

ICC prosecutor warns against crimes amid escalating Israeli aggression

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Geneva, May 14 (RHC)-- The International Criminal Court's Fatou Bensouda told Reuters she would press ahead with her inquiry even without the cooperation of Israel, which accuses her office of anti-Semitism. Tel Aviv, just like its closest ally the United States, has rejected membership in the treaty-based court, objecting to its jurisdiction.

"These are events that we are looking at very seriously," Bensouda said. "We are monitoring very closely and I remind that an investigation has opened and the evolution of these events could also be something we look at."

Israel and Palestinian resistance groups have engaged this week in their fiercest round of fighting since 2014, with punishing Israeli air strikes on Gaza and militants based in the densely populated enclave firing

over 1,600 rockets into Israel. At least 87 Palestinians and seven Israelis have died

In March, her office said it was opening a formal investigation into suspected war crimes in the conflict after nearly five years of preliminary inquiries.

The ICC is examining whether Israeli forces committed war crimes - including disproportionate attacks and willful killings of civilians - during the 2014 Gaza war when Israeli armored forces swept into the heavily urbanized enclave.

While the investigation is "politically fraught," Bensouda said, she denied accusations by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that her office was biased, or was singling out Israel.

"It's indeed unfortunate that these are the reactions that the prime minister would have. This is far from the truth," said Bensouda, a Gambian who will be replaced by Britain's Karim Khan when her nine-year term ends next month.

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