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Olympics

Israel, a colonial and apartheid state at the Olympic Games

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On 19 July, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) delivered its advisory opinion on the ‘legality’ of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories since 1967. Twenty years after the opinion on the Wall in 2004, the ICJ strongly condemned the colonisation of Palestine and the crimes committed by the occupier.

The conclusions of the opinion confirm what Palestinians and those who follow this colonial situation have been saying for years: that Israel's occupation of the territories (Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem) since 1967 is illegal because it has become an annexation, and that the regime of general restrictions imposed on the Palestinians impedes their right to self-determination. This consensus on the illegality of the occupation, including within the international community, was affirmed during the pleadings of more than fifty states and organisations on 1 February 2024, the majority of which supported the rights of the Palestinian people. Only Israel's historic allies (mainly the United States and the United Kingdom) took the opposite view.

A clear denunciation of the persecutions committed since 1967

In this sense, the opinion is indisputably clear for the entire international community, with legal obligations for Israel: withdrawal of all Israeli State presence from Palestinian territory, compensation for all damage caused by the occupation, including the right of return for refugees and the dismantling of all settlements. The international community thus has an obligation not to recognise the current situation and this illegal presence in occupied territory, which is the first step in the strategy of the BDS movement, which is now calling for divestment and sanctions.

Above all, the Court affirms for the first time that the system of discrimination imposed by Israel on the Palestinians constitutes the crime of apartheid or segregation.

This non-binding opinion is part of the Palestinian strategy of investing in international institutions in order to break the isolation to which the Palestinians were confined. This long-term strategy has borne fruit in the context of the ongoing proceedings for recognition of the genocide and the proceedings before the International Criminal Court, which is expected to issue arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant in the coming weeks.

Ten months of massacres and multiple fronts

All this may seem a pittance when nothing seems to be stopping the genocidal policy in Gaza, where 7% to 10% of Palestinians are thought to have died, where the polio virus has been detected and while Israel is increasing its strikes on Lebanon and, for the first time, on Yemen in retaliation for a Houthi attack on Tel Aviv.

However, the unequivocal classification of colonial crimes by the highest international court breaks the status quo strategy that Israel is trying to impose on the Palestinians because it is based on an illegal situation. Indirectly, it reaffirms the right of the occupied Palestinian people to resist the occupying power. It also calls into question the two-state solution: on 17 July, the Knesset passed a resolution against the creation of a Palestinian state, which it

described as an 'existential danger' for Israel.

Although mobilisation in France has fallen drastically since the dissolution of the National Assembly, Palestine remains at the heart of the news. The Olympic Games provide an opportunity for a new dynamic, with the Israeli President scheduled to attend the opening ceremony. The end of colonisation will not come from a court decision, but by banning the genocidal state.

PS:

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