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## **Assassination of Hamas Leader in Lebanon**

# **Israel's Desperate Measures Are Cowardly and Will Backfire**



**Demonstration in Tubas, West Bank following the assassination of Al-Aroui, January 2, 2024.**

Israel's desperation to wipe out the political organization known as Hamas has now led to the cowardly assassination of Hamas leader Saleh al-Aroui on January 2 in Dahieh, the southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon. The attack also killed six others.

CPC(M-L) expresses profound condolences to Saleh al-Aroui's fellow political activists and resistance fighters, to his family and the entire Palestinian people and resistance. Saleh al-Aroui, 57 years old, was Deputy Head of the Political Bureau of Hamas and a key founder of its military arm the Martyr Izz El-Din Al-Qassam Brigades, with specific responsibility for Hamas' work in the West Bank. Resistance News Network informs, "A freed prisoner who spent 18 years in Zionist prisons, Arouri, from Aroua in Ramallah, was instrumental in uniting the fields, galvanizing the escalating resistance in the West Bank, and establishing the Shalit prisoner exchange deal in 2011. He leaves behind a legacy of defiance and resilience, and an indelible influence on the regional resistance."



**Saleh al-Aroui**

Al-Aroui was "at the heart of the negotiations" conducted by Qatar and Egypt, Hamas said. His cowardly assassination reveals the Israeli intention to not permit an end to its murderous campaign in Gaza and now also in the West Bank.

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh said the Palestinian organization is "more powerful and determined" following the attack. [Those martyred by Israel have] left behind them strong men who will carry the banner after them."

Hamas politburo member Husam Badran said in a eulogy for al-Aroui: "We say to the criminal occupation that the battle between us is open."

Similarly, all the Palestinian resistance organizations issued statements honouring al-Arouri and condemning Israel for its cowardly act.

The Lebanese resistance organization Hezbollah called the strike "a serious attack on Lebanon, its people, its security, sovereignty and resistance," *Al Jazeera* reported. "We affirm that this crime will never pass without response and punishment," Hezbollah said.

Following the assassination, Lebanon's interim Prime Minister Najib Mikati warned that "The explosion is an Israeli crime that clearly aims to bring Lebanon into a new phase of confrontations after the ongoing daily attacks in the south."

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said Arouri's killing would "ignite another surge in the veins of resistance and the motivation to fight against the Zionist occupiers."

The politburo of Yemen's Ansarullah revolutionary group also condemned "the heinous assassination," giving the view that Israel would not have dared to carry it out without U.S. support and approval. Ansarullah said that the assassination "reflects the level of bankruptcy, degradation, and criminality" that the Israeli occupation has reached.

As news of the assassination spread, hundreds of Palestinians protested in the West Bank to condemn al-Arouri's killing. A general strike was announced for January 3, and many shops and businesses remained closed across the territory. All schools and public institutions were closed to mourn al-Arouri's death.



**General strike in West Bank, January 3, 2024, following assassination of al-Arouri.**

While Israel has not taken responsibility for the assassination, media in Israel splashed headlines about Saleh al-Arouri's "elimination" across the front pages of their newspapers.

*Al Jazeera* reports that Israeli officials are said to have been ordered not to discuss the killing of al-Arouri. It reports an Israeli military spokesman saying, "we are on high readiness for any scenario."

*Al Jazeera's* Nida Ibrahim reported from the city of Arouri that Palestinians believe that Israel assassinated al-Arouri "to show its people a victory which it cannot guarantee in the besieged Gaza Strip."

This is the truth of the matter. The state of Israel, the U.S. and all those countries who are supporting their criminal acts under all kinds of fraudulent pretexts have lost all moral authority

and are seriously endangering the peoples of the entire region and world peace. Their attempts to control the region's trade, transportation, security and communications routes and corridors and those of all of Africa and Asia by destroying whoever refuses to submit will not succeed. The peoples of the world are rising to speak in their own names. The Zionists and those who support them financially, militarily and in terms of disinformation are being held to account. The resistance has proven that it is an organized force which wields the collective intelligence made up of both the historical memory of ancient peoples and the fighting spirit of the youth and generations which are imbued with their peoples' right to resist, to fight and to win.

Provocations against Lebanon and Iran, or attacks against the Yemeni resistance and support for the people of Palestine being slaughtered by Israel will backfire. The assassins of Saleh al-Arouri and all the Palestinian martyrs and those who have been killed for supporting their cause will be defeated. The Palestinian resistance is a force to be reckoned with. It will win. Ceasefire Now!



**Building in Dahieh, the southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon where al-Arouri was killed.**

### **Urgency of Increasing Support for the Palestinian Resistance**

Even as they refuse to stop supporting Israel or funding the crimes it is committing against humanity, the U.S. and big European powers are now all riled up against a broadening of the regional war in the Middle East. Kandice Ardiel, a spokesperson for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) said any potential escalation could have devastating consequences for people on both sides of the demarcation line dividing Lebanon from Israel and the Golan Heights known as the Blue Line.

