

PRESS CONFERENCE

April 14, 2026

Press Club Bruxelles Europe

From Words to Action: Shielding the ICC and Civil Society from US Sanctions

About the press conference: On 6 February 2025, less than a month after the beginning of his second term, the United States (US) President Donald Trump issued Executive Order (EO) 14203 “Imposing Sanctions on the International Criminal Court (ICC)” and designated the ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan for his work on the investigations in the Palestine and Afghanistan situations. Since then, eight ICC judges and two deputy prosecutors, three Palestinian organisations and a United Nations Special Rapporteur were designated under the same EO.

By using sanctions against the entire international justice ecosystem, the US is targeting justice efforts for the world’s most serious crimes. Due to US dominance in global finance and IT services, these sanctions have a deep impact all around the world for those directly targeted, and ultimately for victims of international crimes, especially in Palestine and Afghanistan.

Over the past months, the Secretariat of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) drafted a report on the impact of US sanctions against the Court and those cooperating with it. To be centered around the voices of those affected, all individuals and organisations that were designated under EO 14203 were interviewed. In the week leading to the launch of the report, the directors of the three designated Palestinian organisations, Al Haq, PCHR and Al Mezan, will be present in Europe to call for concrete actions.

In the face of such unprecedented attacks, civil society organisations and grassroots movements around the world have mobilised and advocated against these measures and for the adoption of the EU blocking statute. A European-wide mobilisation and a Satyagraha (a citizen-led relay fasting) are underway and represent a grassroots push to prompt European institutions to take concrete action.

The EU must move beyond generic political statements of support and demand the activation of the **EU Blocking Statute (Regulation 2271/96)** to protect NGOs, the International Criminal Court and those working on justice and accountability from the extraterritorial effect of US unilateral sanctions.

The following organisations are participating in the press conference and calling for the EU Commission to adopt the EU blocking statute: Al-Haq, Al Mezan, the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), Amnesty International, Avocats Sans Frontières, the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), EUmans, EuroMed Rights, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), No Peace Without Justice and 11:11:11.

Press Conference Agenda:

Title: From Words to Action: Shielding the ICC and Civil Society from US Sanctions

Date: Tuesday, 14 April

Time: 16:30 – 18:00

Location: Brussels Press Club, Rue Froissart 95, 1040 Brussels

Registration: Online at [this link](#) (free)

Co-sponsors: Al-Haq, Al Mezan, the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), Amnesty International, Avocats Sans Frontières, the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), EUMans, EuroMed Rights, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), No Peace Without Justice and 11:11:11.

Chair: Alison Smith, Director of the CICC

16:30 – 16:35 Welcome remarks and introduction of speakers - Alison Smith, Director of the CICC

I. Introduction: Presentation of the key findings of the CICC Report on US sanctions (16:35 – 16:45)

- **Speaker: Zoé Paris**, Advocacy Coordinator of the CICC.
- Presentation of the main findings of the "CICC Report on Sanctions". Highlighting that the **impact is being felt in Europe and worldwide** – on those designated, on the ICC, those supporting its work, and the wider civil society community working towards accountability for atrocities.

II. The Direct Impact: Testimonies of the Sanctioned (16:45 – 17:05)

- **Speakers: Shawan Jabarin** director of Al-Haq, **Issam Younis** director of Al Mezan, and **Raji Sorani** director of PCHR.
- **Real-life impact of US sanctions:**
 - Impact on Palestinian organisations and their operations
 - How human rights defenders are being treated, and how their targeting is a means of achieving Palestinian erasure
 - The impact on victims of international crimes

III. The broader impact on the justice ecosystem (17:05 – 17:10)

- Speaker(s): **Matt Cannock, Amnesty International**, Deputy Director and Head of Amnesty International's International Law and International Justice Team
- The broader impact of sanctions on justice and accountability internationally.

IV. The Solution: The EU Blocking Statute & Legislative Protection (17:10– 17:20)

- **Speakers: Rasmus Boserup**, Executive Director of EuroMed Rights and **Alexis Deswaef**, President of the FIDH
- **Response from the EU:**
 - The lack of an effective and collective response from the EU and its impact on impunity. (**Rasmus Boserup**, Executive director of EuroMed Rights)
 - The activation of the EU blocking statute to shield EU operators from unlawful extra-territorial decisions. (**Alexis Deswaef**, President of the FIDH)

IV. EU Leadership: A Call to the Commission and Member States (17:20 – 17:30)

- **Marco Cappato** and **Djemila Boulasha** on behalf of EUmans and No Peace Without Justice
- **The Campaign:** Citizens' mobilization at National and European level Demanding that President von der Leyen activate the EU blocking statute for all those sanctioned by the US administration for their work for international justice.

V. Q&A, Media Interaction and individual interviews with speakers (17:30 – 18:00)

Briefing materials:

- Executive Summary of the CICC report and recommendations to the EU (attached, confidential).
- [Brief on the EU blocking statute](#) - Al-Haq
- Non-exhaustive list of statements against US sanctions and calling for the activation of the EU blocking statute:
 - Joint Statement: [Save the ICC and the Rule of Law](#)
 - [EU must Act for Accountability, Civilian Protection, and Rights-Based policies in the Euro Mediterranean Region](#) – EuroMed Rights
 - [Al-Haq, PCHR, and Al-Mezan Condemn US Sanctions and Call for Global Solidarity to End the Genocide in Gaza and the Oppression of Palestinians](#) - Al Haq, PCHR and Al-Mezan
 - [USA: Sanctions against UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese are a disgraceful affront to international justice](#) – Amnesty International
 - [Reject ICC-related Sanctions: A Call to Protect Victims and Uphold Justice](#) - Victims' Rights Working Group
- [Campaign: Defend the ICC](#) – EUmans

At the conclusion of the briefing, speakers will be available for interviews.

In case of press inquiry please contact Keila McFarland Dias, CICC communication manager at +31 6 11 59 71 25 or mcfarlanddias@coalitionfortheicc.org

Access:

- **Registration:** Registration online at [this link](#) (free)
- **Day and time:** Tuesday, 14 April from 16:30 to 18:00
- **Location:** Brussels Press Club, Rue Froissart 95, 1040 Brussels, located in the heart of the European Quarter, making it easily accessible for EU correspondents.
- **Recorded:** The session will be recorded to ensure global reach for those unable to attend in person.

Key Messaging for the Press Kit:

"By designating ICC officials, a UN Special Rapporteur and Palestinian NGOs for sanctions, the United States is targeting justice efforts for the world's most serious crimes, having an impact throughout the world due to the US dominance in global finance and IT services. The EU cannot claim to be a champion of the Rome Statute while allowing its own financial institutions to act as an enforcement arm for foreign sanctions against that very system. If the EU does not activate the Blocking Statute, it is effectively endorsing the dismantling of international justice."