One Year Since the U.S. Imposed Arbitrary Sanctions for ICC Cooperation: A Tool Serving Israel's Ongoing Genocide, Our Organisations Call for State Action to End Sanctions Now

Joint Statements · Palestine · 7 September 2026

For decades, the United States (U.S.) has supported the Israeli settler-colonial apartheid regime, including through diplomatic protection and the provision of the weapons which enable Israel's genocide against the Palestinian people. On 4 September 2025, the United States deepened its complicity in genocide, along with other international crimes perpetrated against Palestinians, by imposing sanctions against three leading human rights organisations working on accountability for international crimes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), namely Al-Haq, Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR).

According to Executive Order 14203, the U.S.'s legislative tool authorising the sanctions, the three organisations are being targeted for 'directly engaging in efforts by the ICC to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute Israeli nationals, without Israel's consent'. This biased and prejudicial order omits the context in which the organisations are working in the occupied Palestinian territory, subjugated under Israel's aggressive settler colonial apartheid regime and illegal occupation, and all-encompassing oppression of the Palestinian people, which serves Israel's Zionist agenda of erasing the Palestinian people. A core element of this oppression is the assurance that crimes against Palestinians are never genuinely investigated.

Under the Rome Statute of the ICC – which is now ratified by nearly two-thirds of States in the world — and its complementarity principle, States are primarily responsible for investigating international crimes. Only when they are not able or not willing to do so can the ICC step in. The situation in the OPT is a textbook example of unwillingness and therefore meets the complementarity principle. The State of Palestine has ratified the Rome Statute and accepted the ICC's jurisdiction, and contrary to what is suggested in Executive Order 14203, Israel's consent is not necessary for the ICC to proceed with its investigation of Rome Statute crimes in the Situation in the State of Palestine.

The function of the U.S. sanctions against Palestinian human rights organisations is to ensure impunity for the U.S. and its allies, including first and foremost Israel, and to destroy the possibility of the application of the rule of international law. Together with the 'Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict' ('20-point plan'), which facilitates foreign annexation of the Gaza Strip through the 'Board of Peace', these repressive sanctions reflect the U.S.'s continuous support for Israel and complicity in its genocide against the Palestinian people.

Our organisations stress the danger that U.S. sanctions against civil society, the ICC and its personnel, and UN Experts poses––not only to Palestine––but to international justice as a whole.

It is essential to stand against these sanctions, and to categorically reject the possibility that the U.S. and Israel can dictate their own version of an unregulated world order to the rest of the world. Without meaningful enforcement actions, public international law is rendered hollow. In addition to the pressure caused by U.S. sanctions, the ICC is threatened by the withdrawal of member states, including Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, claiming that the institution has been captured by dominant western States. U.S. Secretary of State Rubio threatened that the U.S. would dismantle the ICC "brick by brick". Chad and Venezuela announced their withdrawal following U.S. diplomatic threats to reduce or withdraw assistance should they fail to do so.

It is imperative that the ICC is protected, and its capacity for exercising its core mandate is guaranteed. At a point where repeated and serious violations of public international law have become routine across too many jurisdictions, there can be no neutrality on this matter. The failure to act to confront the U.S.'s wrecking policy is tantamount to complicity with the perpetrators of core international crimes. History will remember those who choose that path and those who choose to stand with the victims of international crimes that threaten the survival of a people. We call on organisations to stand strong and speak out for international justice.

On this anniversary of the U.S. Sanctions, we reiterate that we will not give up or be silenced. We will not bend to any State apparatus or system fuelled by violence and oppression. **We further reiterate our call on Third States, the international community, the United Nations, and fellow human rights defenders to:**

- **Condemn the application of Executive Order 14203 and exert urgent and meaningful pressure on the U.S. to lift the sanctions imposed under Executive Order 14203;**
- **Take concrete steps to ensure the safety and protection of the operations and staff of sanctioned Palestinian NGOs in the OPT, unfairly and illegally targeted;**
- **Impose diplomatic and economic sanctions on Israel, in addition to a full arms embargo.**

We urge in particular EU Member States to immediately enforce the Blocking Statute or any other mechanism which ensures meaningful protection for Palestinian human rights defenders and organisations, UN Experts, and the ICC, from unlawful U.S. sanctions.

Signatories

- Al-Haq
- Al Mezan Center for Human Rights
- Palestinian Centre for Human Rights
- FIDH
- Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)
- EuroMed Rights

- Palestine Solidarity Alliance
- Gaza Group GCDG
- L’association démocratique des femmes du Maroc (ADFM)
- Vredesactie
- Fondation congolaise pour la promotion des droits humains et la paix\
- International Community Care e.V
- Institute for Environmental Security
- Zarga Organisation for Rural Development
- Belgian Academics and Artists for Palestine (BA4P)
- Kurdish organizations Network coalition for the International Criminal Court (KONCICC)
- ARJPDH
- Australian Centre for International Justice
- South African BDS Coalition
- NOVACT
- De-Colonizer
- Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN)
- Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression
- Solsoc
- European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine – ECCP
- CNCD-11.11.11
- Avocats Sans Frontières
- Association France Palestine Solidarité
- 11.11.11
- HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement
- Libya Crimes Watch (LCW)
- Union juive française pour la paix
- Plateforme des ONG françaises pour la Palestine
- Lebanese center for Human Rights

Published at https://humena.org/us-sanctions-palestinian-human-rights-organisations/
HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement · info@humena.org