**Knesset bill outlines plan to defend Israel from ICC probe**

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What will Israel's relationship with the International Criminal Court in The Hague look like now that British human rights attorney Karim Khan has been elected the court's new chief prosecutor? Israeli interests.”

As previously reported by Israel Hayom, the choice of Khan could lead officials in Jerusalem to reconsider boycotting the ICC, but the legal advocacy organization Shurat Hadin-Israel Law Center holds the opinion that Israel should stop cooperating with the international agency, and even enforce that position through legislation and has already prepared a bill to that effect.

Shurat Hadin believes that whoever serves as ICC chief prosecutor, it is still vital that Israel stop cooperating with the court, of which Israel is not a member. Therefore, a bill has been prepared that would block the ICC from carrying out investigations in Israel or investigating Israelis. For years, the US has had a similar law. Kenya, which has been the subject of an ICC investigation, also took similar action.

The bill includes a series of steps to prevent investigations against Israel, including five-year prison sentences and financial penalties for any civilian group, such as an NGO, that hands information of any kind over to the ICC, either directly or indirectly; a five-year sentence for anyone who provides services to the ICC; a prohibition on any financial ties, direct or indirect, with the ICC, including the possibility that the ICC might hire investigators to operate in Israel; a ban on any governmental agency handing any type of information over to the ICC or its representatives without explicit approval from the justice minister; a ban on handing over anyone the ICC wants to investigate or arrest to the ICC or any third party; and a ban on ICC representatives entering Israel or conducting any activity within Israel's borders.

In addition, the bill proposes defining any assets the ICC holds in Israel as assets owned by a terrorist organization; "meaningful" government statements about any foreign officials helping the ICC from within Israel; and a governmental obligation to provide legal and financial assistance to any Israeli who becomes the subject of an ICC investigation.

Shurat Hadin said that the bill has been authored and is ready to be presented to the 24th Knesset as soon as it begins its work.

"Israel has to do today what the US did 20 years ago as soon as the ICC was founded," Shurat Hadin President Nitsana Darshan-Leitner told Israel Hayom.

"We have waited with this bill for a long time, but we now see the hangman's noose tightening around Israel's neck in The Hague," Darshan-Leitner added.

"Israel must to everything in its power to prevent the ICC taking action against Israelis. While the court takes an anti-Semitic position against the state of Israel and IDF soldiers, we need to anchor in law that no Israeli official or entity will submit information against Israelis to the ICC. Israel has an independent, strong law enforcement system, and when a suspicion of 'war crimes' arises, the matter is investigated with the utmost seriousness," Darshan-Leitner said.