Erekat: Hamas participated in the PA’s ICC petition against Israel; Qatar footed the bill

December 24, 2019

Jewish News Syndicate

<https://www.jns.org/erekat-hamas-participated-in-the-pas-icc-petition-against-israel-qatar-footed-the-bill/>

PLO Executive Committee Secretary General Saeb Erekat said on Saturday that after the Palestinians formally joined the ICC in 2015, Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas appointed a 45-member “higher national supervising committee” to pursue legal action against Israel in the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

Speaking during an interview with Palestine TV, Erekat said that the committee, which he chaired, was made up of “the complete spectrum of Palestinian political factions,” including Hamas, the PFLP and DFLP. P.A. Foreign Minister Riyadh al-Maliki served as the official liaison to the ICC, said Erekat.

The committee sought out and retained the services of a six-person legal team specializing in international law to represent the Palestinians at the ICC, said Erekat, who took the opportunity to thank Qatar for covering the legal fees, which he said the P.A. could have otherwise not afforded to pay.

ICC Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda announced over the weekend that the court intends to open an investigation into alleged Israeli war crimes. “I am satisfied that there is a reasonable basis to proceed with an investigation into the situation in Palestine,” said Bensouda on Friday. “There is a reasonable basis to believe that war crimes were committed in the context of the 2014 hostilities in Gaza.”

While Israel is not a member of the ICC and does not recognize the court’s jurisdiction, the Palestinians requested such an investigation five years ago, immediately after joining the court.