PLO asks ICC to investigate 'Israeli settlements'

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The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has decided to submit an official request to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate what it calls “illegal Israeli settlement activity”, PLO Executive Committee member Dr. Hanan Ashrawi told the Ma’an news agency.

Ashrawi told the news agency that the committee had made the decision to move forward with submitting an official investigation request to the ICC, which is based in The Hague.

The Palestinian Authority (PA) [officially joined the ICC](file:///\\News\News.aspx\193486)on April 1, 2015, and immediately filed [a series of legal complaints](file:///\\News\News.aspx\197271) with the court. In addition to claiming that Israel committed war crimes during the 2014 Gaza war, it also claimed that Israeli “settlements” are “an ongoing war crime”.

The official PA news agency Wafa reported that during a PLO Executive Committee meeting on Sunday, the organization condemned Israel for “ethnic cleansing and racial segregation,” which they highlighted were “considered war crimes that should be investigated by the ICC.”

A PLO statement reportedly accused Israel of carrying out a “silent ethnic cleansing” in Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley and Hevron.

As a result of said violations of international law, the PLO “decided to refer the file of settlements as a war crime and the file of ethnic cleansing, discrimination and apartheid to the ICC with an urgent appeal to open a judicial investigation into the war crimes committed by the State of Israel in the Palestinian territories occupied during the 1967 aggression,” Wafa quoted the statement as saying.

While the PA has complained to the ICC against Israel, it itself is not immune from lawsuits at the ICC. In fact, Shurat HaDin – Israel Law Center has already launched [lawsuits against PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas](http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/187264) and Hamas leaders at the ICC.