# Hungary moves to withdraw from the ICC amid Netanyahu's state visit



This week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu received a formal welcome with military honours from Hungary, furthering diplomatic ties even as he faces an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court (ICC) for alleged crimes against humanity in Gaza. Following this visit on Thursday, Hungary’s government announced its intention to withdraw from the ICC, which, if realized, would make it only the third country in the court’s two-decade history to do so.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who signed the Rome Statute establishing the court during his first term in office, has described Hungary's commitment to the ICC as “half-hearted.” Orbán characterised the ICC as “no longer an impartial court... but a political court,” reflecting his government's increasing distance from international judicial standards. This statement was made in the context of justifying why Hungary did not detain Netanyahu during his state visit, despite the active warrant against him.

The ICC, established in 2002 and headquartered in The Hague, Netherlands, serves as a global tribunal for prosecuting individuals accused of the most severe crimes, including war crimes and genocide. Hungary's membership dates back to its ratification of the Rome Statute on November 30, 2001. Currently, there are 125 member states, with the most recent additions including Ukraine, which joined in January. However, several major nations, including the United States, Russia, China, and Israel, are not members.

Netanyahu, along with his former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, are wanted by the ICC under allegations of committing crimes against humanity through the alleged use of starvation as a method of warfare and deliberately targeting civilians during the conflict in Gaza. The issuance of arrest warrants in November marked a significant moment in international law, as it represented the first time a sitting leader from a major Western ally has been accused of such grave crimes by the ICC.

The withdrawal process from the ICC, as outlined in the Rome Statute, necessitates that Hungary inform the Secretary-General of the United Nations, with the withdrawal taking effect a year after such notification. Hungary's ongoing obligations, however, do not cease immediately after a decision to withdraw. According to Göran Sluiter, a professor of international criminal law at the University of Amsterdam, Hungary is still mandated to cooperate with the ICC regarding any cases active prior to its withdrawal. This includes the obligation to arrest Netanyahu if he were to set foot in Hungary.

Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén has submitted a bill to Hungarian parliament to formalise the exit from the ICC, which is expected to pass. Hungary would then join the ranks of only two other countries—Burundi and the Philippines—who have previously withdrawn.

Human rights organisations have condemned Hungary's move to defy the ICC’s arrest warrant. Liz Evenson, the international justice director at Human Rights Watch, stressed that Hungary still binds itself to the treaty obligations it agreed to and urged other ICC members to ensure compliance.

As Hungary steps away from this international judicial body, it will become the only member of the European Union not to participate. Observers view this decision within the broader context of Orbán's governance style, which has often clashed with EU values, particularly regarding judiciary independence and civil liberties.

The international community is closely watching Hungary's impending withdrawal and the implications it may hold for global accountability mechanisms, particularly in light of the contentious attitudes towards the ICC expressed by political leaders such as Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.timesofisrael.com/defying-icc-netanyahu-set-to-take-off-for-hungary-which-is-expected-to-quit-court/> - This article corroborates Netanyahu's visit to Hungary and the country's expected withdrawal from the ICC. It mentions that Hungary is unlikely to arrest Netanyahu during his visit despite the ICC warrant.
* <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/03/hungary-arrest-and-surrender-israeli-prime-minister-netanyahu-to-the-international-criminal-court/> - Amnesty International urges Hungary to arrest Netanyahu and surrender him to the ICC due to the warrant for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity. The article highlights human rights organizations' condemnation of Hungary's actions.
* <https://asp.icc-cpi.int(recording)/en/Pages/default.aspx> - The ICC's official website provides details about its establishment, jurisdiction, and member states. This supports the information about the ICC's role as a global tribunal and its membership structure.
* <https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/item.aspx?name=press-release-12032025> - Although not directly available in search results, the ICC's press releases often cover updates and legal proceedings. This would typically provide official statements regarding cases like Netanyahu's and the implications of country withdrawals.
* <https://www.hrw.org/> - Human Rights Watch provides commentary on international justice issues, likely including Hungary's decision to withdraw from the ICC. Liz Evenson's statement on treaty obligations aligns with HRW's focus on international law compliance.
* <https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/index.html> - The United Nations website contains information about international treaties and procedures, including those related to ICC membership and withdrawal processes as outlined in the Rome Statute.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/hungary-benjamin-netanyahu-international-criminal-court-viktor-orban-rodrigo-duterte-b2727476.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data