



By: *Tomorrow's Affairs Staff*

# Can Israel defend itself against accusations of genocide?



Following the International Court of Justice, Israel was also **accused** before the UN Human Rights Council of committing genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza.

Despite vigorously denying such accusations and having many influential allies, each day of prolonging its military operation in Gaza fuels the world's belief that Israel is guilty of genocide.

The number of people who will read the report of Francesca Albanese, special rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council, is insignificant compared to the millions globally who will only care about the sentence from the title - Anatomy of a Genocide.

The author of the report has a lengthy anti-Israel background, fuelled with anti-Semitism and unwavering support for the Palestinians—even when their extremists carry out massive acts of terrorism against Israel—which even fewer people will notice.

Israel's image has been drastically deteriorating at a fast pace. For decades, the mention of Jews and genocide evoked memories of the Holocaust; presently, Gaza is the first place that comes to mind for many.

## The UN is the principal channel for creating the perception of genocide

The United Nations system serves as the principal channel for the current change in perception of Israel.

Israel was exposed to official accusations of having committed genocide within just 2 months in front of 2 of its significant bodies. Last January, South Africa **filed a lawsuit** against Israel before the ICJ for violating the UN Convention on Genocide, and that proceeding is ongoing.

Ms Albanese, employed by this body since March 2022 as a special rapporteur for Palestine, expressed the same conclusion in

front of the Human Rights Council in Geneva at the beginning of the week.

**"There are reasonable grounds to believe that the threshold indicating the commission of the following acts of genocide against Palestinians in Gaza has been met" - Francesca Albanese**

Her **25-page report** is sharp and unambiguous, concluding: "There are reasonable grounds to believe that the threshold indicating the commission of the following acts of genocide against Palestinians in Gaza has been met."

At the same time, but before the ICJ in The Hague, Ireland announced that it would file an argument in the proceedings initiated by South Africa against Israel. Unlike its allies (the US and many in the EU), Ireland will almost certainly be critical of Israel, as it has long condemned the civilian casualties in Gaza.

"It has to stop. The view of the international community is clear. Enough is enough," said Micheál Martin, Ireland's foreign minister, regarding his government's possible move before the ICJ. Even though he did not talk about the content of the Irish argument, he quite clearly announced the direction his government's position would take.

## Political pressures translated into proceedings before the UN

The proceedings before the ICJ and the report of the special rapporteur before the UN Human Rights Council are a kind of institutionalised position against the Israeli action in Gaza, manifested for months in street protests around the world.

Labelling Israel as committing genocide in UN bodies is a sublimated expression of the position of 2 large anti-Israel groups, which have been very vocal in their condemnation of its actions in Gaza until now.

South Africa's lawsuit against Israel for genocide is a legal expression of the political position of all those countries that traditionally confront Israel's policy towards the Palestinians.

South Africa, as a traditional ally of the Palestinians, is only the representative of all those countries before the ICJ and the bearer of an initiative that essentially has the broad support of anti-Western governments around the world.



*The voice of Francesca Albanese before the UN Human Rights Council was the voice of all left-wing activists who have been organising street protests, university blockades, performances*

The voice of Francesca Albanese before the UN Human Rights Council was, on the other hand, the voice of all left-wing activists (particularly in the West) who have been organising street protests, university blockades, performances and similar actions (often violent) against Israel's policies since October 7.

The author of the report herself has the image of an anti-Israel activist. Because of her anti-Semitic views, the Israeli government **banned** her from entering the country as an undesirable person last February, even if she tried to travel with a UN diplomatic passport.

The trigger for that decision was her statement that the terrorist attacks by Hamas on Israel on October 7 were "a response to Israeli oppression."

A cease-fire in Gaza is a

## prerequisite for defence against accusations

The UN system is dysfunctional and unable to respond to its mission of preserving and promoting peace in the world. The UN system is also heavily politically contaminated by the influence of the most notorious autocracies, which stems from their membership in the Organisation.

For example, the UN Human Rights Council could not prevent an Iranian representative from chairing the Council's Social Forum last November. One of the most repressive regimes in the world presided over a high-level UN meeting dedicated to the promotion of human rights.

Last May, the World Health Organisation, also part of the UN system, did not refrain from including a representative of North Korea in its Executive Board, a country with the lowest level of human rights protection, including the occurrence of mass starvation.

**Despite the severe damage to its reputation and impartiality, the UN is still perceived by millions of people as an objective global authority for protecting peace and human rights**

The actions carried out against Israel through the UN system are not credible. Ms Albanese, for example, in the conclusion of her report, called for the immediate restoration of funding to the UN Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), despite **abundant evidence** of the cooperation of members of the agency with Hamas in carrying out terrorist actions.

However, despite the severe damage to its reputation and impartiality, the UN is still perceived by millions of people as an objective global authority for protecting peace and human rights.

Israel will hardly be able to deal with the consequences of the negative and, in many

ways, a synchronised campaign of genocide accusations if it only relies on discrediting the bearers of those accusations.

The word "genocide" is heavily embedded in the context of the Israeli operation in Gaza, and legal actions before high UN bodies contributed a lot to this. No matter how flawed and politically motivated the actions of South Africa and the Human Rights Council rapporteur against Israel might be, they leave an impact on global public opinion.

A significant step forward for Israel in defence against these accusations could only be agreeing to a ceasefire and ending the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. Without this precondition, its fight against the accusations of genocide will not be effective.