

ICC taunted with atomic bomb analogy over Netanyahu arrest warrant

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The Hague, September 7 (RHC)-- The chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) has defended his move to issue arrest warrants for Israeli officials over their war crimes in Gaza, saying that he had been "cautioned" by several leaders about the decision.

Karim Khan said he had received warnings from several countries and authorities that arrest warrants for Israeli officials would be an "atomic bomb," according to his interview with BBC, which was released on its website on Thursday and is also set to be broadcast on Saturday.

He said that some world leaders had pressured him not to issue warrants to arrest Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and minister of military affairs Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity. "Several leaders and others told me and advised me and cautioned me," he said in the interview which will be broadcast on Saturday.

Back in May, Khan issued the warrants, saying there were reasonable grounds to believe Netanyahu and Gallant bear criminal responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip.

The pair, he added, were suspected of crimes including starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, murder, intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population, and extermination. However, the request for the warrants must yet be approved by ICC judges.

Also in his interview, the ICC chief prosecutor stressed that it was necessary to show that all sides will be held to the same standard in relation to war crimes. "You can't have one approach for countries where there's support, whether it's NATO support, European support [and] powerful countries behind you, and a different approach where you have clear jurisdiction," he expounded.

"We need to apply the law in a way that is equal, because if we don't, and importantly if we're not seen to, we're going to lose all the architecture, not just the ICC, that has been built on human suffering since Nuremberg," added Khan.

Asked whether his move to issue arrest warrants for the Israeli officials was a political decision rather than a legal one, Khan responded: "What we're doing is the antithesis of politics, it's about the equal application of the law irrespective of whether one receives a round of applause from some quarters or a deafening din of condemnation from the other."

He further rejected the accusations of anti-Semitism leveled at him by Netanyahu, saying that "there's not an ounce, not a jot, not a scintilla of truth in the charge." "Our job is to apply the law and not to be dissuaded by these cheap shots or criticisms that manifestly are false," he asserted.

Israel launched its brutal Gaza onslaught on October 7, 2023, after the Hamas resistance group carried out a surprise operation against the usurping entity in retaliation for its intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people.

So far, the occupying regime has killed at least 40,878 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured 94,454 others.

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