



GLOBAL NEWS | #Human Rights Council | NEWS
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Human Rights Council: In the absence of Israel, Palestine criticises US involvement in conflict

By [Liv Martin](#)



A contentious agenda item about an independent commission of inquiry report on Palestine and Israel was at the heart of the first day of the UN Human Rights Council’s 50th regular session. But when the time came for Israel to comment, its representative was nowhere to be seen.

The representative for Palestine, however, had much to say. Notably, he called for the General Assembly to suspend the US’s membership and criticised US secretary of state Antony Blinken for having “not said a word about the continued suffering of the palestinian people over so many years as well as the illegal occupation which has continued over 55 years”.

The US has historically supported Israel and, under former president Donald Trump, left the Council in 2018 over what the US deemed as the UN body’s bias against Israel.

At Monday’s meeting, the US representative, speaking on behalf of 22 countries, doubled down on the US’s stance, saying: “We believe the nature of the [commission of inquiry] established last May is further demonstration of longstanding disproportionate attention given to Israel in the Council and must stop”.

A damning report

The 18-page report, released 7 June, criticised Israel for perpetuating cycles of violence against Palestinians and attempting to seize complete control of Palestinian territory. It took a deep look into “all alleged violations of international humanitarian law and all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law leading up and since 13 April 2021”.

A commission of inquiry is a high-level tool at the Council’s disposal, used only to investigate serious human rights and humanitarian law violations. The report was initially spurred by deadly fighting which came to a head in May 2021, resulting in [260 Palestinian and 13 Israeli casualties](#).

The Council-appointed body, led by Navanethem Pillay of South Africa, Miloon Kothari of India and Christopher Sidoti of Australia, highlighted “Israel’s failure to uphold the laws and customs of war, including those of belligerent occupation, violations and abuses of individual and collective rights, and a lack of accountability”. It also touched on “indiscriminate” rocket firing from the Palestinian side.

The Israeli foreign ministry pushed back, condemning the report as a “witch hunt”, reported AFP, in addition to directly criticising Pillay. The ministry also [tweeted](#), “The [UN Human Rights Council] is a political organisation with a documented history of demonising Israel. Its latest report on Israel is a one-sided document drafted by biased individuals and serves as a political weapon for terrorists” on Monday ahead of the meeting.

[Dozens of Israeli reserve soldiers and students led by the pro-Israel NGO Shurat Hadin marched](#) against the report outside of UN headquarters in Geneva following the its release, as AFP reported.

Despite pushback from Israel, including a refusal to cooperate with the commission and barring its entry into the country, the commission's chair, Pillay, ended her speech with a call to action.

“The occupation must end now; all persons in Palestine and Israel must be afforded all their human rights, without discrimination including their right to live in peace and security alongside their neighbours,” she said.

“The international community must adhere to its international obligations to ensure full respect for international law in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and work towards ensuring that those responsible for international crimes are held to account.”

#Human Rights Council #Israel #Palestine



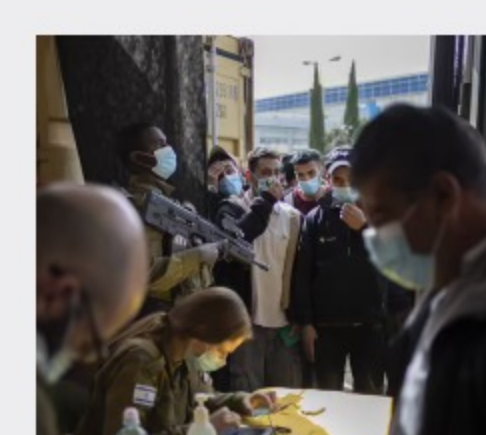
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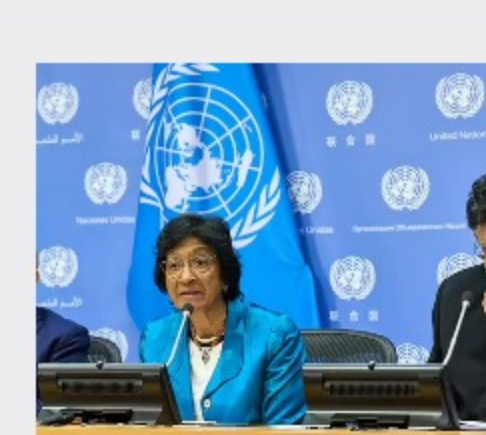
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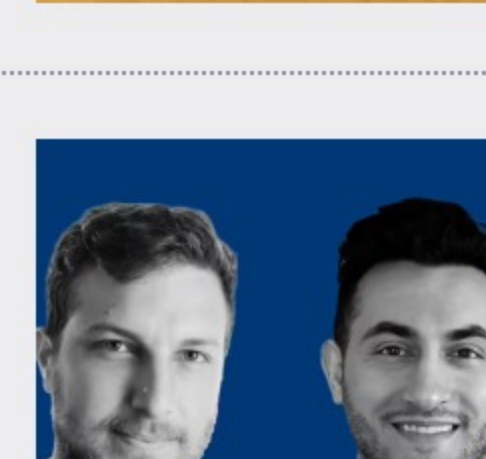
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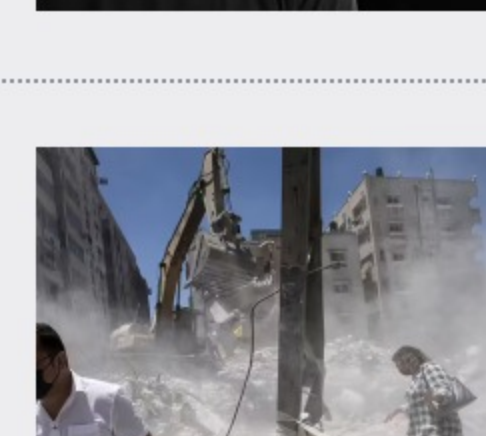
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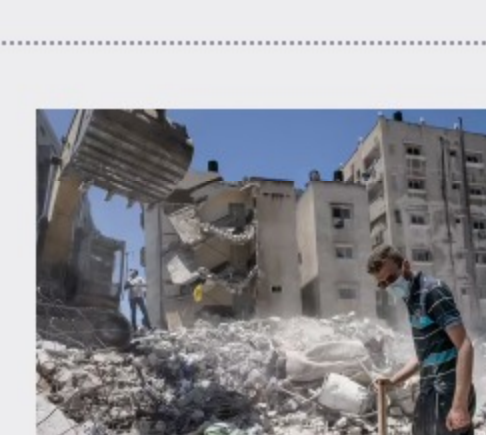
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