ICC Elects Palestinian Official to Oversee Judicial Selection

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An official of “the State of Palestine” was elected to an 8-person advisory committee for selecting judges who would serve on the International Criminal Court on Thursday.

Ahmad Mohammad Barak Bin Hamad was elected by the legislative branch of the ICC’s Assembly of State Parties along with officials from Romania, France, the UK, Kenya, Botswana, Bolivia and Brazil.

Bin Hamad’s election could be a direct opportunity for the Palestinians to have influence over future judges who might deal with alleged war crimes cases against Israelis, if Israel fails to stave off prosecutions.

Judges are eventually approved by a vote of the full assembly.

ICC judges can also decide whether an ICC prosecution will go forward in a borderline case. Israel has played with the idea of asking a panel of ICC judges to veto [ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda’s acceptance of Palestine as a state in 2015.](https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Exclusive-JPost-speaks-to-ICC-Prosecutor-Bensouda-about-Israels-fate-on-war-crimes-445806)
Last month, Attorney-General Avichai Mandelblit said that he was weighing a public campaign to get Bensouda to reverse her acceptance of Palestine as a state – something which Israel vehemently objected to.

Bin Hamad’s election indicated that the assembly has deeply internalized Palestine as a state.

Last week, Bensouda produced an annual report on all preliminary reviews, in which she noted for the first time that she was close to making a decision about opening a full criminal investigation against Israelis and Hamas for war crimes.

Overall, the report was more favorable to Israel’s positions regarding war crimes allegations relating to the 2014 Gaza War, while it appeared more threatening regarding the settlement enterprise.

The Foreign Ministry declined to comment.