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**Human Rights Now**

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**HRN welcomes Palestine’s accession to the ICC as a significant step towards justice and accountability for the grave human rights violations in OPT.**

1. On December 31 2014, the Palestine Authority signed the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) as well as other 15 international conventions and treaties. This move followed after a bid for independence by 2017 rejected by the U.N. Security Council on 30th December 2014.

On January 1st 2015, the Registrar of the International Criminal Court received the Palestinian government’s documents, declaring their acceptance of the jurisdiction of the ICC.

　On 7th January, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon confirmed that Palestinians will formally become a member of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on April 1.

　Human Rights Now(HRN), a Tokyo based international human rights NGO welcomes this move as a significant step towards justice and accountability for grave human rights violations committed in OPT.

2. By ratifying the Rome Statue, the ICC will be given jurisdiction over alleged war crimes and crimes agains humanity committed in Palestinian lands. According to the court's registrar, jurisdiction would date back to June 13, 2014.

　This allows the ICC prosecutor to investigate crimes committed during the conflict between Israel and Hamas within the Gaza Strip in July and August 2014, during which more than 2000 Palestinians, including 500 children, as well as 6 Israeli civilians were killed.

　For decades the grave violations of international human rights and humanitarian law have been endlessly repeated in the OPT and during conflicts in the OPT. Ending impunity of these violations are crucial to the future protection of human rights for civilians located in and surrounding OPT and is an essential prerequisite for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

3. HRN condemns any actions that hinder or sanction Palestine's accession to the ICC and any effort to seek justice and accountability.

 It is grave concern that the Israeli government has taken retaliative measure, halting the transfer of around NIS 500 million (around $127 million) tax revenues to Palestine.[[1]](#footnote-1)

 Based on previous agreements, Israel collects millions of dollars in custom and excise duties on behalf of the Palestinian Authority, and is obligated to transfer these funds monthly. Withholding the tax transfers to Palestine is a clear attempt by Israel to plunge the Palestinian economy into chaos.

 HRN also urges other governments refrain from intimidatin or retaliation against Palestine due to its accession to the ICC by any means, including the withdrawal or suspension of economic aid.

4 Seeking justice and overcoming impunity is the most important way to end all violations of international law in the OPT.

 HRN calls on the the ICC prosecutor to comprehensively investigate all alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity during 2014 conflicts and any future crimes falling within the jurisdiction of the Court.

 HRN calls on and the international community as a whole to support all effort to achive justice and accountability over the crimes in the OPT.

1. Times of Israel,(January 3, 2015),Israel Freezes Palestinian Funds in response to ICC bid, Retrieved from <http://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-freezes-palestinian-funds-after-icc-bid/> accessed on January 8, 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)