

Palestine's Legal Scene

Your weekly survey of the most important publications and activities related to Palestine, from local and international sources

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By Law for Palestine

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This weekly report reviews the legal dynamics of the Palestine question, and everything related to international law and Palestine. The report includes an account of the most important publications, activities, and conferences related to Palestine at the local, regional, international levels. The report further covers decisions, decrees, and judicial orders affecting the Palestinian cause, whether made at the official, academic or public levels. The report aims to be a reference for monitoring, documenting, and archiving the latest human rights developments related to Palestine, and to present them to individuals, researchers, study centers, and official, academic, and legal institutions concerned.

Judicial decrees, decisions, positions, and orders issued by official Palestinian bodies:

- **The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs [condemned](#) the massacre by Israeli forces targeting displaced people near Rafah, resulting in dozens of martyrs. The Ministry stated this crime proves Israel's war targets Palestinian civilians. Palestinian UN Representative Riyad Mansour [sent](#) letters to UN leaders, urging the Security Council to stop the genocide in Gaza and calling on the international community to impose an embargo and sanction on Israel to end its occupation. (May 29, 2024)**

Judicial decrees, decisions, positions, and orders issued by official Israeli bodies:

- **The Israeli Knesset approved a preliminary reading of two bills, one proposed by Knesset member [Yulia Malinovsky](#), seeking to designate the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) as a terrorist organization and sever all official relations with it,**

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while the other, presented by Knesset member [Dan Elep](#), aims to strip UNRWA of the immunity granted to United Nations organizations in Israel. (May 29, 2024)

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- The Israeli newspaper "Haaretz" [reported](#) that an investigation by the Israeli military police revealed that the deaths of two Gaza Strip citizens last March were caused by Israeli soldiers beating them after their arrest and transfer to the "Sde Teman" detention facility near Beersheba. This contradicts the soldiers' claim that road conditions were to blame. The investigation has questioned several soldiers but none have been arrested, similar to over 33 other cases of deaths of Gaza residents transferred to Israel during the war.
- The Israeli Foreign Minister [criticized](#) the Slovenian government's decision, based on the Slovenian parliament's recommendation, to recognize the Palestinian state. He claimed that the decision "rewards Hamas for murder, rape, mutilation of bodies, beheading of babies." He added, "I hope the Slovenian Parliament rejects this recommendation". (May 30, 2024)
- The Israeli Foreign Minister [rejected](#) Spain's request to lift restrictions on its consulate in Jerusalem, and stressed that Israel will not tolerate unilateral recognition of a terrorist Palestinian state led by Hamas. He warned that any contact between the Spanish Consulate and the Palestinian Authority poses a threat to Israeli national security, and that any violations could lead to the closure of the consulate. (May 31, 2024)
- In response to Biden's announcement of what he said was an Israeli proposal to stop the war in Gaza, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office [announced](#) that the war in Gaza would continue until Hamas is "destroyed." (May 31, 2024)

Judicial decrees, decisions, positions, and orders issued by Arab, European, and international bodies:

- UN Secretary-General António Guterres [welcomed](#) passage of life-saving humanitarian assistance and fuel from Egypt into Gaza through the Kerem Shalom crossing, and stressed that the Israeli authorities must facilitate the safe pickup and delivery of humanitarian supplies, as the humanitarian operation is on the brink of collapse. He further expressed dismay at the failure to implement recent orders from the International Court of Justice regarding the situation in Gaza. (May 26, 2024)
- [The Sultanate of Oman](#), [Egypt](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [Iraq](#), [Bahrain](#), [the UAE](#), [the Maldives](#), [Qatar](#), [Kuwait](#), [Cuba](#), [Jordan](#), and [Slovenia](#) condemned the Israeli forces' targeting of a displaced persons camp

in Rafah, Gaza Strip. The countries emphasized the necessity for the international intervention to deter Israeli actions in Rafah. Meanwhile, Canadian Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly [expressed](#) her concern at the strikes that resulted in the deaths of Palestinian civilians in Rafah stating that Canada does not support any Israeli military operation in Rafah and called for an immediate ceasefire. European Council President Charles Michel [stated](#) "It is horrendous to see innocent Palestinian civilians killed in the recent attack. There is no safe zone for the internally displaced in Rafah," demanding that Israel fully respect the International Court of Justice and immediately halt its attack on Rafah. French President Emmanuel Macron [expressed](#) his anger over the attack, noting the absence of safe areas for Palestinian civilians in Rafah. Finnish Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen [called](#) on Israel to respect the decisions of the International Court of Justice and international humanitarian law. She stated that "Finland has consistently urged Israel to refrain from attacking Rafah, with high numbers of displaced people." (May 27-28, 2024)

