**Senators: Palestinian Authority's Decision To Join International Criminal Court is Deplorable, Counterproductive, and Will Be Met With A Strong Response**

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By Senator Graham

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| **WASHINGTON** - U.S. Senators Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina), Robert Menendez (D-New Jersey), Chuck Schumer (D-New York), and Mark Kirk (R-Illinois) today made this statement on the Palestinian Authority's (PA) decision to join the International Criminal Court (ICC).  "The Palestinian Authority's (PA) decision to join the International Criminal Court (ICC) is deplorable, counterproductive, and will be met with a strong response by the United States Congress.  "Israel, like the United States, is not a member of the ICC and therefore is not subject to its jurisdiction. Further, existing U.S. law makes clear that if the Palestinians initiate an ICC judicially authorized investigation, or actively support such an investigation, all economic assistance to the PA must end. In light of this legal requirement, Congress will reassess its support for assistance to the PA and seek additional ways to make clear to President Abbas that we strongly oppose his efforts to seek membership in the ICC. If the ICC makes the egregious mistake of accepting the Palestinian Authority as a member, given that it is not a state, Congress will seek ways to protect Israeli citizens from politically abusive ICC actions.  "Palestinian leaders will no doubt try to do to the ICC what they have done to international organizations like the UN Human Rights Council - take an organization with laudable goals and undermine its credibility by turning it into a political battering ram against Israel. The ICC and its members would be making a terrible mistake if they allow their important global role to be compromised.  "Today there is no viable Palestinian state, and nothing will bring about that goal other than direct negotiations. Rather than committing to direct negotiations with Israel for a sustainable, realistic two-state compromise, President Abbas seeks to launch unilateral, politicized investigations of Israel citizens. He would do better to commit to the exacting, demanding work of diplomacy. As an immediate demonstration of his intentions, President Abbas should end Palestinian actions to join the ICC and pledge to re-enter negotiations with Israel for an enduring, realistic solution to this ongoing conflict. We renew our calls for the Palestinian Authority to end its pact with Hamas, a recognized terror organization that is committed to Israel's destruction and whose charter calls for the murder of Jews." |