

Britain drops its challenge to ICC arrest warrants for Israeli leaders

Labour government announces its biggest step yet in overhauling the UK's approach to the Middle East

Labour has announced its biggest step yet in overhauling the UK's approach to the Middle East, dropping its opposition to an international arrest warrant against Benjamin Netanyahu despite pressure from Washington not to do so.

Downing Street announced on Friday that the government would not submit a challenge to the jurisdiction of the international criminal court, whose chief prosecutor, Karim Khan, is seeking a warrant against the Israeli prime minister.

The move makes it more likely that the ICC will now grant Khan's request, in what would be a stunning international rebuke for Israel over the way it has conducted the war in Gaza and put Netanyahu at risk of arrest if he travels abroad.

It also reverses months of British policy after the previous government was steadfast in its support of Israel and its desire to stick closely to the US position.

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