- The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, [condemned](#) the Israeli airstrikes that hit the displaced persons' tents in the city of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip. He called for a thorough and transparent investigation into this incident. UN Secretary-General António Guterres also [condemned](#) Israel's actions which killed scores of innocent civilians who were only seeking shelter from this deadly conflict. He emphasized that there is no safe place in Gaza and added that this horror must stop. (May 27, 2024)
- UNRWA Commissioner General, Philip Lazarini, [said](#) that the military operation in Rafah should end immediately, and the flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza must be improved without further delay. He emphasized that "Rafah has turned into hell on earth", stressing that, with the passage of every day, providing assistance and protection becomes almost impossible. He reiterated his call for an immediate ceasefire. (May 27, 2024)
- UNICEF Executive Director, Catherine Russell, [said](#) that images of children and burned families emerging from the bombed tents in Rafah "shock us all." Russel added, "There must be an immediate ceasefire, the unconditional release of all hostages, and an end to the senseless killing of children," Russell [added](#). (May 27, 2024)
- [The Arab Parliament](#), [the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council](#), and the [Organization of Islamic Cooperation](#) denounced the "heinous massacre" committed by the Israeli occupation against displaced Palestinian civilians in the refugee camps in Rafah, in blatant defiance and

flagrant violation of all resolutions, including the recent resolutions of the ICJ, which called for a halt to the military attack on the city of Rafah. (May 27, 2024)

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- The UN Special Rapporteur for the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Francesca Albanese, [said](#) that Israel's bombing of a displaced camp in Rafah, along with blatant defiance of the int'l law and system, is unacceptable. She added that the genocide in Gaza will not end easily and without external pressure, and that "Israel must face sanctions, justice, suspension of agreements, trade, partnership and investments, as well as participation in international forums". (May 27, 2024)
- The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, [said](#) that Israel continues to violate international law with impunity and in contempt of the ruling of the ICJ, which ordered an end to its military action in Rafah. He emphasized that the ICJ's order must be implemented promptly if the global system is to prevail, calling for an immediate ceasefire. (May 27, 2024)
- Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator at the UN, Martin Griffiths, [said](#) that there is no place that is safe in Gaza, not shelters, not hospitals, not the so-called humanitarian zones. He warned that a military operation in Rafah would lead to a slaughter. Griffiths further added: "Whether the attack was a war crime or a "tragic mistake", for the people of Gaza, there is no debate. What happened last night was the latest - and possibly most cruel - abomination. To call it "a mistake" is a message that means nothing for those killed, those grieving, and those trying to save lives". (May 27, 2024)
- UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk [expressed](#) his horror at the further loss of civilian life in Gaza, after Israeli air strikes hit a camp for displaced people in the southern city of Rafah. He added that these airstrikes once again confirm that there is no safe place in Gaza. (May 27, 2024)
- [Spain](#), [Ireland](#), and [Norway](#) announced their official recognition of the State of Palestine and established full diplomatic relations with it. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez stated that this historic decision aims to help Israelis and Palestinians achieve peace. Meanwhile, Irish Deputy Prime Minister Michael Martin announced elevation of the Palestinian mission in Ireland to embassy status and the appointment of a Palestinian ambassador, as well as the upgrade of the Irish representation office in Ramallah to an embassy. Martin affirmed that this recognition

marks the beginning of a process toward pursuing peace and supporting the building of the Palestinian state. (May 28, 2024)

