

U.S. rights group urges ban on Israel in Paris Olympics after ICJ ruling

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New York, July 24 (RHC)-- A U.S.-based rights advocacy group says Israel should be barred from the Olympic Games Paris 2024 over a recent ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) about the occupying regime's barbaric crimes against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Fadi Quran, executive director at nonprofit organization Avaaz, made the statement in a social media post on Tuesday following an ICJ advisory opinion asserting that Israel is committing apartheid and systematic discrimination against Palestinians and has effectively annexed large portions of their territory through its occupation.

"The IOC has a policy prohibiting apartheid and systematic discrimination, necessitating a ban" on those engaging in such practices, Quran said, adding, "The ICJ has confirmed that Israel is guilty of these actions."

Stressing that the presence of Israel's representatives at the international sports event violates the regulations of International Olympic Committee (IOC), the senior activist who is also a Palestinian community organizer, said ignoring a request from the Palestinian Olympic Committee to exclude Israel would "permanently stain the Paris Olympics and every member of the Olympic committee."

The Hague-based UN court maintained in its advisory opinion on Friday that the entire occupation in 1967 is unlawful and that Israel's settlement policy is in breach of the Geneva Convention.

The ICJ also said the Tel Aviv regime needs to make reparations to Palestinians for the damage caused by its occupation, and that the UN Security Council, the General Assembly and all countries have an obligation to not recognize Israel's occupation as legal.

In an open letter to IOC chief Thomas Bach, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) urgently called for immediate and effective measures in response to the escalating and deteriorating situation in Gaza.

Drawing on the precedent set by the IOC's actions against Russia and Belarus, as well as the recent ICJ ruling, FIDH underscored the necessity for the IOC to uphold its "commitment to equality, human rights, and non-discrimination."

Western governments have accused Russia of "war crimes" since Moscow launched a special military operation in Ukraine in February 2022.

Macron offers warm welcome to Israel for Paris Olympics

French President Emmanuel Macron said on Tuesday that Israeli athletes are "welcome" to the Paris Olympics 2024, and added that Russian athletes' participation in the international sporting event is up to the Olympic Committee.

In a live-streamed interview with France 2 ahead of the games, Macron stressed that the Israeli regime's situation differs from Russia's and that it is up to the IOC to decide whether Russian athletes should participate.

"We do not use the games to do politics. The Israeli athletes are welcome to our country... and it is France's responsibility to guarantee their security," Macron said.

In January, the ICJ, whose orders are legally binding but lack direct enforcement mechanisms, issued an interim ruling, ordering the occupying regime to take all measures to prevent genocide in Gaza, but stopped short of ordering a ceasefire.

In May, the court ordered Israel to halt its offensive in Rafah after South Africa asked the ICJ to order a halt to the war in Gaza, and in the refugee-packed city in particular.

Israel launched the war on Gaza on October 7, 2023 after the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas waged the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the occupying entity in response to the Israeli regime's decades-long campaign of bloodletting and devastation against Palestinians.

Since the start of the offensive, the Tel Aviv regime has killed more than 39,000 Palestinians and injured upwards of 90,000 others. Thousands more are also missing and presumed dead under rubble.

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