

*International Criminal Court
prosecutor seeks arrest warrants
against Benjamin Netanyahu and
Israeli Minister of Defense Yoav
Gallant*

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The Hague, May 20 (RHC)-- The International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor announced on Monday that he is seeking arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant.

The move, by ICC prosecutor Karim Khan, will further isolate Israel internationally and increase pressure on the Biden administration to press Netanyahu to end the war in Gaza. It could also trigger legislation by Congress against the ICC.

This is the first time the ICC seeks arrest warrants against a major U.S. ally, as well as the first time it has issued warrants for the leader of a so-called 'democratic' country.

But Israel is not a member of the ICC and has historically refused to abide by international rules, including resolutions by the United Nations.

Khan said in a statement on Monday that he seeks arrest warrants against Netanyahu and Israeli Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant. "Based on evidence collected and examined by my Office, I have reasonable grounds to believe that Netanyahu and Gallant, bear criminal responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed on the territory of the State of Palestine (in the Gaza strip) from at least 8 October 2023," Khan said in his statement.

Khan and his team have discussed the possibility of seeking arrest warrants for several weeks, raising deep concerns in Israel.

The Biden administration has told ICC officials it opposes the move and said that the court doesn't have jurisdiction to investigate the war in Gaza.

Israel has threatened to take punitive action against the Palestinian Authority (PA) if the ICC issues arrest warrants. The Israelis claimed the Palestinian Authority led a campaign to issue the warrants and warned the U.S. that Israeli sanctions against the PA could lead to its collapse.

A panel of judges will now examine the prosecutor's request and decide whether to issue the warrants.

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