Meanwhile, an unnamed U.S. Defense Department official told Agence France Presse on January 3 that "The strike was an Israeli strike." Further details were not provided. However, two days after al-Arouri was assassinated, the U.S. carried out a targeted assassination in Baghdad, via drone strike, of Iraqi resistance leader Mushtaq Taleb al-Saidi of the organization Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba. Al-Nujaba is part of what is known as the Axis of Resistance, that includes Iran's Quds Force and Lebanon's Hezbollah. Also in Iran, on January 3, a commemoration for Lieutenant General Qasem Soleimani, was attacked with two explosions.

CPC(M-L) condemns the January 3 terrorist attacks in Iran. Two separate explosions left at least 84 people dead and 285 injured, some critically, in the Iranian city of Kerman where many people were taking part in the fourth martyrdom anniversary of Lieutenant General Qasem Soleimani. The first blast took place 700 metres away from Soleimani's tomb and the second explosion happened one kilometre away from it. Such acts of terror instigated by the refusal of the big powers to solve problems by peaceful means underscore the failure of their hegemonic projects as well as the dangers they pose to the peoples of the world.

Hezbollah Leader Hassan Sayyed Nasrallah addressed al-Arouri's assassination in a speech in

Beirut on January 3. This speech had been scheduled in December, before the assassination of al-Arouri, to mark the fourth anniversary of the assassination of Iranian Lieutenant General Soleimani by a U.S. drone strike in Baghdad, Iraq on January 3, 2020. Nasrallah had previously issued a clear warning to Israel against carrying out assassinations on Lebanese soil, vowing a "severe reaction" in response to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's explicit threat in August 2023 to assassinate al-Arouri. In Nasrallah's January 3 speech he once again warned Israel, explaining that when Hezbollah, on October 8, joined the fight against the Zionists to support the Palestinian people and resistance in Gaza, it did so in a regulated way, consistent with Lebanese national interests. These limits will disappear should the Zionists wage an all-out war on Lebanon, he said.

Further indicating Israel's recourse to assassination against those who oppose its Zionist reaction, in December 2023, Israeli media published leaked recordings from Ronen Bar, the head of Israel's internal security agency Shin Bet, pledging to locate and take out Hamas leaders "in every location" in the world, including Lebanon, Turkiye and Qatar. "It will take a few years, but we will be there in order to do it," he said in recordings aired by the Kan public broadcaster. "This is our Munich," he added, referring to a series of Israeli assassinations in the 1970s that targeted Palestinians involved in killing 11 Israelis at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

The U.S., on January 4, deployed its criminal Secretary of State Antony Blinken to visit Israel and other countries in the region. While Blinken's agenda has not been revealed, on January 3 a U.S. State Department spokesperson dismissed South Africa's filing of an application instituting proceedings against Israel at the International Court of Justice for the crime of genocide. "Those are allegations that should not be made lightly [...] we are not seeing any acts that constitute genocide [...] That is a determination by the State Department."

On the basis of facts Israel stands accused of genocide.

***All Out to Support the Palestinian Resistance!  
Ceasefire Now!***



**Protest in West Bank, January 2, 2024, following assassination of Al-Arouri**

## Leader of Lebanese Resistance Warns Israel Against Waging All-Out War on Lebanon



*The following report is taken from the coverage by the Lebanese news channel Al Manar of the speech delivered by Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah, Secretary General of the Lebanese political organization and resistance movement Hezbollah on January 3.*

Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah condemned Israel for the assassination of Hamas leader Saleh al-Arouri in the Beirut suburb of Dahieh on January 2. He warned Israel against launching an all-out war on Lebanon, affirming that Hezbollah would return the fight in kind. The speech was originally scheduled to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the U.S. assassination of Iranian Lieutenant General Qasem Soleimani.

When Hezbollah decided to join the war on October 8, it did so to support the Palestinian people and resistance in face of the Zionist war on Gaza, Nasrallah stated. He said that up to this point, the operations carried out by Hezbollah are regulated in a way that abides by Lebanese national interests, but such limits will disappear if Israel decides to wage an all-out war. Hezbollah fighters are ready to confront all the military choices of the enemy, he added.

He went on to state that after the Al-Aqsa Flood Operation the Israelis and all their allies sought to use this as a pretext to wage an all-out war on Lebanon and the West Bank in addition to Gaza. However, Hezbollah's military readiness and preemptive actions prevented the implementation of this scheme, Nasrallah said.

He noted that there was discussion in the Israeli cabinet of plans to attack Lebanon, adding that one of the generals warned the political command against any involvement in an open war with Hezbollah to avoid the massive destruction of Gush Dan area (Tel Aviv and its surroundings), where three-quarters of Israelis live.

Nasrallah reiterated, "War with Hezbollah will be very costly. Hezbollah is presently taking Lebanese interests and conditions into consideration, but the same interests will surpass all limits [on military action] if an all-out war is launched on Lebanon."

