



Date : 21/12/2019

**The decision of the International Criminal Court to open a formal investigation into the committed crimes came after a long delay that amounted to a denial of justice.**

**The decision is a first step on the long journey to achieve justice.**

**The decision enables the court to issue arrest warrants and circulate them to INTERPOL**

**The Security Council should support investigations and do not intervene to suspend them**

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK) welcomed the International Criminal Court Prosecutor's statement regarding the opening of a formal investigation into the committed crimes in Palestine.

AOHR UK confirmed that an objective initial investigation into the case according to the information provided to the court concluded that all the criteria required to open a formal investigation are available and there is no impediment to this investigation being opened.

AOHR UK pointed out that since the first request submitted by the State of Palestine to the International Criminal Court to investigate the crimes committed from 13th June 2014 onwards, and the subsequent requests to join and referral to the court. Since then, the Office of the Prosecutor has proceeded very slowly in investigations and today and after five years a decision has been taken to open An official investigation. The journey to complete justice is still long.

AOHR UK stressed that the suffering of the Palestinian people did not begin in June 2014, but dates back decades, since 1948 and through 1967, Serious crimes



committed against the Palestinians and remain outside the scope of justice, because the Rome Statute does not allow consideration of crimes committed before its effective date which is 1st July 2002.

Until this day, the Israeli occupation continues to commit various crimes against the Palestinian people, including mass killings, arrest, torture, land confiscation, settlement building, aggression against the holy places and impose brutal blockade on Gaza Strip with major three wars resulting in thousands of casualties; and all the while, these crimes are being met with silence from the international community, who have not moved an inch to help, deplore the crimes or act against them.

During the Trump era, injustice escalated to a new level when Trump declared Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and moved the United States embassy to Jerusalem in serious violation of all UN resolutions and international law. He also stopped UNRWA's support – UNRWA being the only witness to the displacement of Palestinians. And the most dangerous of Trump's actions was the decision he took considering settlements to no longer be illegal.

The absence of justice, and the support the occupation has received over the years, has made the occupation persist in committing its various crimes and continue in its settlement building. Only recently, Naftali Bennett proposed a project to build a residential neighbourhood in the heart of the old city of Hebron, and Netanyahu put forward his plan to annex the Jordan Valley region on the Jordanian border. This is all alongside the continual building of thousands of settlement housing units, the killings, arrests and torture. Every year UN reports are issued documenting hundreds of cases.

Indeed the crimes committed in Palestine needs a special court to deliver justice similar to the courts of Yugoslavia and Rwanda, but the forces supporting Israel are preventing the establishment of such a court, although it is possible to bypass the Security Council under the Uniting for Peace resolution through the UN General Assembly.



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Until the time comes when the international community meets to form a special court, today we have a permanent court with a specific temporal jurisdiction that can play an important role in achieving justice for the victims who have fallen since June 2014.

AOHR UK called on all states specifically the members of the Security Council to support the process of investigation and not interfere with the conduct of the investigations that will be initiated by the Prosecutor. There is a fear that the members of the Security Council will agree - for political and supportive reasons to Israel - to stop the investigations for a year as stipulated in the Rome Agreement.

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