

UN expert says ICC should issue more arrest warrants for Israeli authorities over Gaza genocide

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Geneva, November 21 (RHC)-- A United Nations legal expert has censured world leaders for failing to bring an end to the Israeli regime's "colonial erasure" of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, calling for more arrest warrants to be issued for the occupying entity's authorities over war crimes in the besieged territory.

Francesca Albanese, the UN special rapporteur on the rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, denounced in an interview with UK-based media website Middle East Eye (MEE) the delay by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in issuing arrest warrants for Israeli leaders over Gaza atrocities.

"The International Criminal Court should have acted much earlier," Albanese said, referring to an investigation opened in 2021 by the Hague-based court into Israel's war crimes and crimes against humanity. In a request six months ago, ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan applied for arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and then minister of military affairs Yoav Gallant.

"We should have seen these people before the International Criminal Court ... This is what justice is about," Albanese said, adding that the ICC should seek more arrest warrants. "There should be more in the dock, in my view. And it's taking ages. This is because the political pressure on the international justice system is extreme and we see pressure on the prosecutor, pressure on the judges," she added.

"Israel was trying to obstruct it by moving exceptions against the independence of the judges. And the US was making pressure through open threats."

The Italian human rights lawyer also proposed a "totality triple lens" approach to inferring Israel's genocidal intent within the framework of a holistic approach that looks at the bigger picture of the regime's accountability. "It's the totality of the genocidal violence, the destructive violence that has been unleashed against the totality of the Palestinians in the totality of the land that Israel militarily controls," Albanese told MEE.

"That gives the broader picture, which inscribes itself in the long trajectory of colonial erasure that Israel has practiced on the Palestinians."

'Genocide denier'

Elsewhere in her interview with MEE, the Italian human rights lawyer called British Foreign Secretary David Lammy a "genocide denier" as she demanded that Europe halt trade with Israel. Lammy had claimed that Israel was not committing genocide in Gaza because millions of people had not been killed.

"It's not the numbers of those killed that determines whether or not there is genocide, and any lawyer would know that," Albanese said. "I hadn't realized that Mr. Lammy was a lawyer. As a politician, you might say that for political convenience."

Backed by the United States and its Western allies, Israel launched a devastating war on the besieged Gaza Strip on October 7 last year, after Palestinian resistance groups carried out a surprise retaliatory operation into the occupied territories.

So far, the regime has killed at least 43,972 Palestinians, most of them women, children, and adolescents, and injured more than 104,000 others.

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