Ashrawi: ICC Prosecutor must immediately launch an investigation into Israeli war crimes

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The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) must immediately launch an investigation into Israeli war crime of ethnic cleansing, today said Hanan Ashrawi, member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

“The Palestinian leadership condemns in the strongest terms the ongoing demolition of approximately a hundred Palestinian homes in the Sur Baher neighborhood of occupied Jerusalem,” said Ashrawi in a statement. “Israel is displacing hundreds of Palestinians from their homes in Jerusalem to expand its illegal colonial settlement and wall regime. This is a war crime of ethnic cleansing that must be met with unequivocal international condemnation and immediate steps towards criminal accountability.”

The PLO official said the Palestinian people are without any protection. “The international community has failed to assume its legal and moral responsibilities in relation to Palestine. It has failed to uphold the letter and spirit of international law, thus facilitating the commission of this crime,” she charged.

“The Israeli government and judges of the High Court are personally, legally, morally and criminally responsible for this reprehensible crime, which is happening at the watch of the International Criminal Court and Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda. We call on the Prosecutor to immediately launch an investigation into this and other ongoing Israeli war crime against the Palestinian people and consider any further delay completely inexcusable. Delaying justice any further is tantamount to its denial.”

Ashrawi added: “The ongoing demolitions and mass expulsion in Sur Baher is part and parcel of a larger silent ethnic cleansing campaign targeting the indigenous Palestinian residents in the City, with the clear intent of replacing them with Israeli settlers and changing the demographic and cultural realities of the area. The massive scale of the Sur Baher crime is a clear indication of Israel’s criminal and colonial agenda, which is emboldened by US complicity and overall international inaction.

“Despite the level and scope of these crimes, the Palestinian people will remain steadfast and determined. The Palestinian leadership will pursue all available legal and political avenues to confront these illegal actions and ensure accountability for these Israeli crimes. Responsible states must not go on rewarding Israeli criminality and impunity. We call on governments worldwide to sanction Israel for its criminal conduct and exact a price for this criminal approach.”