Foreign Ministry expresses ‘great concern’ over ICC Prosecutor’s annual report

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The Palestinian Foreign Ministry today expressed 'great concern’ over the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court Fatou Bensouda’s Annual Report on Preliminary Examination Activities in the Situation in Palestine.

“It is with great concern that the State of Palestine has read the Annual Report on the Preliminary Examination in the Situation in Palestine 2019,” said the ministry in a press release.

“We must reiterate at the onset, as has been the consistent and unwavering position, that the State of Palestine respects and values the independence of the Office of the Prosecutor, and will continue to strive to safeguard its integrity,” the statement read.

“Since the beginning of the Preliminary Examination process almost five years ago, the State of Palestine has made every effort to cooperate with the Office of the Prosecutor, including through numerous meetings at all levels, and providing submissions of substantive communications on the scope of the criminality, monthly reports on the new and ongoing crimes committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and answers to queries,” the ministry added.

“While the State of Palestine understands that the Report is not meant to purport to make any definite legal or factual determinations, this does not justify the distortion or complete omission of information relevant to those determinations,” it went on to say.

“The Report relies on misleading narratives of politicized nature under the cover of false equivalence rather than objective and accurate description of relevant facts. It propagates the unilateral political assertions of one State while disregarding consistent legal findings from prominent credible, reliable and independent sources,” it explained.

“In this regard, a flagrant discrepancy exists between the approach and the information recognized as material by the OTP in the case of Palestine versus every other situation under examination,” it elaborated.

“We regret that Report in the situation in Palestine fails to abide by the standardized practice applied in all other situations under the purview of the Court, which only serves to seriously undermine the credibility, objectivity, and independence of the Court,” it concluded.