Knesset Lawfare Subcommittee Holds First Meeting

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A motion to wave the Palestinian flag at the UN is part of a campaign to delegitimize Israel, MK Tzipi Livni (Zionist Union) said at Thursday’s inaugural meeting of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Subcommittee on Lawfare, which she leads.

Livni said at the meeting’s opening that the committee will deal with legal defensive measures for IDF soldiers and will discuss how the government can go on the legal offensive, as well.

“This committee will deal with lawfare not only to see how we can defend ourselves, but also to try to change international trends against Israel in a legal context and how to deal with moves the Palestinians are trying to make over Israel’s head,” the former justice minister explained.

Livni pointed out that some of the Palestinians’ moves could have a serious effect, like appeals to the International Criminal Court in the Hague, and some are more symbolic, like a motion to have the flags of non-member observers, like the Palestinians and the Holy See, waved at the UN.

“This isn’t only symbolic, it’s part of an orchestrated diplomatic and legal struggle that is meant to create legitimacy for a Palestinian state with all that that means, and to deny legitimacy to the State of Israel,” she said.

Before closing the meeting to the press, Livni said the committee would discuss what Israel can do to play a bigger part on the international legal field.

The committee will deal with matters of international law in connection to the legitimacy of the IDF’s actions and defending Israel and IDF soldiers in that arena, including the ICC. It will also discuss universal jurisdiction laws used against Israelis.

According to Livni, these issues are not given the attention they need by different government ministries, even though international law is another war front.

Livni and other senior Israeli officials like former defense ministers Ehud Barak and Shaul Mofaz used to avoid traveling to the UK because of universal jurisdiction laws, which allowed private citizens to lodge war crime complaints against people who are not British citizens even if the alleged crimes took place outside of Britain. In 2011 the law was changed so that only in cases in which there is solid evidence of responsibility for heinous war crimes would be subject to universal jurisdiction laws.