Hungary Backs Israel in Fight Against ICC Call to Probe War Crimes Against Palestinians

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Israeli Foreign Minister Yisrael Katz recently received a letter from his Hungarian counterpart Péter Szijjártó in which the latter expressed his support for the Israeli stance that the ICC does not have the jurisdiction to conduct such an investigation in Palestinian territories in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

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“The Hungarian Government has always highly appreciated the principle and value of national sovereignty … We believe that your position with regard to the lack of jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court in the given case is justified,” Szijjártó wrote.

In a statement, Katz expressed his gratitude and appreciation for Hungary’s position, which is “in line with the values of law and justice, as well as with the excellent relations between the two states.”

In recent years, the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has forged closer ties with the government of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who is viewed in Europe as an extreme right-wing figure.

Last month, ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda stated that there is basis to investigate Israel for its actions but has requested the court to decide over the question of its jurisdiction in the Palestinians territories. Israel’s attorney general argued that the ICC, to which Israel is not a party, “lacks jurisdiction in relation to Israel and that any Palestinian actions with respect to the court are legally invalid,” as the Palestinian Authority is not a sovereign states, although it has joined the ICC’s Rome Statute.

The Prosecutor’s Office specifically noted allegations that Israel has been involved in demolishing Palestinian property and evicting Palestinians from the West Bank and East Jerusalem. It also referenced 2014’s Operation Protective Edge, the war in the Gaza Strip, as well as Israel’s plan to evacuate residents of the Bedouin village Khan al-Ahmar, and Israeli construction of settlements in the West Bank.