

# Israel-Palestine Live: Blinken Meeting with Abbas Described as ‘Tense’

By [Middle East Eye](#)

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[What You Need to Know About South Africa’s Genocide Case Against Israel at the ICJ](#)

*The International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague will hold hearings on Thursday and Friday in response to [South Africa’s](#) accusation of genocide against [Israel](#).*

More than 23,000 [Palestinians](#) have been killed in the ongoing war on [Gaza](#), including more than 9,000 children.

South Africa wants an emergency order calling on Israel to suspend its military campaign, which it launched after an attack by Hamas-led Palestinian fighters on 7 October, which killed 1,140 people, according to Israeli officials.

The state filed the lawsuit at the end of December, citing statements made by Israeli public officials and the actions of its military.

It is the first time Israel is being tried under the United Nations’ Genocide Convention, which was drawn up after the Second World War in light of the atrocities committed against Jews and other persecuted minorities during the Holocaust.

Here Middle East Eye answers some commonly asked questions about the case.

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## [Israeli Shelling Near Hospital Kills and Wounds 40: Report](#)

The Israeli army has targeted a residential building only a few metres away from Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Hospital, killing and wounding at least 40 people, according to Gaza officials.

The Gaza government media office say the area had been deemed "safe" by the Israeli army.

"This is a continuation of the deception and fabrications by the Israeli occupation army to mislead public opinion," the media office said.

"We condemn in the strongest terms the ongoing massacres and crimes of the occupation against our Palestinian people, and we call on the whole world to stop the genocidal war waged against civilians," the office added.

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## [Opinion: How South Africa's Genocide Case Is Challenging the Imperial Order](#)

Amid mounting calls for a comprehensive ceasefire in [Israel's onslaught on Gaza](#), South Africa has invoked the Genocide Convention and lodged a [case](#) at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague.

The [application](#), filed last month, delineates the atrocities perpetrated by Israel in Gaza in the wake of the 7 October operation by Hamas.

The application, while acknowledging and unequivocally condemning the actions of [Palestinian](#) armed groups on 7 October, emphasises that these acts cannot serve as justification for the crime of genocide.

The South African document notes that the [Genocide Convention](#) states that all parties to the convention have a duty to prevent or punish the crime of genocide, and based on emerging evidence in Gaza, it is South Africa's view that Israel has contravened the convention both by perpetrating genocide and by not acting to prevent genocide, nor punishing incitement to genocide.

It argues that Israel's acts and omissions are genocidal in nature, as it seeks to bring about the destruction of Palestinians as a national, racial or ethnic group.

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## [Israeli Raid on Nablus Injures 12](#)

Israeli forces raided the West Bank city of Nablus and besieged the Old City, injuring at least 12 Palestinians, Al Jazeera [reports](#).

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## [Former Shin Bet Chief Calls for Release of Hostages in Exchange for Palestinian Prisoners](#)

Former Shin Bet chief Ami Ayalon said in an interview with [Haaretz](#) that the release of all

Palestinian prisoners, including Palestinian political figure Marwan Barghouti, in exchange for all the hostages held by Hamas may present a proper peace deal.

To Ayalon, the release of all hostages would be the closest thing to a “picture of victory” that Israel could present in its war in Gaza. Additionally, he believes Barghouti is “the only Palestinian leader who can be elected and lead a united and legitimate Palestinian leadership toward a path of mutually agreed separation from Israel.”

Ayalon also criticised the Israeli government’s policy towards Palestinians, most notably prime minister Netanyahu’s policies.

“The misconception was that the Palestinians aren’t a people, and if we allow them to have economic prosperity, they’ll give up the dream of independence,” he said. “In the end, the Palestinians define themselves as a people. They’re willing to kill and be killed for their independence, and the terrorists who are killed turn into martyrs in their eyes.”

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### [Blinken to Make Surprise Visit to Bahrain: US Official](#)

US top diplomat Antony Blinken will make a surprise visit to Bahrain on Wednesday, a State Department official said, the latest leg of a crisis tour of the Middle East.

After meeting Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas in the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah, Blinken will fly to Bahrain, home base of the US Fifth Fleet, for talks with King Hamad on preventing a regional escalation of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza.

*Reporting by AFP*

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### [Report: Tense Blinken-Abbas Meeting ‘Marred by Quarrels and Arguments’](#)

The meeting between Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was described as “tense” and involving “quarrels and arguments”, according to Sky News Arabia.

Citing unnamed sources, the TV channel said Palestinian officials asked Blinken to pressure Israel to release Palestinian tax funds.

The officials told Blinken: “If you can’t release the funds, how will you be able to put pressure on Israel to achieve peace and a Palestinian state?”

Blinken reportedly renewed his call for reform in the Palestinian Authority and its security services. Palestinians responded by saying: “You should reform yourselves and your policy toward the Palestinian issue.”

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[Click here to read the full live updates.](#)

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