

Washington sanctions UN expert Francesca Albanese for documenting Israeli genocidal aggression against Gaza



Washington, July 10 (RHC)-- The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump has imposed sanctions on United Nations expert Francesca Albanese over her documentation of Israel's abuses against Palestinians during its war on Gaza.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced the penalties on Wednesday, accusing Albanese of waging a "campaign of political and economic warfare against the United States and Israel."

Francesca Albanese, who serves as UN special rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territory, has been a leading global voice in calling for action to end Israel's human rights violations.

Israel and its supporters have been rebuking Albanese and calling for her to be removed from her UN position for years.

Earlier on Wednesday, she called out European governments for allowing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu -- who is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crime charges in Gaza -- to use their airspace while travelling.

"Italian, French and Greek citizens deserve to know that every political action violating the [international] legal order, weakens and endangers all of them. And all of us," Albanese wrote in a social media post.

Rubio cited Albanese's push for the prosecution of Israeli officials at the ICC as the legal basis for the sanctions.

Trump had issued an executive order in February to impose penalties on ICC officials involved in "targeting" Israel. Last month, the Trump administration sanctioned four ICC judges.

"That bias has been apparent across the span of her career, including recommending that the ICC, without a legitimate basis, issue arrest warrants targeting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant," he said.

The ICC charged Netanyahu and Gallant with crimes against humanity and war crimes in Gaza for depriving Palestinians in the enclave of "objects indispensable to their survival, including food, water, and medicine."

Rubio also highlighted a recent report by Albanese that documented the role of international companies, including U.S. firms, in the Israeli assault on Gaza, which she describes as a genocide. "We will not tolerate these campaigns of political and economic warfare, which threaten our national interests and sovereignty," the top US diplomat said.

Trump's ICC decree freezes the assets of targeted individuals in the US and bans them and their immediate family members from entering the country.

Nancy Okail, head of the Center for International Policy (CIP) think tank, decried the sanctions against Albanese as "devastating." "Sanctioning a UN expert gives the signal that the United States is acting like dictatorships and rogue states," Okail told Al Jazeera.

Over the past 21 months, Israel's U.S.-backed campaign in Gaza has levelled most of the territory and killed at least 57,575 Palestinians, according to local health officials.

[SOURCE: AL JAZEERA and NEWS AGENCIES]

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