

**Israel-Hamas war**

## Israel warns troops off social media after Brazil seeks soldier over Gaza

Decision by federal court hailed as 'groundbreaking' by pro-Palestinian group that raised allegations over war crimes



Israeli soldiers operating inside the Gaza Strip © Israeli Defense Forces/Handout/Reuters

**James Shotter** in Jerusalem and **Heba Saleh** in Cairo YESTERDAY

Israel has warned its troops against posting about their actions in Gaza on social media, after a Brazilian court asked police to investigate an Israeli soldier visiting the country who was accused of participating in war crimes.

The action, initiated by the Hind Rajab Foundation (HRF), a pro-Palestinian group, was based in part on video footage and photographs that HRF claimed showed the soldier taking part in the demolition of homes in Gaza.

The Israeli foreign ministry said on Sunday that officials from the embassy in Brazil had immediately helped the man to leave the country without being detained.

“The foreign ministry draws Israelis’ attention to posts on social media about their military service, and to the fact that anti-Israel elements may exploit these posts to initiate futile legal proceedings against them,” the ministry added.

The Brussels-based HRF hailed as “groundbreaking” the decision by the federal court in Brazil to acknowledge jurisdiction over the matter and to order urgent police action.

“This is a historic moment,” said Dyab Abou Jahjah, HRF chair. “It sets a powerful precedent for nations to take bold action in holding perpetrators of war crimes

accountable.”

The incident is the latest example of the legal fallout from Israel’s offensive in Gaza, which has killed more than 45,800 people so far, according to Palestinian officials, reduced much of the territory to uninhabitable rubble and fuelled a humanitarian catastrophe.

Israel’s opposition leader Yair Lapid accused Benjamin Netanyahu’s government of a [“huge political failure”](#) over the episode, arguing that setting up a state commission of inquiry into the war — which Netanyahu has resisted — would have helped to ward off such legal actions.

“How did we get to the point where the Palestinians are better than the Israeli government in the international arena?” he wrote on X.

Israel launched the offensive in Gaza in response to Hamas’s October 7 attack in 2023, during which militants killed 1,200 people, according to Israeli officials, and took 250 hostage.

The UN’s top court is hearing a case brought by South Africa accusing Israel of genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza. Meanwhile, the International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and former defence minister Yoav Gallant for crimes against humanity and war crimes.



The remains of a car in which a Palestinian child, Hind Rajab, 6, was found, in Gaza last February © Reuters

Israel has vehemently rejected allegations of genocide and called South Africa's case "profoundly distorted". Israel says its forces in Gaza operate in accordance with international law and Netanyahu's office has dismissed the arrest warrants as "antisemitic".

Abou Jahjah said HRF had submitted to the ICC evidence against some 1,000 Israeli soldiers to help bolster its case against the Israeli leaders.

The group has also compiled a list of soldiers it suspects of having been involved in war crimes and it has been monitoring their movements through their social media posts, he said.

"We knew he was in Brazil the moment he entered and we filed a 400-page dossier against him just three days later," said Abou Jahjah. "We don't target all Israeli soldiers, just the ones suspected of committing war crimes."

He added that they had been compiling evidence about alleged breaches of international law that "start with entering homes and looting and destroying property and go to demolishing entire neighbourhoods, including hospitals, civilian infrastructure and houses of worship".

"There is also killing people, kidnapping people, torturing people, and posing with prisoners," he said.

HRF has also filed war crimes complaints against dozens of Israeli soldiers who are dual nationals of countries including Belgium, France and Holland with the aim of triggering prosecutions there.

Some of these cases are still at an early investigation stage, Abou Jahjah said, while others have been rejected by national judiciaries and are being appealed by HRF. "We are optimistic about the cases in Belgium," he said.

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