**PM Netanyahu holds discussions on Israeli policy regarding the statement of the international court in The Hague**

Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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(Communicated by the Prime Minister's Media Adviser)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has, in recent days, held discussions on the issue of Israeli policy regarding the announcement of the international court in The Hague on the opening of an investigation against the State of Israel.

Also participating in the discussions were Defense Minister Benny Gantz, Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi, Minister Yuval Steinitz, Minister Yoav Galant, Minister Michael Biton, IDF Chief-of-Staff Lt.-Gen. Aviv Kochavi, National Security Council (NSC) head Meir Ben-Shabbat, Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit and other senior officials.

It was decided to adopt the recommendations of the inter-ministerial team led by the NSC which recommended not cooperating with the international court and not leaving the prosecutor's letter unanswered but to respond and make it clear that the court is acting without authority. It will also be made clear that Israel is a nation of laws that knows how to investigate itself.

In the letter it will also be pointed out that Israel absolutely rejects the claim that it has carried out war crimes. Israel reiterates its unequivocal position according to which the court in The Hague lacks the authority to open an investigation against it.

This position was also made clear to the court by leading countries and globally noted experts in international law. The unacceptable interference of the court lacks any legal basis and contravenes the goals for which it was established. The State of Israel is committed to the rule of law and will continue to investigate any accusation against it regardless of the source and expects that the court will refrain from violating its sovereign authority.

Prime Minister Netanyahu said that at a time when IDF soldiers are fighting with supreme morality against terrorists who perpetrate new war crimes every other day, it is Israel that the court in The Hague has decided to condemn. There is no other word to describe this other than hypocrisy. A body that was founded to defend human rights has become a hostile body that defends those who trample human rights.