

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT



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## **Palestinian treaty applications boost chances for accountability**

Palestine's application this week to join the Geneva Conventions and key international human rights treaties is a significant advance for human rights protection, Amnesty International said today, urging it to sign up as well to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

On 2 April 2014 it was announced that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas had the day before signed letters of accession to some 20 multilateral treaties.

Amnesty International believes the move should spur the Palestinian Authority into bolstering its commitment to upholding the rights of all people within areas under its control. This must mean, among other actions, conducting independent and effective investigations into all alleged violations by Palestinian Authority security forces, and prosecuting those responsible in fair trials when there is sufficient evidence.

Amnesty International has been calling on Palestine to become a state party to all relevant international human rights and international humanitarian law treaties, without reservations or declarations amounting to reservations, since it achieved UN non-member observer state status in November 2012.

While welcoming the current development, Amnesty International renews its call on Palestine to become a state party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Such a move could pave the way towards securing justice for victims of war crimes and other crimes under international law committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and holding various actors, including the Israeli authorities and Palestinian armed groups, accountable for abuses. Entrenched impunity has blocked accountability for such crimes over many years.

Other states that have yet to ratify the Rome Statute, including Israel, should also do so without further delay.

Statements by Israeli ministers threatening sanctions against the Palestinian Authority for seeking to join the international treaties are unacceptable, Amnesty International believes. Withholding money or resources from the Palestinian Authority, including tax revenues that Israel collects on its behalf, would have dire implications for Palestinians, particularly in the Gaza Strip, whose 1.7 million residents have been living under an Israeli blockade for almost seven years. As the occupying power, Israel remains responsible for the welfare of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and is prohibited from carrying out collective punishments.

### **Further information**

The treaties that Palestine has applied to join include the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their first Additional Protocol; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol; the Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of

Genocide; and the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid.

For further details on the calls Amnesty International has made to the Palestinian leadership since Palestine achieved UN non-member observer state status in November 2012, see the following documents:

- *Palestine should accede to the International Criminal Court now* (Index: MDE 21/008/2013), issued on 29 November 2013

(<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE21/008/2013/en/38795c74-b0e0-47f4-9db0-b95bfe09d2ef/mde210082013en.pdf>);

- *Palestinian non-member state observer recognition at the UN* (Index: MDE 21/005/2012), issued on 12 December 2012

(<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE21/005/2012/en/390223df-9abb-4cf3-922f-3d1d7b613888/mde210052012en.pdf>);

- *Palestine UN status upgrade should open door to justice* (Index: PRE01/591/2012), issued on 30 November 2012 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/palestine-un-status-upgrade-should-open-door-justice-2012-11-30>).