

ICC to Launch Probe into U.S. War Crimes in Afghanistan



The Hague, November 2 (RHC)-- The International Criminal Court (ICC) is preparing to launch an investigation of a range of possible war crimes in Afghanistan, including those committed by U.S. troops, according to a new report.

ICC chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, will seek to initiate an investigation in the coming weeks, according to the Foreign Policy magazine, citing several knowledgeable sources. The probe will likely be launched after the U.S. presidential elections but before the end of the year.

However, it is not clear whether the ICC would ever bring charges against Americans after the investigation because doing so would require significantly more evidence than the chief prosecutor's office currently possesses, the report said. If indeed launched, the move would mark the first time a formal ICC investigation has scrutinized U.S. crimes.

In order to discuss the potential investigation and to express concerns about its scope, U.S. officials recently visited the ICC, an international tribunal that sits in The Hague in the Netherlands.

The ICC has repeatedly highlighted alleged abuses of detainees by American troops between 2003 and 2005 that it believes have not been adequately addressed by the U.S. government.

“Crimes were allegedly committed with particular cruelty and in a manner that debased the basic human dignity of the victims,” the tribunal noted in a report last year. The U.S. government has insisted that the ICC does not have jurisdiction over U.S. citizens because Washington never ratified the Rome Statute that established the court in the first place.

Afghanistan is still suffering from insecurity and violence years after the United States and its allies invaded the country in 2001 as part of Washington’s so-called war on terror. In October last year, President Barack Obama announced plans to keep 9,800 US troops in Afghanistan through 2016 and 5,500 in 2017, reneging on his promise to end the war there and bring home most American forces from the Asian country before he leaves office.

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