**Israel Condemns 'Outrageous' ICC Ruling on Investigation Into Possible War Crimes**

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The security cabinet issued a statement on Sunday, condemning the International Criminal Court’s “outrageous” ruling that allows investigations of alleged war crimes by Israel and Hamas to proceed, claiming the decision last week “exposes the court as a political body, standing in one line with international organizations driven by antisemitic principles.”

It argues the court in The Hague “has no authority to made such a decision,” as Israel is not a member state and the Palestinian Authority isn’t recognized as a sovereign state.

The ICC on Friday accepted the findings of Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda’s preliminary investigation from December of 2019 that there is a basis for investigating the matter further, and ruled that the court does have jurisdiction in the Palestinian territories, rejecting Israel’s argument that it lacks such authority.

The cabinet “ordered the relevant functions to take the necessary steps to secure the state’s interests and defend its citizens and soldiers,” without specifying what these measures may include.

Earlier on Sunday, Haaretz reported that hundreds of senior Israeli security officials, past and present, are expected to be called in for briefings, fearing they may be arrested abroad.

Senior security officials said a number of ICC member states have agreed to give advance warning to Israel of any intent to arrest Israelis on their arrival in those countries or if a request for an arrest warrant is issued against them. At the same time, Israel might ask those on the list to refrain entirely from travelling abroad, to avoid arrest or trial.

The cabinet’s Sunday statement argued the court “was established to prevent horrors such as the ones committed by the Nazis against the Jewish people. Instead, it persecutes the Jewish people’s state.”

It went on to claim the court “is turning a blind eye to the horrific war crimes committed by oppressive regimes like Iran and Syria,” and instead targeting “the only democracy in the Middle East.”

The court’s ruling allows an investigation into alleged war crimes by both Israel and Gaza-based Palestinian group Hamas.

The cabinet’s statement echoed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s statement on Friday, saying “The court ignores real war crimes, and instead persecutes Israel, a country with a stable democratic regime that holds up the rule of law and is not a member of the court. With this decision, the court harmed democratic nations’ right to defend themselves from terrorism and played into the hands of elements that undermine efforts to expand the circle of peace. We will continue to protect our citizens and our soldiers in every way from legal persecution.”

The U.S. also criticized the ICC ruling, with State Department Spokesperson Ned Price tweeting that “The United States objects to today’s (ICC) decision regarding the Palestinian situation. Israel is not a State Party to the Rome Statute, We will continue to uphold President Biden’s strong commitment to Israel and its security, including opposing actions that seek to target Israel unfairly.”

A State Department press release said that the court “issued a decision claiming jurisdiction in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza, while expressly recognizing the serious legal and factual questions that surround its ability to do so.”

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry meanwhile hailed a “historic day for the principle of accountability” and said it was ready to cooperate.