

# *Palestinian Authorities Hand Over Membership Bid Letters to UN Officials*

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United Nations, January 2 (RHC)-- Palestinian authorities have officially handed over membership letters to 20 international organizations, including the International Criminal Court. President Mahmoud Abbas signed the documents after the Palestinian statehood bid hit a stumbling block at the UN Security Council.

Palestinians authorities have officially handed over the signed requests for Palestinian membership in 20 international treaties to the UN representative James W. Rawley. The move comes one day after President Mahmoud Abbas signed the treaties during a meeting broadcast live on TV.

The move paves the way for Palestinian membership in the Hague-based International Criminal Court that could eventually allow Palestinians to prosecute Israeli leaders for their crimes against Palestinian people.

Israel claims joining the court would also expose the Palestinians themselves to prosecution. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has also vowed to adopt steps in response. Palestinians expect that Israel might impose sanctions on the Palestinian authority. Abbas said that he took the decision to join international organizations and the ICC after the United States vetoed the statehood bid before the UN

Security Council.

According to Palestinians, this long-pondered and risky step of becoming a member in the International criminal court is aimed at holding Israel accountable for its war crimes in the occupied territories. Even if an economic sanction is imposed on the Palestinian authority for the move, Palestinians are determined to go ahead.

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