

# *U.S. Senators Threaten Palestine with Strong Response Over ICC Bid*

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Washington, January 12 (RHC)-- Right-wing U.S. senators have threatened the Palestinian leadership with a "strong response" over its decision to join the International Criminal Court.

Senators Lindsey Graham, Robert Menendez, Chuck Schumer, and Mark Kirk issued the warning in a statement issued on Capitol Hill. The statement called the Palestinian move "deplorable" and "counterproductive."

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas signed an application to join the ICC after the United Nations Security Council rejected a Palestinian proposal for statehood on December 30, 2014.

"Existing U.S. law makes it clear that if the Palestinians initiate an ICC judicially authorized investigation, or actively support such an investigation, all economic assistance to the Palestinian Authority must end," the U.S. senators said. "In light of this legal requirement, Congress will reassess its support for assistance to the Authority and seek additional ways to make clear to President Abbas that we strongly oppose his efforts to seek membership in the ICC," they added.

Last week, the U.S. State Department issued a similar warning. State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki claimed that the Palestinian Authority does not qualify legally for membership to the international court because Palestine is not a sovereign state yet.

However, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said Palestine would join the International Criminal Court on April 1st.

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