Israel denies ICC's jurisdiction over territories in West Bank, Gaza

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Israel's attorney general said on Friday that the International Criminal Court (ICC) has no jurisdiction over Israel and the territories in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The announcement by Avichai Mandelblit was part of an Israeli legal memorandum that was published in anticipation of an ICC decision on opening an investigation into "the situation in Palestine."

In 2014, the Palestinian Authority joined the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court that established the ICC, and then turned to the international court on several matters. However, the ICC has been deliberating on whether it has jurisdiction over Israel which is not a party to the Rome treaty.

"Israel is not a state party of the ICC and the Palestinian entity is not a state under international law," said Roy S. Schondorf, Israeli deputy attorney general for international law.

"We have a strong legal basis for the fact that court does not have jurisdiction," he added.

For decades of conflict with Palestine, Israel has maintained that the matters between two sides must be solved through direct negotiations.

"It is a real act of overreach for a court to try and determine its jurisdiction ... to determine the scope of the entity of the Palestinian state ... when the parties themselves have said it's a matter for negotiations," said Tal Becker, legal adviser of the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

"Palestinian statehood is referred to by Palestinians themselves as a future aspiration and not a current legal reality," Becker noted.

In recent years, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has been leading a diplomatic offensive against Israel in several international organs, in an attempt to pressure Israelis to make concessions toward the Palestinians after years of stalemate in negotiations.