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- The International Court of Justice [announced](#) that it has received a request from Mexico to join the case brought by South Africa against Israel regarding the violation of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. (May 28, 2024)
- United Nations agencies [reiterated](#) their call for an urgent ceasefire and the facilitation of humanitarian access in the aftermath of the "Israeli airstrikes" that hit tents for displaced Palestinians in Rafah, resulting in the deaths of dozens of innocent civilians, including women and children. The spokesperson for the World Health Organization, Dr. Margaret Harris, said: "You are watching people who shouldn't die, die in front of you because you simply either lack the tools, the skills or the supplies to do what needs to be done." (May 28, 2024)
- The World Health Organization expressed [dismay](#) for the airstrike in Rafah that reportedly killed 45 displaced people sheltering in tents. It added that the ongoing closure of the Rafah border, lack of fuel and aid getting into and across Gaza, and frequent mission delays and denials "have choked our ability to support the health system." (May 28, 2024)
- Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel [condemned](#) Israel and called for intensified solidarity with Palestine. He added, "The world must stop the massacre against the Palestinian people now," stressing that the destruction of the camps in Rafah constitutes a great insult to humanity. (May 28, 2024)
- [Saudi Arabia](#), [Jordan](#), the [Sultanate of Oman](#), [Qatar](#), and [Kuwait](#) condemned the continued Israeli targeting of refugee camps in Rafah in the Gaza Strip, as they were bombed again. (May 28/29, 2024)
- Bolivian President Lucho Arce [condemned](#) the Israeli bombardment in Rafah in southern Gaza Strip, which killed dozens of Palestinian civilians. He added that "the new war crime committed by the Israeli army is sinister and inconceivable." He called on the international community to take effective measures against Israel. The Bolivian Foreign Minister [called](#) on Israel to immediately stop the war of genocide to which the Palestinian people are subjected. (May 28/29, 2024)
- The European Union's Foreign Policy Chief, Josep Borrell, has [stated](#) that the EU firmly rejects any attempt to label UNRWA as a terrorist organization. It remains an indispensable life line to

Palestinians. Borrell reiterated the EU's continued support for UNRWA, praising the agency's work and its personnel. He noted that the EU member states have resumed their financial support for the agency, with "the next tranche of EU funding is on its way." (May 29, 2024)

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- Around 50 UN human rights experts have [denounced](#) the ongoing Israeli attacks on the city of Rafah, expressing anger over airstrikes on a camp sheltering displaced civilians in Tel Sultan. They said that "Even if Israeli leaders claim now that the strikes were a 'mistake', they bear international legal responsibility. Calling it a mistake will not make the strikes legal." The experts called for immediate sanctions and other measures by the international community to pressure Israel to comply with international law. (May 29, 2024)
 - The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, [told](#) the UN Security Council that as Israel conducts a significant ground operation in Rafah and its surroundings, "the devastation is only intensifying." He added that the occupied West Bank "remains a pressure cooker of negative trends," while the risk of regional conflict escalates every day. Wennesland warned that the current trajectory "must change if we are to avoid further catastrophe." (May 29, 2024)
 - The World Health Organization representative in the occupied Palestinian territories, Rik Peeperkorn, [said](#) that the attack that hit tents sheltering displaced people in Rafah shows there is no safe place in Gaza at all. Peeperkorn explained that since the closure of the Rafah crossing, only three trucks have entered Rafah through the Kerem Shalom crossing. He described the situation in Gaza as an "overwhelming disaster". (May 29, 2024)
 - During the opening session of the tenth ministerial meeting of the Arab-China Cooperation Forum, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, [called](#) on China, as a permanent member of the Security Council, to play a larger role in promoting international consensus on the two-state solution and turning it into a reality through a reliable irreversible process. (May 30, 2024)
 - Prime Minister of Slovenia, Robert Golob, [announced](#) that the government of Slovenia has taken a decision to recognize the State of Palestine as an independent, sovereign state within the borders drawn by the United Nations resolution of 1967. Golob [said](#) that the decision will be referred to Parliament with a request for support from the representatives. He added that he

“pushed for a swift decision due to recent developments in Rafah, where Israel conducted several deadly attacks.” (May 30, 2024)