Nasrallah pointed out that the assassination of Hamas official Saleh al-Arouri in the southern suburb of Beirut is an aggression on Hamas command and Dahieh simultaneously. This attack on Dahieh, being the first since the 2006 war, is very dangerous, adding that all the Israeli indirect reassurances in this regard are rejected.

He reiterated Hezbollah's vow that this crime will not go unanswered and offered condolences on the martyrdom of al-Arouri, stressing that his life was one full of struggle and resistance.

## **Outcomes of Al-Aqsa Flood Operation**

The Hezbollah leader indicated that there were schemes, before Al-Aqsa Flood Operation, to stir sedition among the Palestinian factions in order to expel all the Palestinians from the Strip.

Sayyed Nasrallah underlined the importance of the Yemeni navy's role to block the passage of the Israeli-affiliated ships through the Red Sea.

Sayyed Nasrallah stressed that so far there have been numerous outcomes from the Al-Aqsa Flood Operation, concentrating on the major losses inflicted upon the Israeli enemy and mentioning the following:

The first outcome is revitalizing the Palestinian cause after it was about to be thrown into oblivion and solutions, such as the two-state solution, imposed.

The second outcome is Israel's failed bet that the Palestinian people and resistance are exhausted. The new generation has proven to be as committed to the Palestinian cause as the former ones.

The third outcome is the rise of the popular support for the resistance groups in Palestine despite the massacres and the attempt to blame the resistance for the Zionist crimes.

The fourth outcome is the fall of Israel's moral standing and image before the international community. During the last two decades, certain Arab media outlets tried to ameliorate the Zionist image, but the war on Gaza has shown Israel's criminality. He noted that U.S. surveys of youth in the U.S. show that 50 per cent of them think that Israel must be eradicated and the Palestinian people must regain their rights.

The fifth outcome is negating the path of normalization between some Arab regimes and the Zionist occupiers.

The sixth outcome is the appearance of the Israeli entity as the main violator of the international laws. Israel has violated all the international laws, he noted.

The seventh outcome is that the strategic deterrent power of Israel has been smashed. Hezbollah, the Palestinian and Iraqi resistance groups, and the Yemeni armed forces have proved that they are not deterred by the Zionist enemy and the United States.

The eighth outcome is overthrowing the information superiority of the Israeli enemy.

The ninth outcome is the Israeli failure to reach a swift victory.

The 10th outcome is the failure of the Israeli air force to settle the battle.

The 11th outcome is the eradication of the Israelis' trust in their command and army as well as the threat posed by the battle to the existence of the Israeli entity. The Al-Aqsa Flood Operation contributes mainly to the demise of the occupation entity. Hundreds of thousands of Zionists left occupied Palestine.

The 12th outcome is the eradication of the Israeli image of military capability and power which the Zionists use to try to lure some Arab regimes to sign agreements.

The 13th outcome is the military failure and the psychological repercussions of the war on the Israelis. Thousands of Israeli soldiers have been either killed or wounded on the Lebanon front, but

the enemy does not acknowledge that. Some 300,000 Zionists have requested psychological treatment since October 7, 2023, according to Ynet. Hundreds of thousands of Zionists were displaced from the north of occupied Palestine.

The 14th outcome is the Israeli failure to achieve any of its goals in the war.

The 15th outcome is the deepening internal strife among the Israelis.

The 16th outcome is smashing the image the U.S. claims for itself and showing that it is the main violator of international laws. It is the U.S. which is preventing a Gaza ceasefire.

The 17th outcome is the failure of the international organization to protect the civilians in Gaza. All the Lebanese must acknowledge that only power can protect them from the Israeli aggression.

### **Martyrdom of Soleimani and Al-Muhandis**

The Hezbollah Secretary General reiterated condolences and felicitations on the January 3, 2020 martyrdom of Iranian Lieutenant General Soleimani, Hajj Al-Muhandis and their Iraqi companions. He also condemned the terrorist attack on the commemoration of Soleimani near his grave site in Kerman, Iran.

Soleimani's martyrdom terrified the enemies of Iran and other countries in the region more than his presence, and the attack on the visitors to his tomb is the proof, Nasrallah noted. His image, might and determination are present in all fields of resistance.

Nasrallah clarified that one of the main features of Soleimani's loyalty to the resistance was that he helped every resistance group to reach self-sufficiency. "Iraqi paramilitary and resistance fighters found Martyr Soleimani as the main supporter. U.S. occupation forces were expelled from Iraq in 2011, thanks to the Iraqi resistance supported by Martyr Soleimani."

Nasrallah affirmed that Soleimani contributed mainly to sustaining ties among the resistance groups in the entire region under the title of "Axis of Resistance." He noted that Soleimani was keen on sustaining communication among the resistance groups in order to coordinate the engagement with the Israeli enemy, adding that resistance groups in the region act according to their national conditions, despite the strategic agreement on identifying the enemies, friends and targets.

