

# *U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo condemns probe of Washington's war crimes in Afghanistan*

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Washington, March 7 (RHC)-- U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has condemned a decision by the International Criminal Court to probe alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Afghanistan by U.S. troops and the CIA.

Speaking from the State Department, Pompeo said the United States would take steps to prevent its citizens from standing trial at The Hague. "This is a truly breathtaking action by an unaccountable political institution masquerading as a legal body. It is all the more reckless for this ruling to come just days after the United States signed a historic peace deal on Afghanistan, which is the best chance for peace in a generation. ... The United States is not a party to the ICC, and we will take all necessary measures to protect our citizens from this renegade, unlawful so-called court."

ICC prosecutors say they have ample evidence that U.S. forces in Afghanistan “committed acts of torture, cruel treatment, outrages upon personal dignity, rape and sexual violence.” The ICC is also probing war crimes committed by U.S.-backed Afghan forces and the Taliban.

Human Rights Watch welcomed the ICC’s ruling, writing in a statement: “The ICC Appeals Chamber’s decision to greenlight an investigation of brutal crimes in Afghanistan despite extreme pressure reaffirms the court’s essential role for victims when all other doors to justice are closed.”

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