

New legal fronts to open More states to sue Israel over Gaza crimes



International Desk

Israel faces heightened international scrutiny in the International Court of Justice for its actions in Palestine, with the United Nations asserting that its "relentless" bombardment of Gaza violates international law.

Indonesia and Slovenia have shown their support for another case against Israel at the ICJ concerning violations of the rights of Palestinians.

Both countries said that they will be joining proceedings that seek an advisory opinion on Israel's control of, and policies, on the

occupied Palestinian territory. The hearing will begin on 19 February.

The UN General Assembly voted in December 2022 to request that the ICJ issue an advisory opinion on whether Israeli policies against Palestinians violated international law.

The request was made almost a year before the beginning of Israel's ongoing war on Gaza, in which more than 24,000 people have been killed in the Palestinian territory.

"The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination must be respected. Israel's occupation

of Palestine, which has lasted for more than 70 years, will not erase the right of the Palestinian people to independence," Indonesia's Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi was quoted as saying by the Indonesian foreign ministry.

Ljubljana said that Israel's war on Gaza and increased Israeli violence in the occupied West Bank were the reasons for its decision to take part in the action.

"In the light of recent events in Gaza and the West Bank, Slovenia, as one of the few EU countries, has decided to actively participate and present its views in these

proceedings before the International Court of Justice, which has been asked to give an advisory opinion," Slovenian Foreign Minister Tanja Fajon said at a press conference.

In a separate case at the ICJ, public hearings were held last week for South Africa's case that accused Israel of committing genocide in Gaza.

South Africa's case against Israel was backed by several countries. A decision on whether to back the demands of South Africa, which includes an immediate cease-fire in Gaza, is due to be made by the court in the next few weeks.

Indonesia said it supported South Africa's case against Israel, though it is not a signatory of the 1948 Genocide Convention. Slovenia has been calling since October for a cease-fire in Gaza. Also the European Parliament on Thursday called for a "permanent cease-fire" in Gaza - but on condition that all Israeli hostages are released immediately and Hamas dismantled.

Violence case at ICC

Meanwhile, Mexico and Chile expressed "growing worry" on Thursday over "an escalation of violence" after several months of war between Israel and Hamas in a referral to the International Criminal Court (ICC) over possible crimes.

Hamas launched a surprise attack in Israel in October, killing 1,200.

The Israeli retaliatory offensive on the Hamas-led Gaza Strip has led to increasing international alarm and scrutiny over the deaths of civilians, especially children. Gaza health authorities said on Thursday the war's death toll had risen to 24,620, with many more feared buried under the rubble.

In a statement, Mexico's Foreign Ministry argued that the ICC was the proper forum to establish potential criminal responsibility, "whether committed by agents of the occupying power or the occupied power".

"The action by Mexico and Chile is due to growing worry over the latest escalation of violence, particularly against civilian targets," it said.

Both the ICJ and the ICC handle cases of alleged genocide, with the former resolving disputes between states and the latter prosecuting individuals for crimes.

Pakistan-Iran tension: Resolution lies only in diplomacy

By Syed Ali Hassan
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OPINION

Iran and Pakistan have traded barbs after both sides launched cross-border strikes with heavy weaponry.

Iran targeted the hideouts of Jaish al-Adl in Pakistan's Panjgur and Turbat in Baluchistan late on Tuesday in response to two deadly attacks by terrorist group on Iranian border guards. In the border region of Saravan in Iran, according to Iranian media, nine individuals were killed in attacks by the Pakistani military.

In such a complex situation, the primary issue continues to be the secondary status, with the presence of terrorist havens and the resulting terrorism in both countries. Iran and Pakistan have exchanged evidence regarding terrorist havens and the elements involved in terrorism at the official level.

The insurgency of nationalist and militant forces is at an alarming level in Pakistani Baluchistan, receiving support and approval from the local population. Similarly, incidents of terrorism persist in Iranian Sistan and Baluchestan.

However, the situation in Iranian Sistan and Baluchestan does not mirror that of Pakistani Baluchistan. The border areas of Iranian Sistan and Baluchestan, including the capital city Zahedan as well as Chabahar port, are predominantly inhabited by Sunni Muslims, who share familial ties with Baloch residents in Pakistan.

Due to this shared cultural connection, both brotherly nations have granted special status to the Baloch residing on the border. Local Baloch can travel between the two countries without visas, and Baloch residents on both sides engage in marriages, forming close bonds. The border area carries a history of friendly relations and brotherhood.

