

Threats Against Iran are Criminal Under International Law

Brazilian Foreign Affairs Minister Reprimands Ban Ki-moon

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Last week, Brazil's Foreign Affairs Minister, Antonio Patriota, reminded Ban Ki-moon regarding his role as UN Secretary General. It referred to the issue of criminal actions in derogation of international law.

"One sometimes hears the expression, 'all options are on the table.' But some actions are contrary to international law" Patriota [told](#) UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

This declaration was reported by Yahoo News, which explains the context:

Patriota's comments come as the United States, United Kingdom and Russia have asked Israel both privately and publicly not to carry out a preemptive strike against Iran's nuclear facilities. (Laura Rozen, [UN should weigh in on legality of Iran strike, Brazil's foreign minister tells Yahoo News](#), Yahoo News, February 23, 2012)

This article implies that only Israel has uttered such threats. Yet, President Obama [himself](#) said that "all options are on the table", a warning also issued by other U.S. officials from both his and the previous administration.

The Yahoo News article reviews Brazil's growing influence in international politics. Mark Weisbrot from the Center for Economic and Policy Research specified that this kind of threat represents a "serious crime under international law, and a clear violation of the United Nations Charter." (Mark Weisbrot, [Brazil Takes the Lead In Trying to Prevent Another Senseless War](#), February 28, 2012)

Antonio Patriota was referring to Article 2 of the UN Charter, which states:

All Members shall refrain in their international relations **from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state**, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations. ([Charter of the United Nations](#))

This means the U.S. and Israel commit a crime each time they threaten to strike Iran or any other member state.

Julie Lévesque contributed to this report.

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