

Tribunal calls on ICC to probe Israeli 'crimes' in Palestine
Agence France-Presse
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The Russell Tribunal on Palestine (RToP) called Sunday for the International Criminal Court to investigate "crimes" committed by Israel in the territories as it wrapped up four years of investigation.

Meeting in Brussels, the people's tribunal, which has no legal status but aims to draw international attention to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories, said it would "support all initiatives from civil society and international organisations aimed at bringing Israel in front of the International Criminal Court".

Since Palestine was awarded observer status at the UN in November, it can now file complaints against Israel with the ICC.

The tribunal also called on the ICC to recognise Palestinian jurisdiction and for an extraordinary session of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, set up for South Africa, to this time examine the Israeli case.

Previously presided by the French resistance hero and Holocaust survivor Stephane Hessel, who died on February 27, the RToP is modelled on the Russell Tribunal on Vietnam, a private investigative body which examined American foreign policy during the Vietnam War, named after the British philosopher Bertrand Russell.

RToP members include prominent rights activist Angela Davis and ex-Pink Floyd founder Roger Waters.

Since it was set up in 2009, the tribunal has gathered evidence from experts and witnesses to make 26 recommendations on Sunday, in its fifth and final session after previous meetings around the world.

These include "further criminal investigations of corporations aiding and abetting Israeli violations" and the "establishment of an international committee of former political prisoners to campaign on prisoner issues".

Members of the tribunal also criticised Israel's main ally, the US, but also the UN and the European Union for policy that was "complicit" in what it says are Israel's violations of international law.

The tribunal also called for a boycott on imports of goods produced in West Bank settlements.

Israel dismissed the conclusions which it said had no real weight.

Israeli foreign ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor told AFP: "They can write what they like, they only represent themselves. It's a private body with no legal or political weight and has moral weight only among its members."

"It has no political or legal significance, it is an ideological and propaganda document that people write for their like-minded friends."