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US sanctions more ICC judges, citing ruling on Israeli war crime probe

International court has repeatedly decried US sanctions amid its ongoing investigation into Gaza war crimes.

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The International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, Netherlands, has warned that US sanctions threaten the 'international legal order' [Piroschka van de Wouw/Reuters]

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In a statement, US Secretary of State Rubio said the judges “have directly engaged in efforts by the ICC to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute Israeli nationals, without Israel’s consent”.

He also faulted Lordkipanidze and Damdin for “voting with the majority” on December 15, when the ICC rejected Israel’s attempt to pause the war crimes probe.

The US is Israel’s ally and has supported its genocidal war in Gaza by continuing to supply the country with billions in military and economic aid.

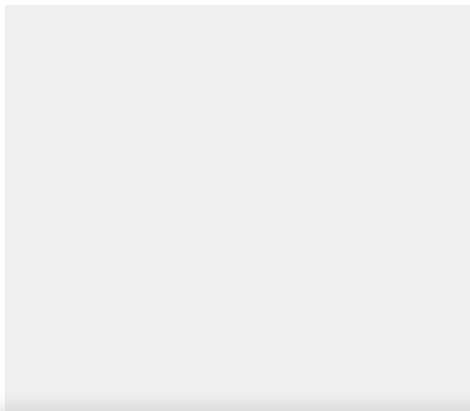
“The ICC has continued to engage in politicized actions targeting Israel, which set a dangerous precedent for all nations,” Rubio said in the statement.

The sanctions are the latest in a series of economic restrictions the administration of US President Donald Trump has placed on ICC members and their associates.

Critics warn such actions could chill investigations across the world and have [wide-ranging implications](#) for prosecutors, judges and even witnesses.

In February, for instance, the Trump administration issued broad sanctions targeting ICC staff and anyone assisting the court’s investigations against the US and its allies.

The Trump White House continued by issuing individual sanctions against judges and prosecutors it disagreed with.

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In June, [four judges](#) were sanctioned, two of whom participated in probes regarding US personnel in Afghanistan. The other two were involved in the decision to issue arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant.

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Then, in August, the US [expanded](#) the sanctions, taking actions against two more judges and two ICC prosecutors.

Even entities outside the ICC have been hit with economic penalties as a result of their participation in its investigations.

Last [September](#), Rubio announced that three non-governmental organisations — Al Haq, the Al Mezan Center for Human Rights and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights — would also face sanctions for helping the ICC “investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute Israeli nationals”.

In a statement on Thursday, the court decried the latest US actions as a “flagrant attack against the independence of an impartial judicial institution”. It nevertheless pledged to carry out its mandate, despite US pressure.

“When judicial actors are threatened for applying the law, it is the international legal order itself that is placed at risk,” it said.

The sanctions come in part as a protest against the ICC’s decision in November 2024 to issue arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant for alleged war crimes in Gaza.

The court also issued arrest warrants for several Hamas leaders, who were subsequently killed in Israeli operations.

The Trump administration has also pressured the court to officially end an investigation into US forces’ conduct during its two decade deployment in Afghanistan.

The US and Israel are not members of the ICC, and the Trump administration argues the court has exceeded its jurisdiction by investigating US and Israeli citizens.

“We will not tolerate ICC abuses of power that violate the sovereignty of the United States and Israel and wrongly subject US and Israeli persons to the ICC’s jurisdiction,” Rubio said on Thursday.

But the court has maintained it can investigate abuses committed by the two countries within the borders of its signatories, including the occupied Palestinian territories.

In a post on the social media platform X, Sarah Leah Whitson, the executive director for the human rights nonprofit Democracy for the Arab World

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“International courts and tribunals must be able to freely carry out their mandates,” David van Weel said in a post on X. “We will continue to work with partners to this end. We support the court and its staff.”

Israeli officials have repeatedly cheered the Trump administration’s sanctions. Israel’s war in Gaza has killed at least 171,152 Palestinians since October 7, 2023, when a Hamas-led attack on southern Israel killed 1,139 people.

The US also announced sanctions on Thursday against 29 vessels and management companies it said were linked to Iran.

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