In this regard, Nasrallah stressed that some journalists and politicians fail to understand the nature of the relations between Iran and the resistance groups and among the resistance groups themselves.

"The Axis of resistance is made up of leaders who take their decisions independently, not servants who obey regulations blindly."

Nasrallah also offered condolences on the death of Hezbollah official Hajj Mohammad Yaghi and the martyrdom of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps commander Sayyed Radhi Al-Moussawi in an Israeli attack on the Damascus countryside.

The Hezbollah General Secretary stated that he will deliver a speech on January 5, devoted mainly to the Lebanese front.

*(www.almanar.com.lb)*



# Resistance Never Dies!

– Samidoun –

Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network joins Palestinian prisoners, their organizations and institutions, those imprisoned and those released, in mourning the martyrdom and saluting the life in struggle of Palestinian national leader Sheikh Saleh al-Arouri and his comrades, including leaders Samir Afandi (Abu 'Amer) and Azzam al-Aqra', and the martyrs Zaki Shahin, Mohammed al-Reis, Mohammed Bshasha and Ahmed Hamoud, assassinated by the Zionist regime today, 2 January 2024, in Beirut, Lebanon.

Palestinian prisoners issued the following statement (translation via Resistance News Network):

"Prisoners' institutions, in the name of all prisoners in the occupation's prisons and those who have been released, mourn the national leader and martyr Sheikh Saleh Al-Arouri and his companions who were martyred alongside him.

"The prisoner institutions (Prisoners and Ex-Prisoners Affairs' Commission, Palestinian Prisoners' Club, and The Supreme National Committee of Prisoners and Ex-Prisoners Affairs), and the national prisoner movement of the occupation prisoners, and the freed prisoners in the homeland and diaspora, mourn to our great people, the fighter, national leader, freed prisoner, and exiled, Sheikh Saleh Al-Arouri (Deputy Head of the Political Bureau of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas), who ascended today after an assassination operation carried out by the Zionist occupation against him and a group of his companions, in the Lebanese capital, Beirut.

"Today we mourn a leader, a national fighter, and a freed prisoner, who devoted his life for the freedom of his land and people until the last moment of his life. He spent a total of about 18 years in Zionist occupation prisons, with his last arrest being in 2007, and he was released in 2010, where the occupation court decided to release him and expel him out of Palestine, deporting him to Syria.

"Mercy for the martyrs of Palestine and freedom for the prisoners."

The assassination of Sheikh Saleh al-Arouri, deputy chair of Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement, formerly imprisoned by the Zionist regime for 18 years and a national, Arab and international leader of the Palestinian struggle, reflects the same bankrupt policy of assassination that Zionism and imperialism have relied upon to undermine the cause of Palestinian and Arab liberation since the inception of the colonial project in the region.

While the occupation army is carrying out a genocidal rampage in Gaza, it has not been able to achieve military objectives or impose defeat upon the Palestinian resistance; rather, it has slaughtered over 22,000 Palestinian civilians, nearly half children, through aerial bombings and an unlimited supply of ammunition provided by the United States and its imperialist partners in the UK, France, Germany, and Canada. Instead, the Palestinian resistance has imposed serious consequences on the occupation army, forcing it to pull out ground troops, including the infamous Golan Brigade, and continues to fire missiles from all areas of Gaza.

In the *Palestine Chronicle*, Palestinian journalist Ramzy Baroud noted that the assassination is also an attempt by the Israeli regime "to redeem the tattered image of its intelligence community, namely the Shin Bet and the Mossad, which have failed to anticipate the October 7 attacks. The Israeli brand, in terms of intelligence, has also been greatly tarnished by the war. Killing Arouri was a direct response to that."

From Saleh al-Arouri to Fathi Shiqaqi, Abu Ali Mustafa, Abdel-Aziz Rantisi, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, Abu Jihad, Kamal Udwan, Mohammed al-Najjar, Basil al-Kubaisi, Kamal Nasser, Wadie Haddad, Ghassan Kanafani, Mohammed Boudia, Basil al-Araj, Tariq Izzedine to Samir Kuntar; the Zionist regime relies on the assassination weapon against the liberation movement. In occupied

Palestine, in Lebanon, in France, in Belgium, in Greece; this policy reflects the presence of the Palestinian people and movement everywhere in exile and diaspora. It marks a failed attempt to suppress the Palestinian and Arab people's unquenchable will by targeting leaders, scholars, resisters and strategists.

This assassination policy includes the attacks on the Palestinian prisoners' movement, from Ibrahim al-Rai, killed under torture, to the systematic denial of medical care to Sheikh Khader Adnan, martyred after 86 days of hunger strike, to the killing of at least seven prisoners behind bars since 7 October 2023, including Abdul-Rahman al-Bahsh, killed just yesterday by occupation prison guards. Arouri was directly involved in managing the negotiations for a prisoner exchange between the resistance and the occupation, akin to his role in the 2011 Wafa al-Ahrar exchange, and this assassination aims to prevent him from seeing and directly welcoming the prisoners freed by the Resistance. These negotiations have been suspended following the assassination.

