

Trump imposes sanctions on ICC over Israel war crimes probe



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WASHINGTON, February 7 – Former U.S. President Donald Trump has signed an executive order imposing sanctions on the International Criminal Court (ICC) over its investigation into alleged war crimes by Israel. The decision comes after the ICC issued an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant over the military response to Hamas' October 2023 attack.

The executive order accuses the ICC of overstepping its jurisdiction and taking “illegitimate and baseless actions” against Israel, a key U.S. ally. Trump’s order warns of “tangible and significant consequences,” including asset freezes, visa restrictions, and travel bans for ICC officials and their families. The U.S. and Israel are not ICC members and do not recognize its authority.

The move has drawn criticism from human rights organizations. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Human Rights Watch warn that such sanctions could hinder international justice efforts and set a dangerous precedent. Critics argue that blocking ICC investigations could deny victims of war crimes access to justice.

Trump’s order follows a history of U.S. opposition to the ICC. In 2020, he sanctioned former ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda over an inquiry into war crimes committed by all sides, including U.S. forces, in Afghanistan. The sanctions were later lifted by President Joe Biden, who supported limited cooperation with the court, particularly when it issued a war crimes warrant against Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2023.

Meanwhile, U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham, a longtime critic of the ICC, has vowed to take further action against the court. Some European nations, including the Netherlands, have expressed concern over U.S. sanctions, calling for international support to ensure the ICC can continue its work. The move highlights ongoing tensions between the U.S., the ICC, and global accountability

efforts.