

LA Jews for Peace Policy Statement

Los Angeles, CA.

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Support for ICC Request for Arrest Warrants

LA Jews for Peace supports the International Criminal Court (ICC) chief prosecutor Karim Khan's request for arrest warrants against Israeli and Hamas leaders: Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defense Minister Gallant, and Hamas Overall Leader Yahya Sinwar, Military head Mohammed Deif, and Political head Ismail Haniyeh.

Charges of crimes against humanity include Hamas killing hundreds of civilians and capture and maltreatment of about 240 hostages, and Israel using starvation as a weapon of war and "intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population."

As expected, the prosecutor's request is being attacked by Israel and the U.S., claiming there is no equivalence between Israel and terrorist Hamas, and by Hamas, claiming there is no equivalence between victim and aggressor. Both claims are legally irrelevant. What counts is evidence that war crimes were committed.

If these requests are fulfilled and arrest warrants are issued, this case may mark a renewal of faith in International Law. It may end Israel's apparent impunity and break the ICC's apparent focus solely on non-Western states.

The prosecutor's request for arrest warrants is just the first step on a long path to bring Israeli and Hamas leaders to account for their war crimes, and to rehabilitate people's faith in the ICC. There will surely be enormous political pressure on the ICC to quash the requests for arrest warrants, much of it from the United States. In anticipation of the Prosecutor's request, Republican Senators threatened the court and all its employees¹

As American citizens who want a just world, we must pressure the U.S. not to undermine the ICC's quest to seek justice. We are not alone, already France, Germany, and Belgium have expressed support for the ICC as have distinguished international attorneys².

¹ *JuristNews*, May 6, 2024: <https://www.jurist.org/news/2024/05/us-senators-send-threatening-letter-to-icc-prosecutor-saying-target-israel-and-we-will-target-you/>

² *Financial Times*, May 20, 2024. <https://www.ft.com/content/aa2089c5-6388-437d-bf5c-9268f3a788ce>