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Urgent warning: The Israeli government may be contemplating crimes against humanity.

We, members and friends of Israeli academe, are horrified by US buildup of aggression towards Iraq and by the Israeli political leadership's enthusiastic support for it.

We are deeply worried by indications that the "fog of war" could be exploited by the Israeli government to commit further crimes against the Palestinian people, up to full-fledged ethnic cleansing.

The Israeli ruling coalition includes parties that promote "transfer" of the Palestinian population as a solution to what they call "the demographic problem". Politicians are regularly quoted in the media as suggesting forcible expulsion, most recently MKs Michael Kleiner and Benny Elon, as reported on Yediot Ahronot website on September 19, 2002. In a recent interview in *Ha'aretz*, Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon described the Palestinians as a "cancerous manifestation" and equated the military actions in the Occupied Territories with "chemotherapy", suggesting that more radical "treatment" may be necessary. Prime Minister Sharon has backed this "assessment of reality". Escalating racist demagoguery concerning the Palestinian citizens of Israel may indicate the scope of the crimes that are possibly being contemplated.

We call upon the International Community to pay close attention to events that unfold within Israel and in the Occupied Territories, to make it absolutely clear that crimes against humanity will not be tolerated, and to take concrete measures to prevent such crimes from taking place.

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