

LA Jews for Peace Policy Statement

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Endorse South Africa's Application to World Court to Stop Genocide

LA Jews for Peace (LAJ4P) endorses South Africa's application to the International Court of Justice (ICJ, the World Court) accusing Israel of committing genocide in Gaza¹. South Africa is demanding the ICJ promptly issue a preliminary order requiring that Israel cease its genocidal acts pending a full hearing by the court.

Accusations of genocide stem from Israel's response to Oct.7 by Netanyahu's far-right extremist government that targets all the people of Gaza rather than solely Hamas. These supposed genocidal actions are opposed by many Jews world-wide, including in the U.S. and Israel. President Biden agrees, calling this government the most extreme in Israel history, and calling Israel's bombing "indiscriminate."

Genocide is defined in the 1948 U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide² as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group" including:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting ... conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

South Africa's application cites dozens of statements by Israeli political and military leaders that demonstrate Israel's intent to destroy the 2.2 million people living in the Gaza strip. The most telling are:³

- Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu: invoking the Biblical story of the total destruction of the Amalek by the Israelites, which Biblical passage reads in relevant part: *"Spare no one, but kill alike men and women, infants and sucklings, oxen and sheep, camels and asses."*
- President of Israel Isaac Herzog: *"It's an entire nation out there that is responsible. It's not true this rhetoric about civilians not aware not involved. It's absolutely not true. ... and we will fight until we break their backbone."*
- Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant: *Israel is "imposing a complete siege on Gaza. No electricity, no food, no water, no fuel. Everything is closed. We are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly."*
- Major General Giora Eiland: *"The State of Israel has no choice but to make Gaza a place that is temporarily, or permanently, impossible to live in."*

LAJ4P focuses on two of the eight allocations of genocide cited by South Africa, specifically: (1) direct military killing of over 21,000 people (70% being women and minors) plus thousands more buried under rubble, and (2) indirect killing of thousands of people by disease, dehydration, famine, and exposure resulting from Israel's cutoff of electricity, water, food, fuel, and medicine, and destruction of 70% of Gaza's housing.

LAJ4P urges the ICJ to rescue the people of Gaza by quickly issuing the preliminary order requested in South Africa's application.

¹ <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20231228-app-01-00-en.pdf>.

² https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.1_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf.

³ Footnote 1 pages 60, 60, 60-61, and 63.