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Israel and the West's War on Itself



Youtube screengrab.

The arrest [warrants](#) by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant are a diplomatic disaster for Israel, [reported](#) The Economist, a ‘hard stigma’ for the Israeli leader, [wrote](#) The Guardian, and a ‘major blow’, said others.

But a term that many seem to agree on is that the warrants represent an [earthquake](#), though many are doubtful that Netanyahu would actually see his day in court.

The pro-Palestine camp, which as of late represents the majority of humankind, is torn between disbelief, skepticism, and optimism. It turned out that the international system has a pulse, after all, though faint, but is enough to rekindle hope that legal and moral accountability are still possible.

This mixture of feelings and strong language is a reflection of several important and interconnected experiences: one, the unprecedented extermination of a whole population which is currently being carried out by Israel against Palestinians in Gaza; two, the utter failure of the international community to stop the grisly genocide in the Strip; and, finally, the fact that the international legal system has historically failed to hold Israel, or any of the West's allies anywhere, accountable to international law.

The real earthquake is the fact that this is the first time in the history of the ICC that a pro-western leader is held accountable for war crimes. Indeed, historically, the vast majority of arrest warrants, and actual detention of accused war criminals seemed to target the Global South, and [Africa](#), in particular.

Israel, however, is not an ordinary 'western' state. Zionism was a western-colonial invention, and the creation of Israel was only possible because of unhindered, die-hard western support. Since its inception on the ruins of historic Palestine in 1948, Israel has served the role of the western-colonial citadel in the Middle East. The entire Israeli political discourse has been tailored and situated within western priorities and supposed values: civilization, democracy, enlightenment, human rights and the like.

With time, Israel became largely an American project, embraced by American liberals and religious conservatives alike.

America's religious crowds were motivated by the biblical [notion](#) that "whoever blesses Israel will be blessed, And whoever curses Israel will". The liberals, too, held Israel within a spiritual discourse, although disproportionately favored the classification of Israel as the 'only democracy in the Middle East', constantly emphasizing the 'special relationship', the 'unbreakable bond' and the rest.

Thus, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that the ICC's indictment of Netanyahu, as a representative of the political establishment in Israel, and Gallant, as the leader of the military class, is also an indictment of the United States.

It is often reported that Israel would not have been able to carry on with its war, thus genocide, on Gaza without American military and political support. According to the investigative news website ProPublica, in the first year of the war, the US [shipped](#) over 50,000 tons of weaponry to Israel.

Mainstream American media and journalists are also culpable in that genocide. They elevated the now war criminals Netanyahu and Gallant, along with other Israeli political and military leaders, as if they were the defenders of a ‘civilized world’ against the ‘barbarians’. Those in the conservative media circles portrayed them as if prophets doing God’s work against the supposed heathens of the South.

They, too, have been indicted by the ICC, the kind of moral indictment, and ‘hard stigma’, that can never be eradicated.

When Karim Khan, the ICC’s Chief Prosecutor, originally filed for arrest warrants in May, many were in doubt, and justifiably so. The Israelis felt that their country commanded the needed support to disallow such warrants in the first place. They cited previous attempts, including a Belgian court case where victims of Israeli brutality in Lebanon attempted to hold former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon accountable for the Sabra and Shatila massacre. Not only was the case dropped in 2003, but Belgium was pressured by the US to [change](#) its own laws so that they do not include universal jurisdiction in the case of genocide.

The Americans, too, were not too worried, as they were ready to punish ICC judges, defame Khan himself, and, according to a recent social media post by US Senator Tom Cotton, ready to ‘invade the Hague’.

In fact, this is not the first time that Americans, who are not signatories of the Rome Statute, thus not members of the ICC, flexed their muscles against those who merely attempted to enforce international law. In September 2020, the US government [imposed](#) sanctions on then-Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda and another senior official, Phakiso Mochochoko.

Even those who wanted to see accountability for the Israeli genocide were in doubt, especially as pro-Israeli western governments, like that of Germany, stepped forward to prevent the warrants from being issued. Unreasonable delays in the proceedings contributed to the skepticism, especially as Khan himself was suddenly being [paraded](#) for supposed ‘sexual misconduct’.

Yet, after all of this, on November 21 the arrest warrants were issued, charging Netanyahu and Gallant with alleged ‘war crimes’ and ‘crimes against humanity’ – the other punishable offenses within the ICC jurisdiction being genocide and aggression.

Considering that the world’s highest court, the International Court of Justice, has already [found](#) that it is plausible that Israel’s acts could amount to genocide and is currently investigating the case, Israel, as a state, and top Israeli leaders have suddenly, and deservedly so, become the enemies of humanity.

While it is right and legitimate to argue that what matters most is the tangible outcome of these cases – ending the genocide while holding the Israeli war criminals accountable – we must not miss the greater meaning of these earth-shattering events.

The ICJ and the ICC are essentially two western institutions created to police the world by reinforcing the double standards resulting from the post-World War II western-dominated international system.

They are the legal equivalent of the Bretton Woods agreement, which regulated the international monetary system to serve US western interests. Though, in theory, they championed universally commendable values, in practice they merely served as tools of control and dominance for the western order.

For years, the world has been in a state of obvious and irreversible change. New powers were rising and others were shrinking. Political turmoil in the US, Britain and France were only reflections of the internal struggle in the west's ruling classes. The incredible rise of China, the war in Europe and the growing resistance in the Middle East were outcomes and accelerators of that change.

Thus the constant call for reforms in the post-WWII international system to reflect in a more equitable way the new global realities. Despite American-western resistance to change, new geopolitical formations continued to take place, regardless.

The Gaza genocide represents a watershed moment in these global dynamics. This was reflected in Karim Khan's language when he requested the arrest warrants, stressing on the credibility of the court. "This is why we have a court," he [said](#) in an exclusive interview with CNN on May 20. "It's about the equal application of the law. No people are better than another. No people anywhere are saints."

The emphasis on credibility here is a culmination of the obvious loss of credibility on all fronts. This should hardly be a surprise as it was the west, the self-proclaimed champion of human rights, the very political entity that championed, defended and sustained the Israeli genocide.

While one would like to believe that the ICC's arrest warrants were made exclusively for the sake of the victims of the Israeli genocide, plenty of evidence suggests that the unexpected move was a desperate western attempt at salvaging whatever little credibility it had maintained up to that moment.

The US government, an unrepentant violator of human rights, has maintained its strong position in defense of Israel, shaming the ICC for the warrants, not the Israeli war criminals for committing the genocide.

The conflict in Europe has been much more palpable, however, reflected in the position of Germany, which [said](#) it would “carefully examine” the arrest warrants but that it is “hard to imagine that we would make arrests on this basis”.

One remains hopeful that the shifts of global powers will eventually save international law from the hypocrisy and opportunism of the west. But what is clear for now is that the west’s own conflict will only gain momentum. Will those who created the Zionist Israeli menace be the very powers that demolish it? One is doubtful.

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