ICC issues arrest warrants for Netanyahu, Gallant, Deif

AFP- The International Criminal Court on Thursday issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former defence Minister Yoav Gallant, as well as Hamas's military chief Mohammed Deif.
The ICC's move now theoretically limits the movement of Netanyahu as any of the court's 124 national members would be obliged to arrest him on their territory.

"The Chamber issued warrants of arrest for two individuals, Mr Benjamin Netanyahu and Mr Yoav Gallant, for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed from at least 8 October 2023 until at least 20 May 2024, the day the Prosecution filed the applications for warrants of arrest," the Hague-based ICC said in a statement.

A warrant had also been issued for Deif, it added.

Israel said in early August it had killed Deif in an air strike in southern Gaza in July, although Hamas denies he is dead.

The arrest warrants had been classified as "secret", to protect witnesses and to safeguard the conduct of the investigations, the court said.

"However, the Chamber decided to release the information below since conduct similar to that addressed in the warrant of arrest appears to be ongoing," the tribunal said.

"Moreover, the Chamber considers it to be in the interest of victims and their families that they are made aware of the warrants' existence."

ICC chief prosecutor Karim Khan in May requested the court issue arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant over alleged

war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

Netanyahu sacked Gallant as defence minister on November 5.

Khan also sought warrants against top Hamas leaders including Mohammed Deif on suspicion of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The prosecutor dropped the application for Ismail Haniyeh, the group’s political leader, on August 2 “because of the changed circumstances caused by Mr Haniyeh’s death” in Tehran on July 31, the ICC earlier said in a statement.

Since Hamas conducted its October 7, 2023 attack, the deadliest in Israeli history, Israel has been fighting a war in Gaza, which the militant group rules.

The war was triggered by the assault on Israel by Hamas militants, a stunning cross-border raid that resulted in the deaths of 1,206 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures.

The Hamas government’s health ministry in the Gaza Strip said Thursday that at least 44,056 people had been killed in more than 13 months of war between Israel and Palestinian militants.

The toll includes 71 deaths in the previous 24 hours, according to the ministry, which said 104,268 people had been wounded in the Gaza Strip since the war began.

© 2024 AFP