

*In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful*

**Statement by H.E. Mrs. Zahra Ershadi, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

**before the Special Session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute**

**General Debate**

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**Madam. President.**

We would like to express our gratitude to you and the Secretariat for convening this meeting and the work done in its preparation. The Islamic Republic of Iran as an observer State would like to touch upon a few points under this agenda item.

**Madam. President.**

Aggression undermines the United Nations Charter and seriously threatens rule of law at the international level. The Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States is explicit in stating that “A war of aggression constitutes a crime against the peace, for which there is responsibility under international law”; a statement which points to the customary nature of prohibition of aggression under international law.

The gravity of such unlawful acts is evident, and its devastating consequences are unspeakable; aggression gravely erodes trust and stability, undermines several founding principles of the UN Charter, and incite anarchy and lawlessness in the future of international relations. Aggression defies sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, and further subdues whatever the Charter of the United Nations aspires for “save(ing) succeeding generations from the scourge of war...”, it brings what humankind despised and what rule of law sought to avert: sorrow and chaos.

Having said that, we cannot overlook that despite the abhorrence of aggression and despite numerous international legal bases aiming to uphold the prohibition of aggression, that is a peremptory norm of international law, the world still observes brazen commission of acts of aggression against sovereign States, which alarmingly could render impunity prevalent, condoned, and normalized.

**Madam. President, distinguished colleagues.**

The aggression of the Israeli regime and the United States against my country is the most recent example. Just couple of weeks ago, the Israeli terrorist regime initiated an unprovoked and premeditated aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran while deliberately attacking civilian populated areas in multiple large cities of Iran where millions of people reside, targeting Iranian senior officials, women, children including pregnant women, babies and toddlers as young as 2 months old; as well as various categories of ordinary people, among others, scientists, university professors, students, physicians, artists and athletes, many of whom were killed in cold blood overnight while asleep in their homes; in some cases, an entire family was killed. In the course of its blatant aggression, the Israeli regime killed over a thousand of people while also leaving thousands injured.

The Israeli regime deliberately and persistently targeted civilian infrastructures. In addition to numerous civilian residential buildings, several hospitals including a children's hospital, the Iranian Red Crescent Society building, a section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Tehran, and Evin Prison were among the targets of these heinous attacks. On 16 June 2025, the Iranian State TV was targeted during live broadcast resulting in the martyrdom of several journalists and humanitarian personnel as well as damage to the premises and media equipment, all under protection under international humanitarian law.

The Israeli regime also targeted Iranian peaceful and IAEA-safeguarded nuclear facilities. On 22 June 2025, the United States in full complicity with the regime conducted an unprovoked and premeditated aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran deliberately targeting three Iranian peaceful nuclear facilities of Natanz, Fordow and Isfahan. These reprehensible attacks against Iranian peaceful nuclear facilities which operate under the safeguards and monitoring of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the damages resulting therefrom, pose formidable risks of release of radioactive material, and could further pose risks to civilian population and the environment for that matter.

These acts of aggression by the United States and the Israeli terrorist regime, constitute gross violations of international law and the very purpose and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular, sovereignty, territorial integrity and the prohibition of the threat or use of force enshrined therein; this is, in particular, a blatant violation of article 2(4) of the Charter of the United Nations and further threatens international peace and security. Such attacks also grossly violate international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

**Madam President, distinguished colleagues.**

The entrenched pattern and policy of deliberate, widespread, systematic, and brutal attacks of the genocidal Israeli regime directed against civilians including its intentional killing and infliction of grievous bodily harm as well as its willful targeting of civilian objects and properties also constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes, among others. Such crimes and violations must unequivocally be condemned by all and must be prevented. Acquiesce, inaction and omission against such atrocities would only embolden the perpetrator to commit more crimes.

As we are convened here to address various differing views on how to ensure accountability for aggression, we should ask ourselves of the real deeply-rooted flaw that has rendered, by way of example, the UN Security Council unable to prevent and stop such blatant aggression against my country; we should ask why the international community has not been able to stop the ongoing aggression and genocide of the Israeli regime against Palestinian people throughout past seven decades and particularly over the last two years. The response is axiomatic; lack of genuine commitment and good faith in performance of obligations in tandem with the prolific double standards and selectivity towards administration of justice.

It is a sobering fact that in spite of the clear dicta of the International Court of Justice rejecting use of force, the *jus cogens* character of the prohibition of aggression, the obligation of States, *inter alia*, to refrain from aiding or assisting the aggressor in any manner, and the due diligence duty in this respect, certain western countries, in particular, the United States, are willfully providing military, including transfer of arms, economic, political and diplomatic support to the Israeli regime in commission of atrocious crimes in the region. The United States has paralyzed the UN Security Council; each time the US vetoes even a simple resolution calling for cessation of the Israeli brutal attacks against civilians, more people including women and children are being killed in Palestine by the Israeli regime. This reveals more than before the threats that double standards and nonperformance of obligations on the basis of political considerations pose not just to the international peace and security but the erosion they inflict upon the very bases of international law.

The International Criminal Court has been entrusted with the critical responsibility of ensuring that perpetrators of the most egregious crimes under international law do not operate with impunity. The objective sought in conferring such a mandate upon the Court emanates from the very idea that certain serious crimes considered as *delicta juris gentium*, deeply shock the conscience of humanity and thus require arrangements that while being complementary to national jurisdiction provide a framework to effectively prosecute such crimes. Such an important responsibility instills strong expectations in the international community as a whole that the Court should reject politicization, double standards, and selectivity.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate that any exercise should not exacerbate the acute challenges; we must be circumspect at malicious attempts that aim to change the place of aggressor and victim, such attempts must be prevented; self-defense must be defended without doubt; aggression must be penalized with severe consequences.

We will follow the deliberations and various aspects of discussions while reserving any further position on the matter.

**I thank you.**