

Support UNGA Res. Calling for Sanctions on Israel to implement ICJ Ruling on Illegality of its Occupation

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The Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC), the largest coalition in Palestinian society leading the global BDS movement, **calls for immediate pressure on all States to support the updated [resolution](#) tabled at the UN General Assembly calling for sanctions on Israel**. The resolution is aimed at enacting the [July 2024 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice \(ICJ\)](#) about the illegality of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory and its violation of the prohibition of apartheid under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). A vote is expected in a few days.

This resolution, a diluted version of an [earlier draft](#), **falls below the [bare minimum](#) of the [legal obligations](#) of States** to implement the ICJ ruling, undoubtedly a result of intense bullying and intimidation by the colonial West (led by the US)—Israel's partners in the ongoing Gaza genocide against 2.3 million Palestinians. By relegating ending the Gaza genocide to an after thought, the resolution ignores its *utmost* urgency.

Despite such obvious failure, the resolution does call for:

- Ending Israel's illegal occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, within 12 months;
- **Ending States' complicity in aiding or maintaining this occupation by imposing trade and military sanctions** such as "ceasing the importation of any products originating in the Israeli settlements, as well as the provision or transfer of arms, munitions and related equipment" to Israel. In April 2024, the UN Human Rights Council [called](#) for an embargo on "the sale, transfer and diversion of arms, munitions and other military equipment to Israel, the occupying Power;"
- Preventing, prohibiting and eradicating Israel's violations of article 3 of CERD identified in the advisory opinion, regarding apartheid;
- Imposing sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes, against individuals and entities engaged in the maintenance of Israel's unlawful occupation.

Limited in scope to addressing a mere subset of Palestinian rights, the resolution **does not, indeed cannot, legally or morally prejudice the other rights of the Indigenous people of Palestine, particularly the right of our refugees since the 1948 Nakba to return** and receive reparations and the right of the Palestinian people, including those who are citizens of apartheid Israel, to liberation from settler-colonialism and apartheid.

Supporting this resolution would therefore be only a step in the right direction. It **cannot absolve States of their legal and moral obligations to end all complicity with Israel's regime of oppression**. Meaningful targeted sanctions by States and inter-state groups (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Arab League, African Union, etc.) remain absolutely necessary to stop Israel's genocide and end its occupation and apartheid. Failing to do so would further shatter international law's credibility and relevance to the global majority.

Dozens of UN human rights experts have [confirmed](#) that the ICJ ruling "has finally reaffirmed a principle that seemed unclear, even to the United Nations: **Freedom from foreign military occupation, racial segregation and apartheid is absolutely non-negotiable**." The ruling in effect affirms that [BDS is not just a right but also "an obligation"](#) and it constitutes a [paradigm shift](#) from one centered on "negotiations" between oppressor and oppressed to one centered on accountability, sanctions and enforcement to end the system of oppression and to uphold the inalienable, internationally recognized rights of the Palestinian people.

To sincerely implement the ICJ ruling on the occupation and fulfil the legal obligations triggered by the court's earlier finding that Israel is plausibly perpetrating genocide in Gaza, and in line with the demands by UN human rights experts, all States must be pressured to immediately:

- Impose a comprehensive arms embargo on Israel, including the export, import, shipping and transit of military and dual-use items, military cooperation, and academic and industrial research;
- Impose sanctions on trade, finance, travel, technology and cooperation with Israel;
- "Review all diplomatic, political, and economic ties with Israel, inclusive of business and finance, pension funds, academia and charities," as stated by UN experts, to [ensure](#) an end to all complicity in Israel's illegal occupation;
- Impose an embargo on oil, coal and other energy exports to Israel;
- Declare support for suspending apartheid Israel's membership in the UN, as apartheid South Africa was suspended;
- Take immediate actions to ensure that their economic relationship with Israel and the [activities of corporations](#) domiciled in their territories do not breach their duty to prevent and to not be complicit in genocide and are not complicit in Israel's commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity;
- Reaffirm the right of Palestinian refugees to return, as per UNGA Res. 194, and fully support UNRWA until this right can be exercised.