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- **The European Union's Crisis Management Commissioner, Janez Lenarčič, [called](#) on Israel to stop its campaign against UNRWA, refrain from proceeding with law designating it as a terrorist organization, and comply with its legal obligations to ensure the safety of UNRWA staff and premises. He emphasized the urgent need for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages, a massive surge of humanitarian assistance to Gaza, and compliance with provisional measures of the International Court of Justice. (May 30, 2024)**
- **British Foreign and Development Secretary David Cameron [expressed](#) his concern about the proposals of Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich to impose further restrictions on the National Authority's finances and expand settlements in the West Bank. He added: “such measures would harm chances for peace, security & stability,” stressing that “We need an effective Palestinian Authority for lasting peace.” (May 30, 2024)**
- **The Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Philippe Lazzarini, [stated](#) that the war in Gaza has produced a blatant disregard for the mission of the United Nations, including outrageous attacks on the employees of UNRWA and facilities. Lazzarini added: "These attacks must stop and the world must act to hold the perpetrators accountable." (May 30, 2024)**
- **The United Nations Population Fund [urged](#) all parties to protect hospitals and healthcare workers who are seeking care. They reported that out of 36 hospitals, 31 have been damaged, leaving no fully operational medical facility. (May 30, 2024)**
- **In a speech before the Security Council, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi [stated](#) that "another forced exodus of Palestinians will only create one more intractable problem and make a solution to this decades-long conflict impossible to find." He emphasized the international commitment that obliges the occupying power not to force civilian populations to flee from the land it occupies. Grandi added that the war in Gaza serves as a tragic reminder of what can happen when conflicts, and consequently refugee crises, are left unresolved. (May 30, 2024)**
- **UNICEF [stated](#) that children in the Mawasi area of Gaza are enduring unimaginable conditions. Living in makeshift tents filled with insects and worms, extreme temperatures, and constant**

fear. The organization emphasized that no child should go through this and stressed the need for an immediate ceasefire. (May 30, 2024)

- The French Ministry of Defense **decided** to cancel the participation of Israeli military industry companies in the “Eurosatory 2024” international exhibition for defense and cybersecurity. The French Ministry of Defense said, “Conditions are no longer met to host Israeli companies at the show at a time when the President is calling for Israel to cease operations in Rafah.” (May 30, 2024)
- **The European Union** and the **Belgian** Foreign Ministry condemned attempts by the Israeli Knesset to classify UNRWA as a terrorist organization and remove the immunities and privileges granted to its staff. They stressed that UNRWA's activities are essential for the Palestinians in the face of the dramatic humanitarian situation in Gaza. (May 31, 2024)
- President Joe Biden **announced** an Israeli proposal for a comprehensive plan to “end the crisis in Gaza,” consisting of three stages, based on a six-week ceasefire, withdrawal of Israeli forces from populated areas, release of some hostages, increase in humanitarian aid, leading to the second stage, which involves negotiations for a permanent cessation of hostilities, Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, and ensuring the release of all hostages. Finally, a major reconstruction of Gaza with international assistance is proposed as part of the third stage. A joint statement by the US, Egypt, and Qatar, as mediators, **was released**, calling on Israel and Hamas to adopt the proposal. The **United Nations**, **European Union**, **French President**, and **Germany** expressed their support for the proposal. (May 31, 2024)
- The European Commission **stated** that it is preparing to disburse the second installment of financial assistance to the Palestinian National Authority amounting to 25 million euros, and 16 million euros to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) to provide basic services such as health and education to Palestinian refugees. (May 31, 2024)
- The UN Human Rights Office in the Occupied Palestinian Territory **expressed** deep concern about the significant impact on Palestinian civil society organizations due to the escalating military operations by Israel in Gaza and the continuous threats and intimidation. It added that “It is clear that the ability of NGOs to monitor and report on gross human rights violations that are being committed by Israel and Palestinian armed groups has been severely undermined at a time when their work is needed more than ever.” (May 31, 2024)

- **Members of the Dutch Parliament [have called](#) for an independent investigation into reports that Israel spied on the International Criminal Court lawyers in the Hague. MPs from the D66 coalition and the Dutch Green-Labor coalition condemned these actions, stressing the Netherlands' responsibility as the international criminal court's host to protect court staff and ensure the court operates independently. (May 31, 2024)**

Publications of human rights NGOs:

