Rights Groups Sue France Over Failure to Prevent Corporate Support for Israel's Occupation

(PARIS, July 22, 2026)—Today, five human rights organizations filed a legal challenge before the Conseil d'État, France's highest administrative court, seeking an order requiring the French government to adopt effective measures to prevent French corporate and financial actors from contributing to Israel's unlawful occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT).

The plaintiffs – the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Jurists for the Respect of International Law (JURDI), the International Centre of Justice for Palestinians (ICJP), La Ligue des Droits Humains (LDH), and Law for Palestine – argue that France has failed to meet its obligations under international law by not implementing effective measures to prevent companies and financial institutions from engaging in trade, investment, and other commercial activities that sustain Israel's continued unlawful presence in the OPT. They are represented by Henri Thulliez, Yacine Baita, and Frédéric Thiriez, and advised by Open Society Justice Initiative. The defendants include the French Prime Minister and several ministers responsible for the economy, foreign affairs, and commerce.

The case builds on the July 2024 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), in which the Court said it is of the opinion that Israel's continued presence in the OPT is unlawful and clarified that all states are obligated not to recognize as legal the situation arising from Israel's unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and to neither render aid nor assistance in maintaining the situation created by Israel's continued presence in the OPT. The World Court further clarified that states must take steps to prevent trade and investment relations that contribute to the illegal occupation. The applicants contend that France has not translated these obligations into concrete regulatory or enforcement measures.

James Goldston, Executive Director of Open Society Justice Initiative, said "The International Court of Justice left no doubt that states cannot stand on the sidelines when faced with legal obligations. This case is about ensuring that France halts any aid or assistance for the unlawful occupation of Palestine. International law only has force if states are prepared to implement it in practice."

Ihsan Adel, Founder and Chair of Law for Palestine, stressed that "states cannot comply with their obligations while settlement goods remain on their markets and corporations continue settlement-related business activities."

The ICJ's position on third-states obligations towards the situation in the OPT underscore that the occupation has been sustained not only by military force but also by the economic support of third states and private actors to the detriment of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and sovereignty over their land and resources.

Alexis Deswaef, President of FIDH, described the case "as an opportunity for the Conseil d'État to take a strong stance and reaffirm the State's responsibilities with respect to corporate activities in occupied Palestine."

Ghislain Poissonnier, Vice President for JURDI, said: “JURDI notes that despite the ICJ’s 2024 Advisory Opinion, deeming the occupation illegal, France has not acted, making legal action necessary to end its corporate support to the illegal situation in occupied Palestine”.

Although France recognized the State of Palestine in September 2025, it has not implemented effective measures that address any economic and commercial relations linked to the illegal occupation.

Before filing the case, the plaintiffs formally requested that the French government adopt measures to comply with the binding legal obligations set out in the ICJ’s Advisory Opinion, including preventing trade and investment that sustain the unlawful situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and ensuring French companies do not contribute to it. The government did not respond but issued new recommendations to French businesses operating in the settlements on June 30th, 2026, that expose “*themselves to the risk of being found guilty of violating international law*”.

For the claimants, the government failed to respond to their request, which amounts to an implicit administrative decision allowing the plaintiffs to challenge it before the Conseil d’État. They argue that this inaction contradicts France’s own public support for the Advisory Opinion and its acknowledgment of the duty to distinguish between Israel and the OPT in economic dealings. Citing evidence that French companies continue operating in sectors such as transportation, construction, finance, and commercial services in the OPT, the plaintiffs contend that France has failed to regulate corporate conduct and prevent businesses from contributing to violations of Palestinians’ rights. They are asking the Conseil d’État to declare the State’s inaction unlawful and order measures to ensure compliance with international law, including restrictions on occupation-linked trade and investment, corporate safeguards, and monitoring mechanisms.

Additionally, these proceedings have been brought forward as the Palestinians in Gaza continue to be forcibly displaced, starved, maimed, and killed in violation of the three preliminary orders issued by the ICJ in the South Africa v Israel case under the Genocide Convention.

Nathalie Tehio, President of LDH, warned that “growing corporate involvement risks facilitating annexation of the West Bank” and argued that “France must adopt binding measures to ensure compliance with international law, including the ICJ’s Advisory Opinion”.

For decades, the plaintiffs argue, Israel has exercised unlawful control over Palestinian territory and resources, supported by third states and private actors that benefit economically from the occupation, while not taking effective measures against the occupation’s crimes in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

Tayab Ali, Director of ICJP emphasized that “this case seeks to move beyond expressions of concern toward accountability, asserting that international legal obligations must be enforceable before independent courts.”

The applicants contend that the proceedings offer an important opportunity to clarify the scope of state obligations following the ICJ’s 2024 Advisory Opinion and to establish guidance on how governments must regulate corporate conduct linked to serious violations of international law.

They argue that without such action, legal obligations risk remaining theoretical rather than effective, and that judicial intervention is necessary to ensure that France fulfils its duties under international law.