In August 2023, in response to Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's assassination threats, Arouri declared: "Does the occupation expect that after its assassination threats, we will announce our surrender? No, these threats do not frighten us. We in Hamas are martyred like our people, we are arrested as they are arrested, our homes are demolished and we are being chased and pursued. This is the normal situation under the occupation. We fight because we must."

*(January 2, 2024)*

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### In the News

## Resistance Continues to Advance

As of January 1, 2024, Israel's ongoing genocide and murderous bombing campaign in Gaza has killed 21,822 Palestinians and wounded 56,451 since October 7, 2023, the majority women and children. The numbers have doubled since the temporary truce ended on December 1, 2023.

The Palestinian Commission of Detainees' and Ex-Detainees' Affairs and the Palestinian Prisoner Society (PPS) reported that the total number of prisoners in Israeli prisons, by the end of December, has reached 8,800, and the number of administrative detainees, held without charges or trial was 3,291. Many of them are women and children. Released prisoners report that prisoners, especially Gazans, are being repeatedly tortured and humiliated. People from Gaza are also being disappeared and there is little information about them. The Israeli Prison Service has reported only that in one prison, Damon, there are about 51 women from Gaza, including elderly, adults, and children. There are 661 Gazan detainees arbitrarily classified as "unlawful combatants," much like the U.S. classification of "enemy combatant," that allowed for elimination of any rights and detention at Guantánamo prison.



Samidoun Palestinian Prisoners Solidarity Network issued a statement condemning the January 1 murder of 23-year-old Palestinian detainee, Abdul-Rahman Bassem Al-Bahsh, assassinated by occupation forces while in detention inside the colonial Zionist Megiddo prison.

Israel has prioritized the use of massive, U.S.-supplied munitions to destroy residential areas in Gaza. Israel has used 2,000-lb bombs to kill up to 100 Palestinians in one strike. However, reports

also indicate that Israel is not able to succeed as it had hoped and announced. Palestinian reporter in Gaza Yousef Fares, writer at *Al-Akhbar News*, informed on December 27:

"Perhaps the most notable thing that was observed last week was the ability of both the Qassam Brigades and the Al-Quds Brigades to resupply the defensive lines with men and equipment, and to develop operational tactics that have qualitatively improved their defensive operations. This has directly led to increased human losses in the ranks of the occupation army on the one hand, and has reduced losses in the ranks of the Resistance on the other.

"The tactical deployment of the Resistance cells consists of no more than a handful of people who are responsible for the task of confronting the enemy within the geographic bounds of one residential area. When those cells complete their tasks, they are replaced with new groups. The total number of active cells at this moment does not exceed 20 per cent of the total number of capable fighters of the Resistance -- this leaves tens of thousands of fighters on standby ready for deployment.

"This strategy of troop rotation has given the resistance the space to sustain the fighting, even in the areas and neighborhoods that the occupation forces 'captured' early on in the war. For example, in Beit Lahia and Beit Hanoun, where the 'Israeli' ground incursion began two months ago on October 26, the Qassam Brigades announced on December 22 that their fighters were involved in heavy clashes with the ground forces and inflicted direct casualties on the occupation army. The Palestinian Resistance is exploiting the occupation's reduction in human and vehicle strength in those areas that the occupation assumed it had already secured from the resistance. Clearly, the Resistance fighters still have active supply lines through underground tunnels to resupply their cells, who continue to effectively carry out operations on the ground.

"The Resistance knows that time is on its side, and that the enemy is exhausted and demoralized. The Resistance is preparing for a new phase of the war, and it is confident that it will be victorious."



Fares also reports that the resistance fighters have sufficient ammunition.

Military manufacturing units and workshops have been working for five years to produce the Yassin-105 rocket in abundance. "This is in addition to the imported weapons that reach the Gaza Strip, such as RPG-7 and PG-29V Tandem shells. Other explosive devices are also available in abundance, especially since the Resistance has been domestically producing many of them for over 15 years.

"Additionally, sources close to the Resistance revealed to *Al-Akhbar* that the Resistance factions developed the technical capacity to manufacture Kalashnikov (AK-47) ammunition locally, more than seven years ago, despite the fact that the production process requires about 60 complex operations. It is worth noting that the locally manufactured ammunition has proven to be just as effective as imported bullets.

"A field source in the Al-Quds Brigades, whom we met while preparing a file following the Battle of Sword of Al-Quds in 2021, revealed that it is official policy that the minimum stockpile of ready-to-use mortar shells in the field must exceed 15,000 shells. Naturally, the number is several

times greater for the Qassam Brigades, given their greater size, capabilities, and resources.

