

Israel will not allow war crime trials over Gaza: PM
Malaysiakini.com
Oct 13, 2009

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel would not allow its citizens to be tried for alleged war crimes over the Gaza war and that adopting a damning UN report on the offensive endangered the stalled peace process.

The hawkish premier was speaking days before the UN Security Council was to raise the report, which accused both Israel and the Gaza Strip's Islamist Hamas rulers of committing war crimes during the 22-day war at the turn of the year.

"Our first mission is to head off this attack," Netanyahu told the opening of the winter session of parliament, the Knesset.

"This warped document... written by this warped committee undermines Israel's right to self defence.

"This report encourages terror and endangers the peace," he said, repeating comments he made at the annual UN general assembly.

"I want to make it clear - Israel will not take any chances for peace if it can't defend itself," he said.

Israel will never allow this

Netanyahu also said that Israel will not allow a situation in which its political leadership during the war and military officials would face trial over the conflict that killed 1,400 Palestinians and 13 Israelis.

"We will not agree to a situation where (ex-premier) Ehud Olmert, (defence minister) Ehud Barak and (ex-foreign minister and now opposition leader) Tzipi Livni, who sent our soldiers to defend our cities and citizens, will sit on the defendants' bench in The Hague," he said of the International Criminal Court.

"We will not agree to a situation where IDF commanders and soldiers are branded war criminals after they defended the citizens of Israel with bravery and honour from a cruel enemy," Netanyahu said.

The UN report, released by an independent international fact-finding mission headed by former international war crimes prosecutor Richard Goldstone last month, accused Israel and Palestinian armed groups of committing war crimes during the war that erupted last December 27.

The UN Security Council is due to begin holding its regular monthly debate on the Middle East tomorrow, with the session widely expected to discuss the findings of the Goldstone report.

UN chief Ban Ki-moon supports a Palestinian proposal to reopen debate in the Human Rights Council on the report, his spokesperson Michele Montas said on Monday.

She said Ban discussed the issue during a telephone conversation with Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas on Sunday.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/114931>