

# Blow to occupation

THE International Court of Justice has delivered a legal blow to the decades-old Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. In a non-binding advisory opinion, sought by the UN General Assembly, the ICJ has endorsed what many around the globe already know: that Israel has been illegally occupying Palestinian land in the West Bank and East Jerusalem since the 1967 war. The occupation, the court added, was impeding the Palestinians' right to self-determination, while it asked the international community not to "render aid or assistance" to Tel Aviv with regard to its presence in the occupied territories. The ICJ further called on Israel to stop building new settlements and remove existing ones. It should be noted that Israeli settlers — protected by their military — are known for their extreme violence against Palestinians, and even many of Tel Aviv's staunchest foreign backers are appalled by vicious settler attacks. The Palestinians have naturally welcomed the court's views, while Israel has, expectedly, dismissed the ICJ's findings as "lies". The Zionist state believes that it is beholden to no law, as the ongoing slaughter in Gaza illustrates, and has repeatedly shown that it can trample on the international 'rules-based order', as the global community meekly watches on. But the ICJ's decision comes at a crucial time, and gives much-needed context to the Palestinian question: the people of Palestine are fighting for their legitimate rights — and for their land, stolen from them first in 1948 and again in 1967. Unless these key issues are addressed in a spirit of justice and equity, peace will not come to this ancient land.

Now the question remains: will the powerful members of the international community put pressure on Israel to vacate the occupied territories, as the ICJ has demanded? This is unlikely to happen, as the global order is driven by realpolitik, not principles. Therefore, there are 'bad' occupations, such as the Russian presence in Ukraine, which must be resisted by the 'free world'. On the other hand, there are 'good' occupations, such as Israel's devouring of Arab land, which can be conveniently ignored. But the problem is that if the world keeps ignoring the Israeli occupation, Palestinian anger will keep exploding as it did on Oct 7 last year. Hence, a viable Palestinian state — free from Israel's stranglehold — is the only solution to this long-festering dispute.

Indent the paragraph.

Idea and grammar are ok.