

Trump imposes sanctions on International Criminal Court

By **Steve Holland**

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The International Criminal Court building is seen in The Hague, Netherlands, January 16, 2019. REUTERS/Piroschka van de Wouw/
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Summary

In first Trump term, ICC prosecutor, senior aide were sanctioned

Unclear how quickly U.S. will announce designations

ICC has issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu, Putin

WASHINGTON, Feb 6 (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday authorized economic and travel sanctions targeting people who work on [International Criminal Court](#) investigations of U.S. citizens or U.S. allies such as Israel. repeating action he took during his first term.

The move coincides with a visit to Washington by Israel's Prime Minister Benajmin Netanyahu, who - along with his former defense minister and a leader of Palestinian militant group Hamas - is wanted by the ICC over the war in the Gaza Strip.

It was unclear how quickly the U.S. would announce names of people sanctioned. During the first Trump administration in 2020, Washington imposed sanctions on then-prosecutor Fatou Bensouda and one of her top aides over the ICC's investigation into alleged war crimes by American troops in Afghanistan.

The ICC did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The sanctions include freezing any U.S. assets of those designated and barring them and their families from visiting the United States.

The 125-member ICC is a permanent court that can prosecute individuals for war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and the crime of aggression against the territory of member states or by their nationals. The United States, China, Russia and Israel are not members.

Trump signed the executive order after U.S. Senate Democrats last week blocked a Republican-led effort to pass legislation setting up a sanctions regime targeting the war crimes court.

The court has taken measures to shield staff from possible U.S. sanctions, paying salaries three months in advance, as it braced for financial restrictions that could cripple the war crimes tribunal, sources told Reuters last month.

In December, the court's president, judge Tomoko Akane, warned that sanctions would "rapidly undermine the Court's operations in all situations and cases, and jeopardise its very existence."

Russia has also taken aim at the court. In 2023, the ICC issued an arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin, accusing him of the war crime of illegally deporting hundreds of children from Ukraine. Russia has banned entry to ICC chief prosecutor Karim Khan and placed him and two ICC judges on its wanted list.

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