



call. The risk of genocide, the gravity of the violations being committed, and the flimsy justifications by elected officials in Western democracies warn of a change of eras. The rules-based order that has governed international affairs since the end of World War II is on its way out, and there may be no turning back. The consequences of this abandonment are all too apparent: more instability, more aggression, more conflict, and more suffering. The only check on violence will be more violence. The end of the rules-based order will also bring spreading and palpable anger across all layers of society, in all corners of the earth, except among those positioned to reap whatever sullied rewards can be extracted from the breaking international system. But steps can be taken to avert this worst-case scenario. They start with the immediate cessation of all military operations by both Israel and Hamas, with the immediate release of all remaining civilian captives detained by Hamas and of all Palestinians unlawfully detained by Israel, and with the lifting of the siege of Gaza. The ICJ's provisional measures to prevent genocide in Gaza must be fully implemented. Israel and its biggest supporter, the United States, must accept that the stated military objective of destroying Hamas has wrought an overwhelming cost to civilian lives and infrastructure, which likely cannot be justified under international law. It is now more important than ever that the prosecutor for the International Criminal Court act decisively to deliver indictments for crimes committed by all parties to the conflict. Neither historical grievances nor

It is as if the grave moral lessons of the Holocaust, of World War II, have been all but forgotten.

long-term prospects for peace in the Middle East, and arguably beyond, can be addressed without an international and inclusive process that specifies a dismantling of Israel's system of apartheid and allows for the security and rights of all populations to be protected. The painful memories of wrongs, both recent and from long ago, can help save lives today, as well as in the future, in Israel, in the Palestinian territories, and beyond. That process must begin immediately, however, as time is running out. If history indeed repeats itself, as we are told it often does, then we should consider ourselves well warned. With the universal application of international law likely in its death throes and nothing yet to take its place save brutalist national interests and sheer greed, widespread anger can be, and will be, exploited by the many ready to foster even broader instability on an even greater global scale.

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## Defunding UNRWA, int'l law and compelling Israel to compliance

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### OPINION

For global citizens, the preference is unequivocal: a rejection of war and violence. They cherish life, prioritize the well-being of their children, and maintain a profound love for their homeland, culture, and religion. The resistance against state-sponsored terrorism is rooted in a desire for personal autonomy — a refusal to allow external forces to dictate choices related to attire, voting preferences, or aspirational pursuits. In essence, individuals assert their right to make these decisions independently.

Individuals with a deep sense of humanity find that the Gaza Genocide has fundamentally altered their perception, prompting a shift away from indoctrinated perspectives. South Africans, given their historical context, intimately understand the profound 'question of humanity and human dignity' that the Gaza Genocide evokes. This tragic event has sparked a heightened awareness among many about the moral shortcomings of political elites and the corporatocracies operating under the guise of democracies.

The assertion of freedom in democracies comes into question when it necessitates conformity or silent submission to imposed norms. This sentiment is at the core of the defund UNRWA campaign, initiated concurrently with the ICJ's provisional measures against Israel. The timing of Israel's accusations, announced at the time of the ICJ order, can be understood through a South African idiom: "Hulle gatte krap hulle lekker" (they are fuming at the South African victory at the ICJ).

Israel's assurance of steadfast support from the West, particularly the US, heightened after the US dismissed allegations of Israeli genocide on January 10, 2024. With the belief that European and American judges at the ICJ would align with US interests, Israel's arrogance reached its zenith. Despite a supposed US assurance of a veto (US-controlled and decided outcome) at the ICJ, South Africa secured a victory, prompting Israel to resort to its next basket of lies. This time accusing UNRWA staffers of collaboration with Hamas.

By February 5, 2024, Israel had still not provided any evidence for the accusations. The Gangster Club, comprising the US, Canada, Australia, Britain, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Finland, Estonia, Japan, Austria, and Romania, swiftly announced aid cuts to UNRWA following Israel's accusations.

UNRWA stands as a manifestation of international law, being a UN agency established in 1949 by a resolution of the UN General Assembly with the mandate to provide relief to refugees affected by the Nakba. Its pivotal role becomes even more significant following the recent ruling by the ICJ. UNRWA operates the critical infrastructure for basic services and humanitarian assistance in Gaza. The binding nature of the ICJ ruling imposes a legal obligation on all countries, including Western states, to facilitate the fulfillment of these measures. Refusal to comply highlights the clash between a rules-based system and international law.

initially established within the framework of the rules-based order. However, as the geopolitical landscape evolves, adherence to international law has transitioned from being a responsibility for others to becoming a challenge for those who initially shaped these rules.

The West attempts to maintain a narrative of defending a 'rules-based order' while engaging in actions that undermine it. This complex and evolving dynamic signals a global shift, with the former architects of the rules now finding themselves at odds with a multipolar world order they no longer fully control. And global citizens are cognizant of their doublespeak.

The dystopian notion of humanity, freedom, democracy, and rights, emanating from the US and its coalition of subservient states, is critiqued by Andrey Sushentsov. According to Sushentsov, "American elites believe in democracy at home and dictatorship abroad; that's why the world is so dangerous right now." The professed values of human rights, equality, justice, peace, and dignity espoused by the US and its client states mask a darker reality of violence, greed, power, and domination. Sushentsov underscores Washington's difficulty in acknowledging the sovereign equality and unique perspectives of other nations, illustrating an inherent arrogance.

It is this arrogance that manifests as bullying on the global stage. Settler colonial states, in particular, grapple not only with the concept of sovereign equality but also with the 'audacity' of those they consider inferior who refuse, revolt against, or resist their oppressive actions. This sentiment echoes South Africa's case against Israel at the ICJ, where the refusal to submit to perceived superiority becomes a powerful act of resistance. It has now become another act of bullying, as South Africa's Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Naledi Pandor is being threatened by Israeli officials. According to Pandor, "The Israeli agents, intelligence agencies, [this] is



South African professor of International Law John Dugard (C) shakes the hand of South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Naledi Pandor at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) prior to the verdict announcement in the genocide case against Israel, brought by South Africa, in The Hague.  
● AFP

Despite the claim of a Western commitment to a 'rules-based order,' the immediate defunding of UNRWA by the Gangster Club, mere hours after the ICJ ruling, underscores a blatant assault on international law. The underlying message is clear: those challenging the established order will face ruthless opposition. This power dynamic is revealing, as the US, in its response to the ICJ ruling, positions itself as an adversary to international law, signaling a shift from its historical role as the global enforcer. In John Dugard's analysis, the 'rules-based order' operates outside of international law, serving the interests of the US and its allies in a momentary context. The disregard for the ICJ verdict and the defunding of UNRWA represents an unprecedented attack on institutions designed to uphold international law. This irony is palpable, considering that many of these institutions were

how they behave. They seek to intimidate you. We must not be intimidated." Gangsterism and racism at its finest. In this mindset, and despite the numerous expert opinions and overwhelming evidence, US officials described South Africa's case as "meritless" and expressed "disgust at this filing". For the white supremacists who have been controlling the 'rules-based order' and its application to nation-states who need to be 'reeled in', South Africa's actions were distasteful because a small African country dared to say "enough". According to Pandor, "For the first time in 75 years, Israel is being held accountable by an institution and by the global community. We have now, as South Africa, broken a dangerous culture of impunity that has characterized the illegal occupation of Palestine."

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