- **Amnesty International has [called](#) for an investigation into three Israeli airstrikes in central and southern Gaza that resulted in the deaths of 44 people, including 32 children, last April, urging the International Criminal Court to investigate "war crimes." Erika Guevara-Rosas, Amnesty International's Senior Director said that the organization's investigation offers crucial evidence of unlawful attacks by the Israeli military. (May 27, 2024)**
- **The Norwegian Refugee Council, along with a group of 19 other non-governmental organizations, [call](#) on all members of the UN Security Council to enforce the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) orders regarding Israel's actions in Rafah. (May 27, 2024)**
- **ActionAid [condemned](#) the recent attacks in West Rafah that targetted one of the camps in the southern Gaza Strip. It added, "These shelters were supposed to be safe havens for innocent civilians, yet they became targets of brutal violence." It continued, "The images coming from our partners of the burned bodies are a scar on the face of humanity and the global community, which so far has failed to protect the people of Gaza." (May 27, 2024)**
- **Palestinian human rights organizations, including Al Mezan, Al-Haq, and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) [sent](#) an open letter to the UN Security Council, titled: "Ceasefire Urgently Needed Amid Israel's Genocidal Massacre in Rafah, Defying ICJ Provisional Measures Orders" (May 28, 2024)**
- **The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) [called](#) for a ceasefire and unimpeded humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip, where millions of people face worsening hunger (May 29, 2024)**
- **CNN reported an analysis of video footage from the Israeli airstrike on a refugee camp in Rafah, along with a review conducted by weapons experts, concluding that American-made [munitions](#) were used in the attack. Weapon expert Chris Cobb-Smith stated that this precision bomb is**

used to target strategic objectives and causes minimal collateral damage, however “using any munition, even of this size, will always incur risks in a densely populated area.” (May 29, 2024)

- Investigations conducted by The Guardian, +972 Magazine, and Local Call have [revealed](#) that Israel conducted a secret campaign lasting nearly a decade against the International Criminal Court, involving surveillance, infiltration, pressure, distortion, and threats against senior court officials to obstruct its investigations. The report disclosed that Israeli intelligence intercepted communications of court officials, including current chief prosecutor Karim Khan and former prosecutor Fatou Bensouda. The investigation indicated that the operation was supervised by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and involved various intelligence agencies. Legal experts [stated](#) that Israel's actions to undermine the court's work could amount to "offenses against the administration of justice" and should be investigated by the court's prosecutor. (May 29, 2024)

Legal Achievements/Impacts for Palestine:

- The University of Ghent in Belgium has [announced](#) that it will be ending all institutional collaborations with Israeli universities and research centers. This decision follows an [investigation](#) by the Commission on Human Rights and Democracy (CHRPDUR), which found evidence that these Israeli institutions may be complicit in human rights abuses. Based on the commission's findings, the university has recommended severing ties with any Israeli partners deemed problematic, and withdrawing from joint projects if necessary. Furthermore, the CHRPDUR has proposed that Israel's participation in European research and education programs should be suspended due to the alleged human rights violations. (30\31 May 2024)
- The University of Copenhagen in Denmark has [announced](#) that it would cease investment in companies involved in commercial activities with Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank amid student protests pressuring the campus to cut financial and institutional ties with Israel. The protests demanded that the university cut academic ties with Israel and divests from companies operating in occupied Palestinian territories. The university said it would work with fund managers to manage its investments and ensure they comply with a United Nations list of companies involved in illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank. (May 28, 2024)

- The city of Hamtramck, on the outskirts of Detroit, Michigan, [passed](#) a Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) resolution, becoming the first US city to fully support a boycott campaign in support of Palestinian rights. The [resolution](#) says that Hamtramck shall make all best efforts to refrain from purchasing goods and services from any vendor that is the target of a BDS campaign, as well as refrain from investment in the Israeli state as well as “Israeli companies that sustain Israeli apartheid”. (May 28, 2024)
- An external audit/review by retired Canadian Chief Justice of Nova Scotia [J. Michael MacDonald](#), [concluded](#) Law students at Toronto Metropolitan University who signed a letter of “unequivocal support” for Palestine and “all forms of Palestinian resistance” did not violate the [school’s code of conduct](#). The review also concluded that what the students signed was a valid exercise of their expression and therefore protected under the [university’s statement on freedom of speech](#). It also found that the letter “was understandably troubling and offensive to many” but was not anti-Semitic. (May 31, 2024)