Defense minister warns ICC: Israel will provide a legal Iron Dome to its service members

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Defense Minister Naftali Bennett vowed on Wednesday to pursue the fight against terrorism without hesitation, stressing that Israel would not be deterred by the recent International Criminal Court announcement on a possible investigation against its conduct.

Bennett, who spoke at the commencement of cadets at the Israeli Air Force's Flight Academy, said that the ICC chief prosecutor's decision to ask the court in The Hague for an opinion on whether its scope of jurisdiction on the matter would not affect Israel's determination to confront terrorists wherever they may be.

"The court is a breeding ground for modern anti-Semitism; We will fight terrorism as if there is no Hague and we will fight The Hague as if there is no terrorism," he continued.

Turning to the newly minted airmen and airwomen, he said: "I know that when you go on a sortie, serving as Israel's long arm that strikes the evildoers in precision strikes, you have to handle enormous stress. This pressure is now worse as a result of the ICC's decision, but you should not be discouraged." He then went on to promise that Israeli decision makers will stand by the Israel Defense Forces troops if they ever get prosecuted, borrowing a term from Israel's successful missile defense disposition.

"I want to make it clear, to all the IDF commanders and fighters past and present – Israel will provide a legal Iron Dome to its service members, you protect us and we will protect you," he said. "We won't let anti-Semitism fly in the cockpit."