

United Nations Says Palestine to Join International Criminal Court on April 1st



United Nations, January 7 (RHC)-- United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says Palestine will soon join the International Criminal Court (ICC). In a statement posted on the UN's treaty website on Tuesday night, the secretary-general said: "The statute will enter into force for the State of Palestine on April 1, 2015."

On Monday, Herman von Herbel, who serves as ICC registrar, confirmed that the body has received documents by Palestine declaring its acceptance of the body's jurisdiction. This paves the way for the court's investigation of Israeli crimes committed during the recent war on Gaza.

When Palestine accedes to the Rome Statute, The Hague-based court would be able to prosecute Israeli officials for crimes they have committed over the past months in Gaza and the West Bank.

The ICC started its work in early-July 2002, when the Rome Statute entered into force as the foundational and governing document. Currently, there are 122 states, which are party to the Rome Statute and thus members of the ICC.

The United States and Israel, along with Sudan, have said that they no longer intend to become states parties and, therefore, have no legal obligations arising from their former representatives' signature of the Statute. Israel and the U.S. are extremely angry about Palestine's attempt to join the ICC, with U.S. officials calling the move 'counter-productive.' Israel has also halted the transfer of more than USD 120 million in taxes belonging to the Palestinians in retaliation for their application to join the ICC.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas signed the request to join the ICC after the United Nations Security Council rejected a Palestinian proposal for statehood on December 30th. The Palestinians have requested to join the Hague-based court in order to bring war crimes charges against Israel.

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