



**Statement by Mr Zane Dangor
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Former President Samper
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Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Senior Officials, Excellencies

I would like to thank the government of Colombia for convening this meeting under the auspices of the Hague Group. The Hague Group was formed in January this year, with a view to hold all states accountable for breaches of international law and to protect the integrity of the international legal regime.

This meeting takes place one year after the General Assembly passed a resolution that affirmed the ICJ Advisory opinion that found that Israel's presence in the occupied Palestinian territories is unlawful. The advisory opinion was requested by the General Assembly as member states were firmly of the view that we had a collective responsibility to hold each other to account and to ensure that legal decisions and resolutions of the apex courts and the UN are respected and implemented. The resolution affirming the ICJ's advisory opinion was supported by the overwhelming majority of member states.

As the humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to deteriorate, we are witnessing continued and urgent calls from UN Member States and the international community for a ceasefire in Gaza. For too long Israel has blatantly ignored orders from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in violation of international law.

Despite this, the impunity continues unabated. Israel continues with its violence against Palestinians, with forced evacuations, and targeted attacks on schools and medical facilities being the order of the day. An unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe, exacerbated by further denials of safe

access to, and delivery of, desperately needed aid, has been unfolding before our eyes.

This meeting, the establishment of the Hague Group and the recent meeting of the Madrid Group also seek the same outcome. To stop the bloodshed, an immediate ceasefire and negotiations towards a just peace. A just peace requires justice and this requires that international law must be respected.

The international community cannot proclaim the importance of international law, including that of the UN Charter applies in some situations and not in others. We should not pick and choose which binding orders of the ICJ to abide by and which to set aside or simply ignore.

Enabling Israel to simply ignore decisions of the Courts and the United Nations with no consequence, is negatively impacting the integrity of international law, including international humanitarian law and the organisations that are tasked with their administration. Israel's continued disregard for the rulings of the ICJ, undermines the integrity of the court and harms the capacity of the institutions of global governance to end impunity. This is unacceptable and we should not be complicit in Israel's endeavours to irreparably harm the institutions that were established to hold all of us accountable to the goals of a more peaceful and just world.

Israel's unlawful actions are enabled when we seek to rationalise their actions. The crime of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of apartheid are not complex, they are unlawful. The advisory opinion that provided the basis for the October 2024 resolution reminded us that we are legally obligated not to condone the internationally wrongful acts of the government of Israel. It is time to end the institutional impunity that Israel has enjoyed for over five decades. The carnage we see in Palestine today, is testament to the folly of Israel's grand exceptionalism from accountability to international law and norms.

In affirming the ICJ opinion, the October 2024 resolution called on the international community to halt the transfer of weapons, parts and ammunition to parties to the conflict as these are at risk of being used to commit violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the unconditional transfer and sale of weapons, parts and ammunition by governments, where there is clear risk of use in harming civilians and violating international law has enabled the violence and indiscriminate killing of civilians to continue unabated.

The ICJ Opinion concluded that all states have an obligation not to recognize as legal the situation arising from the unlawful presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by Israel's illegal presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The ICJ also concludes that there is a serious risk of genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza. As

responsible Member States of the United Nations, it is our duty to ensure that the bloodshed and genocide in Gaza is stopped. And it is stopped now as we do not have the luxury of time.

The Government of Israel must immediately halt the forced displacement of civilians in Gaza, which is causing untold suffering and trauma. The Government of Israel, as the occupying power, must uphold its obligations under international law, protect and uphold the rights of Palestinians, refrain from excessive and lethal use of force and guarantee unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance, including healthcare and other essential services in the West Bank and Gaza.

The violence and restrictions under Israeli occupation have rendered the mandates of humanitarian and development organizations virtually impossible to fulfil. Humanitarian support provided by Member States is regularly obstructed and destroyed by Israeli authorities, or being allowed to be destroyed by right-wing and extreme elements. We now see attacks on mandate holders of the UN in the form of unilateral sanctions.

As Member States of the UN who have pledged our commitment to upholding the UN Charter, we have the ultimate responsibility to ensure and protect the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

That, is what the Hague Group seeks to advance. This requires cross -regional collaboration and this is part of discussions over the next two days.

We hope that today we begin a journey wherein states from all regions including those that were part of the Madrid meeting, joins hand to end the ongoing genocide in Palestine and for more just world.

I thank you.