

The Occupied Territories and International Law

The era of impunity for Israeli decision-makers is over

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The International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor's request to issue arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on suspicion of committing war crimes in Gaza signals Israel's rapid decline into a moral abyss.

The international community is signaling to Israel that it can no longer maintain its policy of violence, killing and destruction without accountability. Likewise, the request for arrest warrants against Hamas leaders for the crimes of October 7 is important and draws a red line where harm to civilians is concerned.

Given the escalating violence, it is our duty to state clearly: the Israeli regime that controls the territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea cannot, and does not want to, investigate its crimes against the Palestinians. For decades, Israel has used its domestic law enforcement system as a whitewash mechanism to deflect international criticism. "The system does not investigate the orders themselves, nor the responsibility of those who issue them or who determine the policy", stated B'Tselem in its report *The Fig Leaf of Occupation*.

The Israeli violence directed at Palestinians to perpetuate the occupation is state violence and is inherent to the Israeli apartheid regime. This is true in the West Bank, in the Gaza Strip and everywhere else. The ICC intervention and ICJ rulings are a chance for us, Israelis, to realize what we should have understood long ago: that upholding a regime of supremacy, violence and oppression necessarily involves crimes and severe violation of human rights.

We call on the international community to act urgently to bring about a ceasefire and a deal for the release of all the hostages, in order to stop the bloodshed and humanitarian catastrophe.

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P.S.

• B'Tselem. 20 May 2024:
https://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20240520_the_era_of_impunity_for_israeli_decision_makers_is_over