"In conclusion, the Resistance maintains stable field conditions in this phase of the war. The fighters have studied the elements of the battlefield, adapted to the intensity of the enemy surveillance, artillery, and bombing, and have gained a deep understanding of the psychology of the enemy's soldiers and their way of working. All of this leads to the Resistance's stability and continuous successful operations, the results of which can be seen in the performance of its negotiating delegation behind the scenes, such as the unanimous position on the release of the captured soldiers, and the adherence to the demand that there is no negotiation except with a complete ceasefire. Even temporary truces, which have in the past allowed them to re-calibrate the course of the battle, are no longer a necessary concession for the Resistance."

Meanwhile, the Israeli newspaper *Yedioth Ahronoth* said in its English edition that five Israeli combat brigades operating in the Gaza Strip, including the 551st and the 114th reserve brigades as well as three training brigades, have been pulled out. According to the paper, soldiers from these brigades were returning to Israel to help in the replenishing of the Israeli economy.

The reports indicate that of the estimated 17 brigades operating in Gaza, four are still fighting in the north and the battles there are far from over. "Moreover, the battles in central Gaza have not yet exceeded the eastern borders of Al-Bureij refugee camp. Several Israeli army brigades have tried and failed to control a very small area of only a few square kilometres.

"No serious fighting has yet taken place in Nuseirat, Maghazi or Deir Al-Balah, which continue to be subjected to relentless bombardments and massacres. Though it is true that seven brigades have been reportedly fighting in the Khan Yunis region in the south, they are yet to achieve any significant military gains."

The *Walla* news website reported that additional forces were most likely to also be pulled out from Gaza in the following week.

Meanwhile, the *Palestine Chronicle* reported that "A single Israeli hospital today, the Barzilai Medical Centre, reported that they have treated 3,500 Israeli soldiers since October 7.

"This is the highest rate of Israeli casualties ever recorded in the 75 years of Israel's history, and it goes against all the official announcements made by the Israeli military, or even independent estimates published by *Haaretz* and *Yedioth Ahronoth*.

"There is no other way of interpreting this, especially with the massive reduction of Israeli military presence in Gaza, except that the Palestinian Resistance is winning and the Israeli military is failing."

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## **South Africa Charges Israel with Genocide Before UN International Court of Justice**

The UN International Court of Justice announced on December 29, 2023 that "South Africa today filed an application instituting proceedings against Israel before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, concerning alleged violations by Israel of its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the Genocide Convention) in relation to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip."

The ICJ also announced that public hearings will be held January 11 and 12 at The Hague to address South Africa's request for immediate provisional measures. The press release states, "In its Request, South Africa asks the Court to indicate provisional measures in order to 'protect against

further, severe and irreparable harm to the rights of the Palestinian people under the Genocide Convention' and 'to ensure Israel's compliance with its obligations under the Genocide Convention not to engage in genocide, and to prevent and to punish genocide'" If the ICJ finds in favour of the request, it could call for an immediate halt to the Israeli genocide and other measures to prevent genocide. The case is an opportunity for other states to join in providing briefs supporting the need for punishment and prevention. Human rights organizers in South Africa are also calling on people worldwide to demand their governments support South Africa's charges of genocide.



According to the Application, "acts and omissions by Israel [...] are genocidal in character, as they are committed with the requisite specific intent [...] to destroy Palestinians in Gaza as a part of the broader Palestinian national, racial and ethnical group" and that "the conduct of Israel -- through its State organs, State agents, and other persons and entities acting on its instructions or under its direction, control or influence -- in relation to Palestinians in Gaza, is in violation of its obligations under the Genocide Convention."

It further states that "Israel, since 7 October 2023 in particular, has failed to prevent genocide and has failed to prosecute the direct and public incitement to genocide" and that "Israel has engaged in, is engaging in and risks further engaging in genocidal acts against the Palestinian people in Gaza."

South Africa's application is a text of 84 pages, with 151 specific articles addressing in great detail the genocidal acts committed by Israel in violation of the Genocide Convention on which the ICJ is called to adjudicate, introduced in article 18 with the statement that "Since 7 October 2023, Israel has engaged in a large-scale military assault by land, air and sea, on the Gaza Strip ('Gaza'), a narrow strip of land approximately of 365 square kilometres -- one of the most densely populated places in the world. Gaza -- home to approximately 2.3 million people, almost half of them children -- has been subjected by Israel to what has been described as one of the 'heaviest conventional bombing campaigns' in the history of modern warfare."

In setting the background to current events, the application references numerous previous UN reports from 2001, 2008, 2009, 2015, 2020, 2021 and 2023, examining a broad litany of brutal violence on the part of the Israeli occupation against the Palestinians, each of which concluded Israel was in violation of international law.