I have personally witnessed instances of religious harmony in Sistan and Baluchestan multiple times. In the grand mosque and affiliated seminaries in Zahedan, many people, including followers of the prominent Pakistani Islamic scholar Mufti Taqi Usmani, offer prayers on Fridays. This includes individuals from the Shia sect as well.

Governments of Pakistan and Iran must unite to thwart the designs of foreign powers and prevent further tragic events. The terrorist organization Jaish al-Adl is active in Iran, and Pakistan is well aware of its activities. The organization poses a clear threat to Iranian nation. Both Pakistan and Iran are aware of the roots of the issue. Pakistan acknowledges that it lacks the means to prevent elements with nefarious designs from entering Iran through its 900-kilometer-long border.

In 2019, Pakistan and Iran agreed to form a joint Rapid Reaction Force with the aim of ensuring the protection of border areas and targeting separatist groups. Pakistan and Iran need to put into action the Rapid Reaction Force promptly to resolve border issues and mitigate the common threat of terrorism. Otherwise, both countries will continue to face the consequences. Both neighbors need to address this issue through diplomatic channels, as the region cannot afford a new cycle of hostilities.

From military strikes to diplomacy

Iran, Pakistan stress 'brotherly' ties

International Desk

Iran and Pakistan are determined to resolve issues through dialogue after an exchange of military strikes between the two "brotherly" nations. Iran has addressed "the friendly and brotherly government of Pakistan" after a tiff over Islamabad's drone attack on an Iranian village near their border, calling on Islamabad to prevent the establishment of "terrorist bases" on its soil.

In a statement issued on

Thursday, Iran's Foreign Ministry said it "condemns the unbalanced and unacceptable action of Pakistan in the drone attack on non-Iranian citizens in a village on the border wall of the two countries".

Nine people, including four children, were killed after Islamabad admitted attacking a village in Saravan in Iran's southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan Province, characterizing it a response to Tehran's operation against terrorist bases

inside Pakistan.

"While the Islamic Republic adheres to the policy of good neighborliness and brotherhood between the two nations and the two governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, and does not allow the enemies to darken the good and fraternal relations between the two countries, it considers the security of the people and the territorial integrity of the country as its red line," the Foreign Ministry statement in

Tehran said.

"And it strongly expects the friendly and brotherly government of Pakistan to adhere to its commitments in preventing the establishment of bases and armed terrorist groups on Pakistan's soil," it added.

Meanwhile, Pakistani President Arif Alvi on Thursday said his country fully respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states and expects the same from other nations not to violate international law.

Alvi said that Pakistan and Iran are "brotherly countries and they needed to resolve issues through dialogue and mutual consultation".

"The sole objective of today's act was in pursuit of Pakistan's own security and national interest, which is paramount and cannot be compromised," Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said.

Iran on Thursday summoned Pakistan's charge d'affaires following the missile strike. United Nations Secre-

tary-General Antonio Guterres urged both sides to "exercise maximum restraint to avoid a further escalation of tensions," his spokesperson said on Thursday.

"The secretary-general underlines that all security concerns between the two countries must be addressed by peaceful means, through dialogue and cooperation, in accordance with the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and good neighborly relations," Stephane Dujarric said.

Kerman bombings terrorists killed, arrested: Intel Ministry

Iran's Intelligence Ministry said on Friday it had killed two terrorists and arrested some others linked to a Daesh-claimed terrorist attack in the southeastern city of Kerman on January 3.

The ministry said in a statement that the terrorists had been involved in the "orchestration and implementation" of the deadly bombings on the assassination anniversary of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, during which 94 people were killed and 211 oth-

ers injured.

The statement said the two "non-Iranian" terrorists were besieged by Iranian operative and were both killed in an exchange of fire, Press TV reported.

The Intelligence Ministry said they had planned a two-stage scenario involving an armed attack on a police station in Kerman and setting a "booby trap" on the way of police officers, both of which were foiled.

It also announced the arrest of Mohammad Imran

Tanvir, nicknamed "Abu Imran", a bomb-making specialist and one of the leaders of Daesh-Khorasan, which is affiliated with the Daesh terrorist group.

The Intelligence Ministry also arrested "Mahtab", another ring leader of the terrorist group, who is currently under interrogation and entered the country under the guise of a worker.

The also said several other terrorists had been arrested before staging acts of terror in various parts of the country, including



the holy city of Mashhad. The Intelligence Ministry said Mohammad Adel Aref, known as "Adel Panjshiri", had been tracked down and identified during the latest intelli-

gence operation. Being at large in the present time and suspected to have holed up in a neighborhood in western Tehran,

Adel was charged with a suicide bomb attack at the Kabul University in Afghanistan, among other convictions.