

Trump signs order imposing sanctions on International Criminal Court

The order accused the ICC of illegitimately asserting jurisdiction and abusing its power.

By Maegan Vazquez and Jacqueline Alemany
Washington Post

President [Donald Trump](#) signed an executive order Thursday imposing sanctions on the International Criminal Court, claiming that it “has engaged in illegitimate and baseless actions targeting America and our close ally Israel.”

The order said the ICC has illegitimately “asserted jurisdiction over and opened preliminary investigations concerning personnel of the United States and certain of its allies.” It also accused the ICC of abusing its power by issuing [arrest warrants](#) in November for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant, Israel’s former defense minister who oversaw much of the [war in Gaza](#).

[The ICC](#) is the only permanent international court that wields power to prosecute individuals for genocide, [crimes against humanity](#), crimes of aggression and war crimes. The court, in a statement Friday, condemned Trump’s order, saying it aimed to harm the ICC’s “independent and impartial judicial work.”

“The Court stands firmly by its personnel and pledges to continue providing justice and hope to millions of innocent victims of atrocities across the world,” the statement said. It called on “all nations of the world to stand united for justice and fundamental human rights.”

The court issued arrest warrants for top Israeli officials last year, finding “reasonable grounds” to believe they were responsible for crimes such as using starvation as a weapon of war and for “murder, persecution, and other inhumane acts.”

Those actions, in part, prompted Trump to impose sanctions.

“Neither country has ever recognized the ICC’s jurisdiction, and both nations are thriving democracies with militaries that strictly adhere to the laws of war,” Trump’s executive order states. “The ICC’s recent actions against Israel and the United States set a dangerous precedent, directly endangering current and former United States personnel, including active service members of the Armed Forces, by exposing them to harassment, abuse, and possible arrest.”

The sanctions may include barring entry into the United States of ICC officials, agents, employees and immediate family members, as well as the blocking of property and assets. The order goes after individuals who have directly engaged in or materially supported the ICC’s efforts to “investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute” people the United States deemed “protected persons” — which includes American citizens, current and former U.S. military officials, current and former U.S. government officials, and foreign nationals from allied countries, such as Israel, that do not recognize the ICC’s jurisdiction.

Arrest warrants can shroud the country’s senior leaders with stigma. Once warrants are issued, officials face the risk of arrest in signatory countries. However, there have been instances of member states ignoring them, and Trump’s order states that he expects American “allies to oppose any ICC actions against the United States, Israel, or any other ally of the United States that has not consented to ICC jurisdiction.”

ICC charges against Israel had also [sparked fury](#) among lawmakers and the Biden administration, who accused the court of acting beyond its jurisdiction. Israel and the United States are not signatories to the statute governing the court.

Israel has drawn international condemnation over its handling of the war in Gaza, which it launched in response to a devastating Hamas-led attack on Israel in October 2023 that killed 1,200 people.

In the 15 months since then, Israeli bombardment of Gaza has killed more than 47,300 Palestinians, including thousands of children, according to Palestinian health authorities. It has also led to mass starvation and malnutrition among the population and left most of the once densely populated territory uninhabitable.

[Last week](#), an effort led by Senate Republicans to impose sanctions on the court over its arrest warrants against Israeli officials failed.

The bill called the ICC's actions against Israel "illegitimate and baseless" and said that the charges would set a "damaging precedent" that threatens the United States, Israel and other "partners who have not submitted to the International Criminal Court's jurisdiction."

Canada, Britain, Australia, Japan, South Korea and other major U.S. allies are among the 125 countries that recognize the court. Russia, China, Iran and North Korea are not signatories and oppose the court's work.

Caspar Veldkamp, minister of foreign affairs for the Netherlands, where the court is based, said in a post on X early Friday that his country "regrets" Trump's order and described the court's work as "essential in the fight against impunity."

"Our country has a strong reputation and responsibility as a host country of important international legal institutions," [he said](#).

News of the sanctions came amid Netanyahu's visit to Washington, which included meetings and a news conference with Trump at the White House on Tuesday. During the news conference, Trump proposed that the United States [should "take over" Gaza](#), displace all the Palestinians living there to

other countries, and rebuild it. The United Nations and other experts have said his proposal [would violate international law](#).

Abigail Hauslohner, Sammy Westfall, Bryan Pietsch and Victoria Craw contributed to this report.