International Criminal Court Investigating CIA and U.S. Forces for Possible War Crimes in Afghanistan

The Hague, November 16 (RHC)-- The International Criminal Court (ICC) has announced that the US military and the CIA may be guilty of carrying out war crimes in Afghanistan. The ICC's chief prosecutor Fatou Bensouda made the announcement while unveiling the results of a preliminary probe launched into the U.S.'s actions in the country.

Bensouda noted that if proven, the war crimes were carried out mainly between 2003 and 2004 during the "cruel and violent" questioning of prisoners.

There is "reasonable basis to believe that, in the course of interrogating these detainees... members of the U.S. armed forces and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency resorted to techniques amounting to the commission of the war crimes of torture, cruel treatment, outrages upon personal dignity, and rape," she said.

"Members of U.S. armed forces appear to have subjected at least 61 detained persons to torture," said the ICC, adding that CIA personnel seem to have tortured a further 27 prisoners. It added that it is yet to decide if it will launch a full investigation into the case.

"These alleged crimes were not the abuses of a few isolated individuals," said the report. "They appear to have been committed as part of approved interrogation techniques in an attempt to extract 'actionable intelligence.'"

The probe is the first time a formal ICC investigation has scrutinized U.S. crimes. The ICC has repeatedly highlighted alleged abuses of detainees by American troops between 2003 and 2005 that it believes have not been adequately addressed by the U.S. government.

Washington has insisted that the ICC does not have jurisdiction over U.S. citizens because the United States never ratified the Rome Statute that established the court in the first place.

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