands of Palestinians during its war on Gaza and stands accused of numerous cases of torture, noting allegations of widespread abuse of prisoners being held incommunicado in arbitrary, prolonged detention, as well as the sexual abuse of men and women.

Yet, Israel accused the commission of creating an “alternate reality”, and thereby contributing to “the exacerbation of this conflict”.

“We call on states to speak out against this prejudiced approach, which only serves to further stain the credibility of the Human Rights Council and the United Nations at large,” it said. The report is the second published by the three-person commission since the Hamas-led October 7 attack that started the current conflict. The commission was established by the UN Human Rights Council in May 2021 to investigate alleged international law violations in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Separately, UN special rapporteurs issued a joint statement on Friday warning that the “international legal order is breaking down in the face of these atrocities” in the occupied Palestinian territory. “The world faces the most profound crisis since the end of World War II,” the group of experts said, adding that the “brutal escalation of violence” has resulted in “genocidal attacks, ethnic cleansing and collective punishment of Palestinians, which risks breaking down the international multilateral system”.

The legal tools employed to address the situation have so far failed to yield their desired results.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor’s application for arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and others linked to the war on Gaza remains outstanding, while provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to prevent genocidal acts in Gaza remain unfulfilled.

“Defiant in the face of overwhelming public sentiment across the international community, Israel continues to act with brazen disregard for international law and order,” the statement said.

The failure to halt Israel’s actions in Gaza “not only enabled the continuation of unprecedented brutality but widened it to the broader region, setting Lebanon ablaze with violence and destruction.” The signatory experts, including Francesca Albanese, special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories, demanded that “everyone, state actors and individuals alike, prioritise respect for international law and human rights without discrimination and double standards”.



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