Netanyahu to Use Holocaust Forum to Boost Support for Israel Against the ICC

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Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is expected to take advantage of a gathering of dozens of world leaders in Jerusalem for a Holocaust memorial Thursday to urge them to support Israel’s efforts to prevent the International Criminal Court from investigating its alleged war crimes against Palestinians.

Sources familiar with Netanyahu’s preparations for his meetings with foreign leaders told Haaretz that while the prime minister has publicly said that the main issue he will raise with them is the [regional threat posed by Iran](https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/.premium-iranian-threat-to-israel-is-real-even-if-it-serves-netanyahu-s-interests-1.8056353), he will also bring up the recent announcement by the ICC’s chief prosecutor that [there is a reasonable basis](https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-hague-prosecutor-there-s-basis-to-probe-israel-over-west-bank-war-crimes-1.8293452) to proceed with [an investigation against Israel for possible war crimes](https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-the-road-to-an-icc-probe-of-israeli-war-crimes-what-happens-next-1.8295148) committed in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem.

Netanyahu is expected to ask the leaders he will meet – chief among them [U.S. Vice President Mike Pence](https://www.haaretz.com/misc/tags/TAG-mike-pence-1.5606886), as well as [Russian President Vladimir Putin](https://www.haaretz.com/misc/tags/TAG-vladimir-putin-1.5599265), French President [Emmanuel Macron](https://www.haaretz.com/misc/tags/TAG-emmanuel-macron-1.6173783) and others – to publish official statements that will back the Israeli claim that the court in The Hague has no jurisdiction in Palestinian territories.

In recent months, Israel has been carrying out a campaign to garner political support for its stance. Netanyahu has contacted several world leaders, but only a few have accepted his request or indicated that they might.

The official Israeli position is that the Palestinians cannot be considered residents of a sovereign state, and are therefore not under the authority of the ICC’s. Israel has also pointed out that the ICC prosecutor has acknowledged that the issues pertaining to such a probe involve complicated legal questions regarding the court’s jurisdiction.

The United States has already stated that [it resolutely opposes “an unjustified investigation,](https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/trumps-warns-icc-of-prosecuting-israeli-actions-1.7111538)” which Washington said was biased and unfair in the way it focused on Israel. Australia published a statement in which it said it was “concerned” over the ICC prosecutor’s decision, and stressed that it does not recognize a Palestinian state. Australia, like the U.S., added that it believes permanent issues should be resolved in direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

The Hungarian government responded to Netanyahu’s request by saying that Israel’s “[position with regard to the lack of jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court in the given case is justified](https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-hungary-backs-israel-in-fight-against-icc-call-to-probe-war-crimes-1.8381956). The Hungarian government has always highly appreciated the principle and value of national sovereignty. Consequently, we have had several legal and political disagreements over competence with European institutions or within the framework of the UN. ... I wish to assure you of our continued political support to Israel on matters of mutual interest.”

Apart from these countries, others have not responded to Netanyahu’s request for public support. He hopes that this week’s visits might help him to bring them on board.

Israel hopes to have as many ICC member countries as possible apply pressure that would prevent the court from intervening in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which it claims would politicize the international institution.