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Bogota Summit launches Global South's legal intifada against Israel and US impunity

Colombia's defiant pivot from Washington and the growing Hague Group alliance marks a potentially historic rupture with western legal hypocrisy on Palestine.



Photo Credit: The Cradle

From 15–16 July, Bogota became the unlikely capital of a global insurrection against western legal impunity. Over 30 countries – including key powers from the Global South and even some European states – gathered in the Colombian capital for the Hague Group Emergency Summit.

This was the most ambitious multilateral initiative yet to directly confront what participants unflinchingly termed Israel's genocide in Gaza, and the broader culture of impunity that has shielded the occupation state since 1948.

From steadfast client to anti-imperial spearhead

That the summit was held in Colombia – a long-standing US vassal in Latin America – was not incidental. Once regarded as Washington's most loyal client in the hemisphere,

Colombia's dramatic pivot under President Gustavo Petro represents the boldest regional defiance of US authority in decades.

Petro, who severed diplomatic ties with Tel Aviv in 2024, has placed Bogota on a collision course with the US over his unwavering opposition to the occupation state's onslaught in Gaza.

Washington reacted predictably by issuing warnings to allies against the "weaponization of international law," and sanctioning UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese for her "illegitimate and shameful efforts" to advance the International Criminal Court's (ICC) prosecutions of Israeli and US officials. Bogota responded with direct defiance. In the run-up to the summit, Petro publicly backed Albanese, declaring that "the multilateral system of states cannot be destroyed," in a thinly veiled rejection of US diktats.

Over 30 nations participated, including the eight founding members of the Hague Group – Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Honduras, Malaysia, Namibia, Senegal, and South Africa, co-chaired by Colombia and South Africa. They were joined by more than 20 additional states spanning Latin America, Africa, Asia, and even Europe.

The participation of European countries such as Portugal and Spain was noteworthy. Both states only established full diplomatic relations with Israel in the latter half of the 20th century: Portugal in 1977 and Spain in 1986, emblematic of their historic caution over Israel's contested legitimacy.

But since Tel Aviv's genocidal war on Gaza began in late 2023, Madrid has adopted a string of punitive diplomatic moves.

Spain canceled a €6.6 million (around \$7.2 million) ammunition purchase from an Israeli firm, scrapped a €285 million (around \$310.7 million) anti-tank missile deal with the Spanish subsidiary of Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, banned Israeli weapons from port entry, formally recognized Palestinian statehood, and pushed to suspend the EU–Israel Association Agreement.

Though neither European state fully endorsed all of Bogota's proposals, their participation and scathing denunciations of Israeli policy reflect a deeper fracture within Europe over Tel Aviv's legitimacy and the cost of complicity.

Laying the legal gauntlet

Central to the summit was a blistering legal and moral condemnation of Israel's conduct in Gaza and the occupied West Bank. The Hague Group issued a detailed catalog of war crimes: the mass killing of over 57,000 civilians, the targeting of hospitals and schools, the weaponization of starvation and siege, and the deliberate use of forced displacement.

The apartheid state in the occupied West Bank, enforced through racial segregation, parallel legal systems, and land confiscations for settlements, was cited as a textbook violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and, per the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) 2024 advisory [opinion](#), a breach of international prohibitions against forced territorial acquisition and apartheid.

Francesca Albanese delivered the [summit's keynote](#), setting the tone with an uncompromising indictment:

“For too long, international law has been treated as optional – applied selectively to those perceived as weak, ignored by those acting as the powerful ... That era must end.”

The ICC [arrest warrants](#) against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant – citing crimes such as starvation as a weapon, indiscriminate civilian targeting, and the murder of Palestinian non-combatants – were repeatedly invoked as a historic turning point.

The Resistance Axis of lawfare

The summit's ethos was clearly to rupture the impunity enabled by the UN Security Council's paralysis. The Hague Group, [founded](#) in January 2025, framed itself as the Global South's corrective to a postwar order that protects violators so long as they are shielded by US power. That paralysis, most attendees argued, was not accidental but structural: The [P5 veto system](#) ensures impunity for those, such as Israel and its allies.

Meeting in the San Carlos Palace, delegates from 12 states – Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Indonesia, Iraq, Libya, Malaysia, Namibia, Nicaragua, Oman, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and South Africa – [announced](#) six binding measures. These included a full arms embargo on the occupation state, port bans for Israeli military vessels, contract reviews to terminate commercial complicity with the occupation, and firm support for domestic and international prosecution of Israeli officials.

These policies were anchored in the ICJ's 2024 opinion declaring Israel's occupation illegal and the UN General Assembly's September 2024 [resolution](#) urging decisive global action within 12 months.

A global rift – but still an uphill battle

Despite the breakthrough, significant limitations remain. Only 12 states adopted the measures outright. Others were given until the UN General Assembly in September to sign on. Key powers, including China, [withheld endorsement](#) – despite supporting the initiative's aims – likely due to economic entanglements with Israel, including port infrastructure investments.

Organizers acknowledged the uphill road ahead: absent broader UN uptake and stronger alignment from economic powers, Washington's veto and European hesitation could neuter the Hague Group's legal insurgency. But the coalition remains adamant that justice is no longer negotiable.

Colombian Vice Minister Mauricio Jaramillo Jassir captured the summit's urgency:

“The Palestinian genocide threatens the entire international system ... The participating states will not only reaffirm their commitment to opposing genocide, but also formulate concrete steps to move from words to collective action.”

A warning – and a promise

The Bogota summit was not just another international conference. It openly challenged the post-1945 legal fiction of a “rules-based order” – a system long exposed as a euphemism for western prerogative.

As South Africa's International Relations Minister, Roland Lamola, asserted

“No country is above the law, and no crime will go unanswered.”

Yet the struggle remains unfinished. The Hague Group's bold confrontation with Israeli impunity marks a decisive break, but the future of this legal uprising hinges on whether its momentum can breach the fortified walls of New York and The Hague, and whether powers like China, India, and Brazil shift from quiet endorsement to active alignment.

On 16 July, as thousands gathered in Plaza Bolivar in support, the message was unambiguous: either the era of impunity ends, or the legitimacy of the global order collapses with it.

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