Section C, starting at Article 43, addresses the acts in which Israel has engaged that are genocidal in character, acts that are ongoing, including 1) Killing Palestinians in Gaza; 2) Causing serious

bodily and mental harm to Palestinians in Gaza; 3) Mass expulsion from homes and displacement of Palestinians in Gaza; 4) Deprivation of access to adequate food and water to Palestinians in Gaza; 5) Deprivation of access to adequate shelter, clothes, hygiene and sanitation to Palestinians in Gaza; 6) Deprivation of adequate medical assistance to Palestinians in Gaza; 7) Destruction of Palestinian life in Gaza; 8) Imposing measures intended to prevent Palestinian births.

Section D entitled "Expressions of Genocidal Intent against the Palestinian People by Israeli State Officials and Others," required for a conviction under the Genocide Convention, documents statements that demonstrate the genocidal intent of Israeli State officials, including from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President of Israel Isaac Herzog, Israeli Minister of Defence Yoav Gallant, Israeli Minister for National Security, Itamar Ben-Gvir, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure Israel Katz, Minister of Finance Bezalel Smotrich, Minister of Heritage Amichai Eliyahu, Minister of Agriculture Avi Dichter and Deputy Speaker of the Knesset and Member of the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee Nissim Vaturi. Included in the examples that "constitute clear direct and public incitement to genocide which has gone unchecked and unpunished" are similar statements made by the Israeli Army Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, Major General Ghassan Alian; former Head of the Israeli National Security Council and adviser to the Defence Minister, army reservist Major General Giora Eiland; and a "motivational speech" given by army reservist Ezra Yachin, veteran of the Deir Yassin massacre during the 1948 Nakba documenting genocidal intent; remarks by Lieutenant Colonel Gilad Kinan, Head of the Israeli army's Air Operations Group; and remarks by Yair Ben David, Commander of the 2908th Battalion of the Israeli army.

Section E states that the public statements cited in Section C demonstrate Israel's genocidal intent, an assessment that "is shared by a significant number of United Nations experts who have repeatedly warned since at least mid-October 2023 that the Palestinian people are at grave risk of genocide by Israel. Eight different such reports issued by UN Experts from October through December 2023 are cited as are the opinions of many international experts and bodies.



South Africa, speaking on its own behalf, then cites its own claim that Israel is in violation of the Genocide Convention, citing nine specific claims from failing to prevent genocide, to committing, conspiring to commit, direct public incitement to commit, attempting to commit, complicity in genocide, failing to punish genocide, failing to enact the necessary legislation to give effect to the provisions of the Genocide convention and failing to allow and/or impeding the investigation by competent international bodies of genocidal acts committed against Palestinians in Gaza -- each of which constitutes a criminal offence under the convention.

The relief sought by the claim includes: a finding that Israel has breached and continues to breach its obligations under the Genocide Convention; must cease forthwith any acts and measures in breach of those obligations [...]; must ensure persons violating the Genocide

Convention are punished; must collect and conserve evidence of genocidal acts committed against Palestinians in Gaza; must perform obligations of reparation in the interest of Palestinian victims and provide for the reconstruction of what it has destroyed in Gaza; and must offer assurances and guarantees of non-repetition of violations of the convention.

South Africa requests that the court address this request as a matter of extreme urgency and states: "Provisional measures are necessary in this case to protect against further, severe and irreparable harm to the rights of the Palestinian people under the Genocide Convention, which continue to be violated with impunity."

Further, at Article 120, South Africa's case states: "The court is empowered to indicate provisional measures 'if the provisions relied on by the Applicant appear *prima facie* to afford a basis on which its jurisdiction could be founded, but need not satisfy itself in a definitive manner that it has jurisdiction as regards the merits of the case."

Article 123 states that in order for the ICJ to determine whether it has *prima facie* jurisdiction to indicate provisional measures, the matters complained of must themselves be *prima facie* "capable of falling within the provisions of [the Convention]" such that "the dispute is one which the Court has jurisdiction *ratione materiae* to entertain." The case law of the ICJ establishes that a dispute is "a disagreement on a point of law or fact, a conflict of legal views or of interests" between parties. In order for a dispute to exist "it must be shown that the claim of one party is positively opposed by the other." The two sides must "hold clearly opposite views concerning the question of the performance or non-performance of certain international obligations." The existence of a dispute is "a matter of objective determination by the Court; it is a matter of substance, and not a question of form or procedure." In other words, Israel's objection that the claim made by South Africa is unfounded, is itself sufficient evidence of a *prima facie* case for the jurisdiction of the ICJ to be established.

