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South Africa puts Israel on trial before the world

No matter the judges' decision on the historic complaint brought before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the highest court under the auspices of the United Nations, by the South African government against Israeli genocide in Gaza on Jan. 11, the hearing itself will have everlasting political ramifications worldwide.

The 84-page document includes devastating, factual evidence on the heinous terror that Gazans have experienced since October 7 and continue to experience at this writing. As of Jan. 14 — 100 days since the genocide began — the Gaza Ministry of Health reported that close to 24,000 people have been slaughtered, with 70% of the victims being children and women. Over 60,000 people have been wounded. Countless thousands more Palestinians have been buried under rubble caused by indiscriminate Israeli airstrikes. More than 2,000 massacres have been carried out, wiping out whole Palestinian families and bloodlines. (Resistance News Network)



Palestinians rally at Nelson Mandela statue, Ramallah, occupied West Bank, on the eve of ICJ hearing on Israeli war crimes, Jan. 10, 2024. (Photo Credit: AlJazeera)

Most of these horrific statistics have either been minimized or censored altogether by the Western corporate media since October 7. This, amongst other reasons, is why the South Africa complaint is so timely and significant.

In its introduction presented to the ICJ, South Africa states, “The acts and omissions by Israel complained of by South Africa are genocidal in character because they are intended to bring about the destruction of a substantial part of the Palestinian national, racial and ethnic group, that being the part of the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip (‘Palestinians in Gaza’).

“The acts in question include killing Palestinians in Gaza, causing them serious bodily and mental harm, and inflicting on them conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction. The acts are all attributable to Israel, which has failed to prevent genocide and is committing genocide in manifest violation of the Genocide Convention, and which has also violated and is continuing to violate its other fundamental obligations

under the Genocide Convention, including by failing to prevent or punish the direct and public incitement to genocide by senior Israeli officials and others.”

Israel: the world’s social pariah

The fact that the fascistic Netanyahu government could not ignore this complaint has led to further isolation of this Nazi apartheid state. This is a political victory in itself. Israel’s weak rebuttal to the complaint has been to label the South African legal team as being “antisemitic” and a “legal arm of Hamas”. In its opening remarks during the ICJ proceedings on Jan. 12, Israel characterized the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) as being a “terrorist” organization over 130 times and used Hamas as a flimsy excuse for decimating all infrastructure in Gaza and its population for 100 days.

The strength of a united Palestinian resistance since October 7 has wreaked havoc on the Israeli economy, with losses in the tens of billions of dollars in U.S. military equipment, along with thousands of casualties, dead and wounded, for the brutal occupation forces.

Israeli cargo ships have been targeted and rerouted from using a direct route on the Red Sea thanks to the Yemeni Naval Forces demanding a permanent end to the bombing of Gaza to allow the flow of direly needed humanitarian aid.

There are reports from the Israeli media that there is growing internal strife within Netanyahu’s cabinet, especially amongst defense ministers — some of whom have been barred from meetings by Netanyahu — due to the resilience and resolve of the resistance, despite all of the carnage in Gaza.

There is also growing discontent amongst Israeli citizens who have come out in the streets in larger and larger numbers to demand a cease-fire, an end to the apartheid occupation, and for Netanyahu to resign. Hundreds of Israeli teenagers are risking jail time for refusing to serve in the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF).

Palestinians thank South Africa

On Dec. 30, one day after the South Africa complaint was made public, an International Coalition to Stop Genocide in Palestine was formed, spearheaded by groups such as Black Alliance for Peace, Samidoun Palestinian Prisoners Solidarity Network, National Lawyers Guild and others. To date, over 1,200 groups have signed on to the coalition including Workers World Party, Bronx Antiwar Coalition and the International Action Center.



Cape Town, South Africa, Oct. 22, 2023 (Photo Credit: Ashraf Hendricks)

Ajamu Baraka, chair of the coordinating committee of the Black Alliance for Peace, stated in a Jan. 3 press release: “The action by the South African government is a courageous attempt to do no less than salvage the credibility of the international mechanisms that were meant to protect human rights and international law. The South African petition is a reminder that it is a legal and moral imperative for states and international civil society to oppose impunity. Genocide has been identified as one of the most egregious international crimes. If the Israeli state and its backers are allowed to escape justice and international condemnation, it will strip the current international system of justice of any legitimacy.” Go to blackallianceforpeace.com/movement-news/israel2icj to read the entire statement.

On Jan. 11, the opening day of the ICJ hearing, hundreds of Palestinian residents living in Ramallah, in the Occupied West Bank, gathered around the statue of the legendary African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela to give praise to the South African government. A youth band played the national anthem of South Africa, while the rest of the crowd waved both the Palestinian and South African flags.

The South African and Palestinian struggles have three important things in common: both have experienced the horrors of apartheid, both have organized armed resistance, and both have shown solidarity with each other for many decades. In 1997, Mandela stated, “We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.” (aljazeera.com/Dec. 5, 2023)

This same South African government has vowed to bring the war crimes of the U.S. government to the ICJ to expose its complicity with the Israeli genocide against the Palestinian people.

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