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## Statement of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda, regarding the worsening situation in Gaza

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Statement : 8 April 2018 | [العربية](#)



It is with grave concern that I note the violence and deteriorating situation in the Gaza Strip in the context of recent mass demonstrations. Since 30 March 2018, at least 27 Palestinians have been reportedly killed by the Israeli Defence Forces, with over a thousand more injured, many, as a result of shootings using live ammunition and rubber-bullets. Violence against civilians - in a situation such as the one prevailing in Gaza – could constitute crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court ("ICC" or "the Court"), as could the use of civilian presence for the purpose of shielding military activities.

I remind all parties that the situation in Palestine is under preliminary examination by my Office. While a preliminary examination is not an investigation, any new alleged crime committed in the context of the situation in Palestine may be subjected to my Office's scrutiny. This applies to the events of the past weeks and to any future incident.

I am aware that the demonstrations in the Gaza Strip are planned to continue further. My Office will continue to closely watch the situation and will record any instance of incitement or resort to unlawful force. I urge all those concerned to refrain from further escalating this tragic situation.

Any person who incites or engages in acts of violence including by ordering, requesting, encouraging or contributing in any other manner to the commission of crimes within ICC's jurisdiction is liable to prosecution before the Court, with full respect for the principle of complementarity. The resort to violence must stop.

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*The ICC's Office of the Prosecutor conducts independent and impartial preliminary examinations, investigations and prosecutions of the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Since 2003, the Office has been conducting investigations in multiple situations within the ICC's jurisdiction, namely in Uganda; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Darfur, Sudan; the Central African Republic (two distinct situations); Kenya; Libya; Côte d'Ivoire; Mali; Georgia and Burundi. Pre-Trial Chamber II is seized of the Prosecutor's request for authorisation to commence an investigation into the situation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The Office is also conducting preliminary examinations relating to the situations in Colombia; the Gabonese Republic; Guinea; Iraq/UK; Nigeria; Palestine; The Philippines; Venezuela and Ukraine.*

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Source : Office of the Prosecutor

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