

# *U.S. secretary of state threatens ICC over U.S. war crimes probe*

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Washington, March 18 (RHC)-- In an effort to threaten everyone into not investigating U.S. or Israeli war crimes in the International Criminal Court, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo says anyone involved in such probes will lose their visa and may be sanctioned.

Washington's top diplomat said that action had to be taken because any investigation into alleged war crimes and torture committed by the United States would be a threat to US rule of law. Visas will be pulled or denied for anyone who has been involved in or even requested an ICC investigation of "any US personnel."

The ICC is currently considering a request to investigate possible war crimes committed by the U.S. in Afghanistan in the course of the nearly 20-year conflict which has left over 100,000 Afghans dead. The international court prosecutor's office says it has "reasonable basis" to believe that "war crimes and crimes against humanity" were, and continue to be, committed by foreign government forces in Afghanistan.

Pompeo openly stated that the action was intended to get the court to drop the potential investigation, and that Washington was ready to further increase the pressure if they don't do as he says.

"We are prepared to take additional steps, including economic sanctions, if the ICC does not change

course,” he said. The court responded later in the day saying they would continue their work “undeterred” by Pompeo’s aggressive statement, and act in accordance with international law rather than Washington’s threats.

Following up on National Security Advisor John Bolton’s threats against the court last year, Pompeo said that action had already been taken against members of the Hague-based court for daring to look into potential crimes committed by the U.S. abroad. He declined to name any names or reveal how many people had been targeted.

While Washington signed the initial document which created the international court in 2000, it has since refused to actually become a member, and many American politicians see the court’s ability to hold the country accountable for its actions abroad as a threat to national sovereignty. Bolton later “unsigned” the document altogether.

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