



## Twenty-Third Session of the Assembly of States Parties

### General Debate

#### **Joint Statement by the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, Al-Haq, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, Addameer, Defense for Children International- Palestine, and Al-Haq Europe.**

Madame President, Excellencies, ladies, and gentlemen,

Another year is ending, and Israel's settler-colonial apartheid regime is yet to end the commission of mass atrocities against the Palestinian people. Another year, and Palestinians continue to endure pain, suffering and loss, deprived of their most basic rights as a result of the ever-increasing policies and practices of oppression, domination and criminality.

For years, our organisations have urged the international community to take urgent and immediate steps towards holding Israel accountable, warning them that the worst is yet to come if impunity persists. Our calls have gone unanswered and as a result, today, we are facing a regime whose leaders are perpetrating a live-streamed genocide against Palestinians in Gaza unafraid of publicly declaring their genocidal intentions.

For 14 months, Israel has been subjecting the residents of Gaza to total annihilation with the apparent intent of destroying any form of Palestinian life or history. Over 150,000 Palestinians have been killed, injured, or still missing. Almost the entire population has been forcibly displaced and subjected to starvation. Thousands more Palestinians have been taken from Gaza and transferred to Israeli prisons and detention camps, with no information about their fate and whereabouts. Entire villages, towns and cities were erased from existence as well as hospitals, schools, universities and cultural and religious sites.

As we are here today, Israel is effectively implementing the so-called Generals' Plan, emptying the North Gaza governorate, Jabalaya, Beit Lahia, and Beit Hanoun, from surviving Palestinians who refuse to be once again uprooted from their land. Palestinians in these areas have been subjected to a complete siege and denied any means of survival as Israel continues its policy of bringing down crowded houses on top of its residents' head, erasing entire families from the registry in the process. Ambulances, civil defense crews, and humanitarian trucks are attacked, killed, and denied entry while thousands are suffering from the lack of medical treatment and starvation. Since the implementation of the plan began on 5 October 2024, it is estimated that at least 2,700 Palestinians have been killed and over 10,000 have been injured, in these areas amid a lack of media coverage.

On [21 November 2024](#), six months after the ICC's Prosecutor's request, ICC Pre-Trial Chamber I issued arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Gallant in what our organizations view as a historic and pivotal moment in the battle against Israel's impunity. However, we would like to stress that this decision is long overdue considering the length of Israel's genocide and the longstanding crimes in the OPT. Nevertheless, the arrest warrants serve as a strong reminder that the pursuit of justice for the Palestinian people, no matter how long it takes, is never in vain.

This decision comes amid intensive attacks and threats targeting the Court and its personnel, a concerted campaign mainly carried out by the United States and Israel. As the new Trump administration prepares to assume power in 2025, the troubling precedent of sanctions on former ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda signals an even graver threat to international justice. These actions undermine the Court's independence and embolden efforts to block accountability for serious crimes in the Situation in the State of Palestine, as well as in all other ICC situations, including Ukraine, Afghanistan, Bangladesh/Myanmar, Venezuela, and beyond. We urge all State Parties to the Rome Statute to strengthen protections for the ICC and its personnel, ensuring it can operate free from political manipulation and retaliation, and uphold the principles of justice and the rule of law.

Several States parties to the Rome Statute, including France, Italy, Netherlands, Hungary, Greece, and Argentina, have made troubling statements signaling their intentions not to abide by their legal obligation to arrest the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu if in the event he plans a visit to their country. We call on States Parties to honor and respect their obligations under the Rome Statute. Article 27 of the Rome Statute states in a clear and explicit manner that the “Statute shall apply equally to all persons without any distinction based on official capacity.” Recent ICC jurisprudence confirms this. On 24 October, the Pre-Trial Chamber found that Mongolia failed to comply with its international obligations under the Rome Statute by not executing the Court’s request for the arrest and surrender of Vladimir Putin and referred the matter to the Assembly of States Parties (ASP). The Chamber reiterated that Article 27 removes all immunities, including for sitting heads of state, and emphasised that States Parties must cooperate fully with the Court, regardless of conflicting obligations under international law.

Finally, we call on the ICC Prosecutor, to investigate those responsible for the commission of Rome Statute crimes in the OPT, including additional new charges against Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Gallant, and to submit further requests for arrest warrants concerning those Israeli officials and military commanders who are responsible for the crimes committed against the Palestinian, including but not limited to, the war crime of transfer of civilians of the Occupying Power into occupied territory, crimes related to the establishment of settlements, crimes committed against Palestinian prisoners and detainees, the crime against humanity of apartheid, and the crime of genocide.

Despite the dawn of justice arriving late, we stress that our organizations will continue to work on holding Israeli leaders accountable for the crimes committed against our people. The accountability clock has started ticking.