

# Israeli massacre of children in Gaza is “greatest of any conflict in recorded warfare,” UN expert warns

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Israel’s killing and wounding of children in Gaza is the “greatest of any conflict in recorded warfare,” UN human rights expert Chris Sidoti said in a press briefing Wednesday.

Sidoti, along with commission chair and International Court of Justice judge Navanethem Pillay, is a member of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which is the official United Nations body of inquest into the war in Gaza.

Sidoti and Pillay delivered a report on the Commission’s findings and recommendations to the United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday, followed by a press conference. Their report accused Israel of the “extermination” of Palestinians, and reasserted that it is the obligation of all states to cease any cooperation with the Israeli occupation.

In July, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that Israel’s occupation of Palestine is unlawful, ordering all countries to cease enabling it.

The ruling by the ICJ and the reports of the commission of inquiry rip to shreds the justification of the imperialist powers for their support of the Gaza genocide on the grounds that Israel has the “right to defend itself.”

In reality, the ICJ and commission of inquiry found that Israel not only has no right to “defend itself” against a population it illegally occupies, but other countries also have no right to enable that occupation by funding and arming it.

In a blunt condemnation of the complete breakdown of international law embodied in the Gaza genocide, Sidoti declared, “Our reports, the decision of the International Court of Justice, resolutions passed by the

Security Council in the last 13 months, and resolutions passed by the General Assembly—none of those have resulted in a single child not being killed.” He continued, “Not a single child has not died because of all of these actions. And that’s the reality that confronts the whole United Nations system today.”

Sidoti gave a succinct summation of the impact of the genocide on children, stating, “As of last week, 13,319 children have been killed in Gaza, of whom 786 were under the age of one. In addition, 165 children have been killed in the West Bank.”

“Kids aren’t terrorists,” Sidoti emphasized:

We have had thousands and thousands of kids killed, and that’s not even including those who are injured, those who are under the rubble, those who have lost limbs. It’s been said that the amputations of limbs of children are the greatest in any conflict in recorded modern warfare. Kids who have lost parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, have experienced now 13 months of severe food deprivation, leading to a situation that is now described as acute malnutrition.

He added:

Kids cannot go through what they have gone through in the last 12 months without it having an enormous impact on them for their entire lives. But that is certainly the case physically

for kids who have lost arms or legs or both, and we've met them. We've met them in hospitals, we've interviewed them. This is a lifelong result...

In her remarks, Pillay declared "that it's the responsibility of every state, it's their obligation under international law, to take positive steps to end the occupation" of Gaza by Israel.

A position paper published by the commission declared that "states have positive obligations, under both the Geneva Conventions and the Genocide Convention. States must ensure that Israel is not committing or preparing to commit violations of international humanitarian law. States must also prevent or punish genocide."

It declared that "any state engaged in such transfer or trade to Israel shall cease its transfer or trade until the state is satisfied that the goods and technology subject to the transfer or trade are not contributing to maintaining the unlawful occupation or to the commission of war crimes or genocide."

When asked about the legal obligations of states, Pillay said, "You have to change your attitude in the way you treat these two states, Palestine and Israel. You have to distinguish between them, so one is an occupier and the other occupied. And the onus then lies on every state under international law to take steps not to cooperate with the occupation itself."

Dismissing claims by the imperialist powers that the war began with the October 7 attack by Hamas on Israel, Pillay declared, "History didn't start on the seventh of October, and we have recorded again and again the huge violations that occurred historically. It's the occupation."

When asked to clarify the commission's position that the Israeli occupation of Palestine is illegal, Sidoti gave a definitive answer: "We have defined it as an occupation. So has the International Court of Justice. This is now a decision taken by the most authoritative judicial body in the international system. There is no higher authority than the ICJ, and there is nowhere else to go to get a higher opinion or even an alternative opinion."

He added, "So our opinion has been superseded by that of the most authoritative body in the international

system, and it was the Court that said that states, individually and collectively, have a responsibility not to aid or assist the continuation of the occupation, the maintenance of the settlements, the establishment of new settlements."

Despite categorical assertions of their concern, the United States and other imperialist powers are only deepening their collaboration with Israel in the Gaza genocide. This month, the United States sent 100 combat troops to Israel to directly participate in the war launched by Israel throughout the Middle East.

The genocide is continuing and accelerating. In a report Tuesday, the UN's human rights office reported that Israel killed 343 people in seven separate recent "mass casualty incidents." The report noted that "on 24 October, between 150 to 200 people were reportedly killed or injured when a residential block of eleven houses was hit in Jabalya refugee camp." It added, "On 29 October, 93 Palestinians were killed or went missing under the rubble following an Israeli strike on a residential building in Beit Lahia."



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