**The International Criminal Court must be defunded**

By: Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Amir Avivi

Ynet News

March 4, 2021

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/mar/4/the-international-criminal-court-must-be-defunded/>

The International Criminal Court in The Hague has set its sights on Israel. This is not about war crimes or International Law, it’s simply a cheap attempt at drumming-up support for their institution.

As a retired Israeli brigadier general I could now face potential arrest or imprisonment by this corrupt body for the alleged crime of defending my people. Now is the time for ICC sponsor states to withdraw their funding of this politicized farce — as history has shown that what starts with the Jews, rarely ends with the Jews.

The Biden administration condemned the move, stating: “The United States objects to today’s International Criminal Court decision regarding the Palestinian situation. Israel is not a State Party to the Rome Statute.” The Americans understand that if Israel, a non-member state, can be persecuted for alleged crimes in “Palestine” a non-existent state, then it’s only time before American servicemen and women face the same fate.

That’s why Congress passed the American Service-Members’ Protection Act in 2002, which colloquially became known as the “Hague Invasion Act,” which states that the American military can be deployed to free American soldiers imprisoned by the ICC.

Former Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda performed some unprecedented legal gymnastics to get Israel on the chopping board, which proves the extent to which this is a purely political show trial. The court decided that parts of Israel’s capital and ancestral homeland were actually a non-existent State of Palestine. Most alarmingly they equated the actions of the Israel Defense Forces with that of the Islamist terror organization Hamas.

I personally witnessed the unparalleled moral compass of the Israeli army on the battlefield when faced by bloodthirsty terrorists deeply entrenched in civilian homes, schools and places of worship. The notion that our forces could be put on trial alongside Hamas is the definition of absurd. If anything, the IDF has historically gone too far to defend Palestinian civilians, putting our own soldiers and civilians in harm’s way.

While a slew of ICC member states have condemned the hostile attack against the Jewish state, the time for action has arrived. It will take more than words to convince those in The Hague to pursue real war crimes instead of headlines.

Few things unite the international community more than Israel bashing. The case against Israel is simply a lightning rod to encourage other states to become more involved in the ICC, while they ignore real war crimes around the globe. Conscientious ICC member states must threaten to stop paying their membership dues until the case is dropped. If the court starts hemorrhaging funds and members from the Western world, they’ll pick their battles with more care.

For Israel, this is far more than politics. The airing of this libel against us will have manifestations on the battlefield that could cost lives. With soldiers and officers acting in fear of prosecution. Israel must therefore increase educational programs for soldiers that demonstrate the length to which Israel already acts above and beyond the framework of international law.

Most importantly the IDF must act with determination to fulfill its primary mission; the survival of the Jewish people. For 2,000 years, we wondered the Earth, with nowhere to call home. Today, we are a free people in our land with the ability to defend ourselves by ourselves. We must send a clear message to our enemies that despite trumped-up charges against us we will not be deterred.

A new generation of Israeli generals has arisen that is ready to face all the challenges before us. As recently stated by the IDF chief of staff, any future military operations, be they in Gaza, Lebanon or elsewhere will be fast, furious and decisive. The best response to the ICC is a strong, relentless IDF.