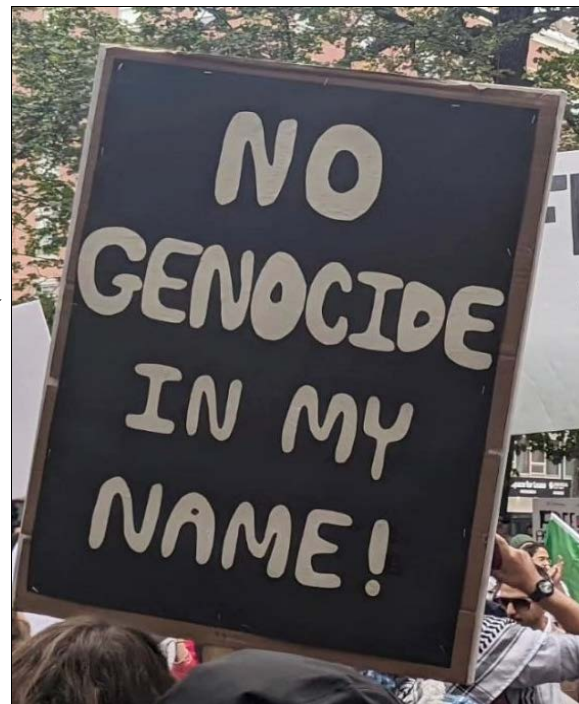
The Genocide Convention, ratified after World War II and the Nazi Holocaust of the Jews, makes it a crime to attempt to destroy a people in whole or in part. The ICJ is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It is located in The Hague in the Netherlands.

Israeli Holocaust scholar Raz Segal on October 13, 2023, identified Israel's campaign in Gaza as constituting genocide based on public pronouncements of Israeli political and military leaders which made their intent to destroy Palestinians as a people clear.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), an alliance of 56 countries in which Islam plays a significant role, issued a statement on December 31, 2023 supporting South Africa for taking its case against Israel to the International Court of Justice. The statement reads: "The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has welcomed the suit filed by the Republic of South Africa at the International Court of Justice for the crime of genocide against the Palestinian people committed by Israel, the occupying power.

"The OIC has affirmed that the indiscriminate targeting by Israel, the occupying power, of the civilian population and the thousands of Palestinians, mostly women and children, killed, injured, forcibly displaced, and denied basic necessities and humanitarian assistance and the destruction of houses, health, educational and religious institutions, in their totality constitute mass genocide.

"The OIC called upon the Court to respond expeditiously and take urgent measures to stop this mass genocide being perpetrated by the Israeli defense forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territories."



## Call Made for Other Countries to File Declarations of Intervention at International Court of Justice

The U.S.-based Black Alliance for Peace announced a newly formed coalition is urging other countries to file Declarations of Intervention at the International Court of Justice in support of South Africa's genocide case against Israel. The International Coalition to Stop Genocide in Palestine convened around the urgent need for nations to invoke the Genocide Convention as a way to end the State of Israel's devastating bombing campaign and additional war crimes being committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The coalition includes Progressive International, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, the Black Alliance for Peace, Democracy for the Arab World Now, Palestinian Assembly for Liberation, Popular Resistance, CODEPINK, the U.S. National Lawyers Guild and numerous other groups. A statement reads that it "strongly supports the call issued on January 2 by the Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Coordinating Committee (PAACC) urging governments to support South Africa's complaint with Declarations of Intervention, which can be filed before or after the hearing, scheduled to take place on January 11 and 12, 2024."

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## Severity of Destruction of Gaza



On December 30, the *Wall Street Journal* carried a report which said the destruction generated by Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip is comparable to the bombing of Germany during World War II.

According to the analysis of satellite data by remote-sensing experts at the City University of New York and Oregon State University, "As many as 80 per cent of the buildings in northern Gaza, where the bombing has been most severe, are damaged or destroyed, a higher percentage than in Dresden [after the Allied firebombing on February 13-14, 1945 ...] Nearly 70 per cent of Gaza's 439,000 homes and about half of its buildings have been damaged or destroyed," the *WSJ* wrote, adding that most of the Strip's 36 hospitals are shut down, and only eight are accepting patients.



Robert Pape, a political scientist at the University of Chicago and the author of a history of aerial bombing, told the *WSJ*, "What you're seeing in Gaza is in the top 25 per cent of the most intense punishment campaigns in history."

According to U.S. officials cited in the report, "Israel dropped 29,000 weapons on Gaza in a little over two months."

"By comparison, the U.S. military dropped 3,678 munitions on Iraq from 2004 to 2010," the report added.

Analyzing the kind of weapons that were used to inflict "maximum damage," as announced by Israeli military spokesman Daniel Hagari, the *WSJ* reported that "Among the weapons provided by the U.S. to Israel during the Gaza war are 2,000-pound "bunker buster" bombs designed to penetrate concrete shelters, which military analysts said are usually used to hit military targets in more sparsely populated areas." The Gaza Strip is one of the most densely populated areas in the world.

On December 30, 2023, U.S. Secretary of State Blinken bypassed the congressional review requirement for foreign military sales and announced an emergency determination for a \$147.5 million sale of further military equipment to Israel. The equipment includes fuses, charges and primers necessary to make the 155 mm shells that Israel has already purchased. "Given the urgency of Israel's defensive needs, the secretary notified Congress that he had exercised his delegated authority to determine an emergency existed necessitating the immediate approval of the transfer," the department said.



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Website: [www.cpcml.ca](http://www.cpcml.ca) Email: [editor@cpcml.ca](mailto:editor@cpcml.ca)