PA Says It’s Awaiting Hague Okay to Push War Crimes Allegations

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Foreign minister urges ICC to set date for submission of documents regarding alleged illegal activity by Israel.

The Palestinian Authority on Monday urged the International Criminal Court in The Hague to set a date for the submission of documents regarding what it says are crimes committed by Israel in the West Bank and during the last summer’s 50-day-war in the Gaza Strip.

According to PA Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki, the authority is still awaiting the court’s authorization in order to submit the documents, which it may do by the middle of June, Israel Radio reported.

ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda said in an interview with The Associated Press last week that she hadn’t received any information from either side regarding last summer’s Gaza war and urged Israel and the Palestinians to provide such information.

The Palestinians accepted the court’s jurisdiction in mid-January and officially joined the ICC on April 1 in hopes of prosecuting Israel for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity during the Gaza conflict.

Speaking during an interview with the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation, Maliki added that Arab states were currently discussing a French draft resolution to the United Nations Security Council regarding the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

The draft resolution seeks to define the pre-1967 lines as a reference point for border talks while allowing room for exchanges of territory; designate Jerusalem as capital of both Israel and a Palestinian state; and call for a fair solution for Palestinian refugees.

Maliki said Arab states backing the Palestinians were set to submit their objections to points in the draft resolution within the coming days.

Last week, [Bensouda warned](http://www.timesofisrael.com/icc-urges-israel-to-cooperate-with-preliminary-gaza-probe/) Israel that if it doesn’t provide reliable information for her preliminary probe into possible war crimes in Palestinian territories, she may be forced to decide whether to launch a full-scale investigation based on Palestinian allegations.

Israel, however, has denounced the Palestinians’ joining the court as “scandalous,” with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warning that it turns the ICC “into part of the problem and not part of the solution.”

Bensouda opened a preliminary examination into the summer conflict in mid-January after the Palestinians accepted the court’s jurisdiction dating back to just before last year’s Gaza war, in which 2,100 Palestinians killed and tens of thousands more left homeless, according to Palestinian and UN tallies.

Israel, which lost 66 soldiers and six civilians in the conflict, said the high civilian toll in Gaza was due to fighters there embedding their military infrastructure in residential areas.

The preliminary ICC probe has generated a lot of interest but Bensouda reiterated that the examination “will be conducted in the most independent and impartial way, devoid of any political considerations.”

She said prosecutors will be looking at the Gaza conflict but also at other issues — potentially Israel’s settlement construction in the West Bank and alleged war crimes by Hamas, which controls Gaza, including its firing of thousands of rockets at Israeli residential areas from crowded neighborhoods.