

UN expert says she faces threats after Israel-Gaza genocide report



Francesca Albanese, UN special rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories, attends a side event during the Human Rights Council at the United Nations in Geneva, March 26, 2024 [Denis Balibouse/Reuters]

Geneva, March 28 (RHC)-- A United Nations expert who published a report saying there were reasonable grounds to believe Israel has committed genocide in its war on Gaza says she has received threats throughout her mandate.

Francesca Albanese, the special rapporteur on the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, presented a report entitled “Anatomy of a Genocide” to the UN Human Rights Council on Tuesday, which Israel said it “utterly rejects.”

In the report, Albanese said there are clear indications that Israel has violated three of the five acts listed under the UN Genocide Convention in its war on Gaza. Asked whether her work on the report had caused her to receive threats, Albanese said: “Yes, I do receive threats. Nothing that so far I considered needing extra precautions. Pressure? Yes, and it doesn’t change either my commitment or the results of my work.”

Albanese, who has held the position since 2022, did not elaborate on the nature of the threats, nor did she say who had issued them. “It’s been a difficult time,” she said. “I’ve always been attacked since the very beginning of my mandate.”

Albanese said one of her key findings was that Israel’s executive and military leadership and soldiers have intentionally “subverted their protection functions in an attempt to legitimise genocidal violence against the Palestinian people.”

“The only reasonable inference that can be drawn from the unveiling of this policy is an Israeli state policy of genocidal violence toward the Palestinian people in Gaza,” she said, adding that it was a “long-standing settler colonial process of erasure”. She called for the “ongoing Nakba” to stop, referring to the ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948.

Israel’s diplomatic mission in Geneva said the use of the word genocide was “outrageous” and said the war was against Hamas and not Palestinian civilians. Albanese, an Italian lawyer and academic, is one of dozens of independent human rights experts mandated by the United Nations to report on specific themes and crises. The views expressed by special rapporteurs do not reflect those of the global body as a whole.

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