**Macron promises to look into whether Hague has right to investigate Israel**

By: Batya Jerenberg

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French President Emmanuel Macron says he will discuss with his legal experts whether The Hague’s International Criminal Court (ICC) has the authority to hear a case brought against Israel by the Palestinian Authority (PA), Kan News reported on Thursday.

ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda announced last month that she believed that “war crimes have been or are being committed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip” and that “potential cases arising from the situation would be admissible” to the court.

She added that Jewish building in “the West Bank and East Jerusalem” could fall under the criminal category of transferring a civilian population into occupied territory.

Macron told Kan’s French reporter that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Reuven Rivlin had asked him to use his influence to stop the legal action. He said that he would investigate whether the Palestinian case against Israel falls under the ICC’s jurisdiction.

The PA would like to see the Israeli government as well as top officials charged with war crimes for their actions in Operation Protective Edge against terrorists in Gaza in 2015, as well as for the whole enterprise of building Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria.

Israel has categorically denied that any actions on the level of war crimes took place in its defensive battles to stop Hamas’ indiscriminate rocket fire on the country, and that individual acts of possible criminality by its soldiers are investigated by its own courts. By the ICC’s own rules, if a country’s legal system operates on its own in such cases, the ICC cannot interfere.

Israel also rejects the idea that creating Jewish villages in the ancestral homeland of the Jewish people could be considered a war crime.

Just before Bensouda’s announcement, Israeli Attorney General Avishai Mandelblit published his own opinion that the tribunal has no jurisdiction regarding Israel and the Palestinians.

Israel is not a signatory to the Rome Statute that established the ICC, and “any Palestinian actions with respect to the Court are invalid,” he wrote.

“Only sovereign states can delegate criminal jurisdiction to the Court. The Palestinian Authority clearly does not meet the criteria for statehood under international law and the Court’s founding statute.”

Mandelblit also noted that Israel has “valid legal claims over the same territory,” and that both sides had agreed that the future status of the region was to be decided via negotiations, not the courts.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo immediately announced that the ICC lacks jurisdiction in the case. About two weeks ago, Hungary’s foreign minister declared that his country agreed as well, and expressed concern regarding the “politicization of the Court and the infringement of countries’ sovereignty by the International Criminal Court.”

Macron, who is in Israel along with 46 other world leaders for the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz at Yad Vashem on Thursday, visited PA President Mahmoud Abbas Wednesday evening.

According to PA news agency Wafa, he told Abbas that France supports a peace process based on the “two-state solution.” The two did not hold a press conference after their late-night meeting.