



ASP24

General Debate

Joint Statement by the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), Al-Haq, and Al Mezan Center for Human Rights

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The situation in the State of Palestine continues to deteriorate as Israel accelerates its settler colonialism and intensifies the commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide against the Palestinian people.

Instead of standing up to these international crimes and fighting impunity, we are witnessing unprecedented attack on the world's only permanent international criminal court for its activity in relation to the situation in Palestine.

The United States and Israel have been directing a campaign of sustained harassment, intimidation, threats, and sanctions against officials of the International Criminal Court as well as against non-governmental organisations and individuals cooperating with the Court.

So far, nine ICC officials, including six judges, have been sanctioned by the U.S for the simple of carrying out their mandate in accordance with the Rome Statute.

Moreover, United Nations Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese, and our organisations: Al-Haq, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights and Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, have also been also sanctioned by the U.S government for their cooperation with the Court in fighting Israel's decades long impunity as well as Addameer.

Such actions directly undermine the independence of the judiciary, obstruct the Court's mandate under the Rome Statute, and threaten the safety and integrity of all those engaged in pursuit of justice.

Regrettably, the reaction by the States Parties to the Rome States has been weak so far, raising many questions about the commitment of states to the principles of justice enshrined in the Rome Statute.

This dire situation is further undermined by the the lack of cooperation by States with the Court's arrest warrants issued for Israeli officials.

Such actions not only weaken the Court but they tell the world that the political interests of powerful governments outweigh any commitments to principles and values of justice.

At the same time, the Court itself must not retreat, but must act without fear. The Court must demonstrate through both, words and actions, that it will not be deterred to hold perpetrators accountable.

For Palestinian victims, accountability is not an abstract principle. It is the difference between endless cycles of domination and oppression, and the possibility of a future grounded in justice and dignity.

To conclude, history will judge whether states rose to the occasion to affirm and protect the principles of justice and accountability for the victims or whether they jeopardised the entire international legal system to protect the political interests of criminals shielded by powerful states.

Madame President, our organisations call on the Assembly of the States Parties to the Rome Statute to:

- Unequivocally defend the ICC against political interference, threats, and sanctions;
- Condemn and reject US sanctions targeting Court officials and those cooperating with it, including civil society organisations.
- Ensure full cooperation with the ICC, including by enforcement of all arrest warrants without exception;

We also call on the Office of the Prosecutor of the Court to:

- Advance and expand investigations into the Situation in the State of Palestine, in line with the its obligations under the Rome Statue and its policies on children as well as sexual and gender-based crimes.
- Expedite the issuance arrest warrants for Israeli officials on charges relating to crimes committed in the Situation in the State of Palestine, including the crime of genocide.

Thank you.