**Who Cares About the International Criminal Court?**

By: Nave Dromi

Haaretz

December 25, 2019

<https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-who-cares-about-the-international-criminal-court-1.8316999>

Reams of commentary have been written about the decision by Fatou Bensouda, chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, that there is a basis to open an investigation against Israel. But amid these mountains of verbiage, two words seem to have been forgotten: Who cares? Or to be more precise, who cares what this politicized organization, with its stench of anti-Semitism, thinks about us?

So Israeli officers won’t be able to wander the streets of Europe. Somehow, we’ll manage. And incidentally, does anyone know the last time that senior Palestinian Authority or Hamas officials were arrested at the airport in the Netherlands or in Britain?

The ICC prosecutor’s decision is neither upsetting nor surprising. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has long since become a tool for channeling anti-Semitism, in its modern, anti-Zionist incarnation.

This conflict has no solution not only because of its religious and cultural nature, but because anti-Semitism will always exist and will therefore always need some kind of representative or public relations agent. Currently, this sought-after position is filled by the Palestinians, with help, of course, from people such as the executive director of B’Tselem, Hagai El-Ad, whose campaign against Israel and its institutions contributed to the ICC prosecutor’s decision, according to the Hebrew-language daily Israel Hayom.

If there’s a problem with Israel’s policy, it is weakness and cowardice. Just as Jews in the past heard anti-Semitic accusations and kept their heads down so they’d be left alone, we’re doing the same thing today. We aren’t evicting residents of the illegal Bedouin settlement of Khan al-Ahmar. We aren’t demolishing illegal construction by the European Union and the Palestinians in Area C of the West Bank, areas that according to the Oslo Accords are under exclusive Israeli control. We’ve exercised restraint in the face of torched fields. (The former chief of staff considered this eminently reasonable.) We’ve attached a lawyer to every officer, and so on and so forth.

But anti-Semites will always find their way to the Jew, even when he makes himself small. And so now, we’re being accused of “war crimes.”

Therefore, Israel’s conclusion ought to be exactly the opposite: Not only should Israel refuse to cooperate with the ICC process, but it should start taking resolute action, with no guilt feelings. It should raze all the illegal construction in Area C, refuse to return the bodies of terrorists, worsen prison conditions for jailed terrorists, annex the Jordan Valley and the rest of Area C, and stop sending truckloads of goods into the Gaza Strip and allowing Qatar to send millions of dollars to Gaza.

We’re war criminals? Then forward march. Let the Egyptians take care of the Palestinians in Gaza and the Europeans protect Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas from Hamas.

Have we behaved perfectly in this conflict that has been forced upon us? Obviously not. And there have indeed been some tragedies, like that of the Sawarka family, which was almost completely wiped out during the last round of fighting in Gaza.

But the difference between a tragedy like that and a war crime is intent. There was never any intent or desire to arrive at this terrible outcome. Israel has no desire to hurt civilians and no interest in doing so. Moreover, Israel often refrains from attacking Palestinians who are genuine war criminals to avoid killing uninvolved civilians.

For years, Jews were subjected to the libel that they baked matzot with the blood of Christian children. Nowadays, the blood libel is that the Zionists are responsible for war crimes. But just as back then, we didn’t really make matza with the blood of Christian children, today we aren’t war criminals.

The only difference – though it’s a significant one – between then and now is the existence of Israel. The Jews of Europe felt defenseless, and therefore they were forced to keep their heads down. But Israelis are strong enough to walk with their heads held high and without fear. To stand up to the anti-Semites dressed up as seekers of justice and tell them, “Who cares?”