

Data support Palestine claim in ICJ: Expert



Interview with Edward Corrigan

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Press TV has conducted an interview with Edward Corrigan, a human rights attorney, from Ontario, about the situation in occupied Palestine.

What follows is an approximate transcription of the interview.

Press TV: Mr. Corrigan, this report by the international human rights group is warning of this harrowing pattern of unlawful killings, just how harrowing and serious is this?

Corrigan: Of course there's almost no penalty for any Israeli soldier who kills Palestinians, or wounds them or shoots them or even – you know, they're on the ground and they kick them and taser them.

It is sometimes a problem if the Israeli soldiers actually shoot the Palestinians and it gets caught on camera. The Israeli soldiers' solution to that is to confiscate cameras and sort of make it illegal for groups to actually document what they're doing, which of course is appalling.

There've been many Palestinians killed, forty-five, 261 Palestinians including 67 children have been seriously injured. More than 8,000 Palestinians have also been injured including 1,500 children, with rubber bullets, tear gas.

To be hit with a rubber bullet it almost like being shot. People have died from the bullets. The damage and the injuries caused by them are substantial.

But Amnesty International is of course one of the most prestigious organizations in the world in terms of documenting human rights, and they have an impeccable reputation, probably the best of all the human rights organizations, and they have been documenting what Israel has been doing to the Palestinians for the last number of years.

Of course, Israel declares this report biased. The number of documented cases of torture, of Palestinians in the custody of Israelis, there hasn't been a single prosecution even though the government has admitted that people were tortured.

Press TV: That brings me to my second question, that despite all these documents being gathered by for example by this instance, by Amnesty International, why hasn't any legal action been taken against Israel?

Corrigan: Israel is now very scared that the Palestinians, who do have sort of state status, can now make complaints to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

They should be making complaints there on a whole range of things about, is apartheid, for example, a war crime? I think they should make a claim there: the fact that they're ethnically cleansing Palestinians from [Al-Quds] East Jerusalem; the apartheid policies in the West Bank and actually even in Israel itself; all of these things now can be taken to court.

They did it before but they didn't give the Palestinians status because you have to have a state. But the recent upgrading of Palestine to a state at the United Nations now probably gives them legal standing to go before the International Court of Justice. Like they did with the wall -- the International Court condemned that almost unanimously.

Now they can take other actions against them, which is sort of the world's premier legal forum, and to make judgments against...Israel which would have a profound impact from a public relations point of view.

While the International Court of Justice cannot enforce them, it would be a huge victory for the Palestinians and of course a condemnation of Israel's rampant human rights abuses and attacks on innocent civilians, you know, the use of tear gas.

The tear gas they use is very virulent. It has killed people but it has also caused women to spontaneously abort their children.

The type of actions that Israel is taking against the Palestinians clearly are policy, clearly with the intent to make life so miserable for the Palestinians that they will want to leave and abandon the land so that...settlers who are trying to expand and take over - actually, the...settlers are attacking and taking over Palestinian crops, they're beating people, destroying their water supply.

You've got a whole range of issues. Virtually every single topic you can think of, Israel is savagely discriminating against the Palestinians and also persecuting them.

The world really needs to stand up and take notice and to take actions.

We're imposing boycotts on North Korea. In fact, there's boycotts being imposed on Iran, and Iran isn't technically doing anything wrong. They're not breaking any law. They're exercising their rights.

But Israel has flagrant disregard to international law, flagrant disregard to repeated reports even from the Israeli human rights organization like B'Tselem. All of these groups have confirmed and documented the amount of torture and human rights abuses and killing of Palestinians. There's almost no conviction of Israeli soldiers who have used violence and abuse against Palestinians.

It's almost impossible for Palestinians to get any sort of justice within the Israeli court system. In fact, an Israeli court judge said that Israel has two systems, one for...and one for Arabs, and the Arabs can't get justice. So in fact, they made that ruling. But he's the exception and not the rule -- this judge.

So, it's time the international community -- it's time, quite frankly, the Palestinians take action and file their complaints with the documentation they have from Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, B'Tselem, the Israeli human rights organizations, the Adalah, which is the Arab-Israeli organization, and take this to the International Court and get a strong, clear ruling that in fact Israel is creating war crimes, their activities and building of settlements are clearly illegal.

This in fact is what the European Union is now enforcing, that international law requires that you have to boycott and not to accept products from the illegal...settlements in the West Bank.

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