

LA Jews for Peace Policy Statement

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Contact: info@LAJewsforPeace.org

PMB #486, 119 N. Fairfax Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90036

The ICC Finally Acts Around Israel-Palestine

LA Jews for Peace applauds the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on Nov.21 2024 for Israeli and Hamas leaders for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the current Gaza war. Warrants were issued for Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and Hamas military chief Muhammad Deif.

These warrants were a long time in coming. The former ICC Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, announced an investigation into war crimes allegedly committed in Palestine in December 2019. The present Prosecutor, Karim Khan, formally requested warrants six months ago in May 2024.

Netanyahu and Gallant are the top two Israeli political leaders who led Israel's world-wide supported response to the Oct.7 attack. But they went beyond a justifiable response to what is now widely considered a genocide. They are accused of deliberate starvation of civilians and intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population. Deif, who Israel claims it killed in an airstrike, is accused of murder, hostage taking, and sexual violence on Oct.7.

LA Jews for Peace considers these indictments fully justifiable based on Hamas' Oct.7 massacre inside Israel and Israel's relentless retaliation against the 2.3 million people in Gaza. These warrants make an important statement in support of international law and emphasize that no one is above the law.

As expected, the Israeli political establishment, including Netanyahu critics, reject the ICC's authority over Israel in general and the aforementioned charges in particular. Israelis are embarrassed to see their leaders in the same place as recognized war criminals like Muammar Qaddafi, Slobodan Milosevic, and Ratko Mladic. Perhaps due to the Israeli media's refusal to describe the horrors that Israel imposed on Gaza since Oct.7.

The United States joined Israel in rejecting the ICC indictments, with calls to sanction the ICC and Senator Tom Cotton (R-Arkansas) going so far as to call for the U.S. to invade the Netherlands (where the ICC is headquartered). The U.S. once again misused its "soft power" to side with Israel, acting as if the law does not apply to itself and its allies.

In fact, it is worse than that. The U.S. itself is complicit in Israel's crimes by dint of its generous supply of weapons to Israel that enabled Israel's war crimes. Perhaps Biden, Blinken, and Austin will be next on the ICC's docket.