

Press Release

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More than 150 African and African Diaspora CSOs, movements and community groups call on African Union to outrightly reject Israel's application as an Observer State to African Union

A Pan–African coalition of more than 150 organizations, social movements and community groups from 45 countries in Africa and diaspora have called on the African Union's member states to reject the application for Observer Status by Israel to the African Union at its upcoming summit in Addis this weekend.

This request follows the International Court of Justice (ICJ) award for provisional measures on 26 January that found merit in South Africa's case against Israel for contravening the Genocide Convention.. As a coalition of civil society representing a broad base of African opinion, we are appalled at the live genocide happening before our very eyes. To permit Israel observer status to the African Union will be against its founding principles and unless it is prepared to cease all atrocities in Gaza, end the occupation of Palestine and East Jerusalem, and take steps to facilitate the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state.

The letter demands the African Union to, “refuse the application for Observer Status by the state of Israel that was brought before the Assembly in 2022” as we believe that such an action would send a strong and unified signal to the State of Israel that their actions are intolerable and that they must desist in continuing down this path.” The letter cites Israel's use of chemical weapons against international law, deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure in Gaza, indiscriminate bombing of civilians including more than 12,000 children as basis for the call.

Israel's aggression and relentless onslaught on Palestinian people serves as a background to strengthen the opposition to its ascension to that status. We recall Israel's earlier recognition as an observer to the block in July 2021, that provoked complaints from several AU member states. This prompted a suspension of the question of admission of Israel into the AU. However, it is necessary given the live events we are witnessing to put this matter to rest by outrightly rejecting this.

More than 28,000 people have already been killed of whom 12,000 are children. It must end its illegal occupation of Palestine.

This coalition of civil society is deeply concerned that continued disregard for Palestinian rights and allowing Israel to pursue normalised relations with the AU, will send the signal to all that International Law does not prevail. We are wary that this disregard would spill into other conflicts in Africa – where impunity already runs rife. But as our letter concludes, “All oppression ends eventually. When the history of this moment is written, which side of it would the AU want to be counted in?”

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