[Palestinian Leaders Deserve to be Hauled Into the International Criminal Court](https://www.commentarymagazine.com/2015/06/26/palestinians-international-criminal-court/)

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As expected, the Palestinian Authority made good on its threat to open a new front in its war on the state of Israel. [By submitting material to the International Criminal Court](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/26/world/middleeast/26icc.html?ref=middleeast) in The Hague, the PA is hoping to add to the campaign of demonization of the Jewish state in Europe and to heighten Israel’s diplomatic isolation. While the ICC appears somewhat leery about diving headfirst into a political conflict that cannot be neatly contained, it’s likely that the PA provocation will reap it some of the benefits it seeks in terms of whipping up anti-Israel sentiment. But while there’s no doubt that such any international court will be biased against Israel and judge it by a double standard in terms of its measures of self-defense or settlement policy, the Palestinians also need to be reminded of an old truism: people who live in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones.

The United States [roundly condemned the Palestinian move today.](http://www.timesofisrael.com/us-slams-palestinians-israel-war-crimes-suit/) The administration did so not out of affection for Israel, but because the decision to go to the court is evidence that PA leader Mahmoud Abbas and his ruling Fatah clique have no intention of returning to peace talks with Israel no matter what inducements the Obama administration offers them. The president is still hoping to embark on one more bout of pressure on Israel in order to tilt the diplomatic playing field in the direction of the Palestinians even though every previous such effort has been met by indifference on the part of the PA. But another power play directed against Israel becomes that much harder to justify if the PA is directly contradicting its past commitments to the United States to refrain from seeking to litigate in court issues that must be decided by direct negotiations.

One element of the PA strategy that should be noted is that Israel is not the only potential target of this effort. Abbas knows that even if the court takes up [bogus war crimes allegations against Israel,](https://www.commentarymagazine.com/2015/06/22/un-gaza-war-report/) it will be obliged to address the far more substantial charges that can be laid at the door of his Hamas rivals. It was Hamas, after all, that started last summer’s war and launched thousands of rockets aimed at Israeli cities and town intended to kill and maim as many civilians as possible. While the PA won’t assist efforts to investigate Hamas, that would be a fringe benefit of incitement against Israel.

But Hamas is not the only Palestinian force that is guilty of crimes worthy of investigation. The PA has also funded terrorists and incited terror via its official media. Moreover, shining a light on the terrorism conducted by Palestinians last summer may also land Abbas and aide Jibril Rajoub in court. [The Israel Law Center](http://israellawcenter.org/war-zones/defending-israel-in-international-law/) is preparing to send the ICC its own indictments of the PA leadership for acts of terror committed by Fatah affiliates directly under Abbas’s control.

Using their formidable propaganda machine assisted by an international press that is always prepared to judge Israel affair, Palestinians have been able to demonize the Jewish state in the court of international public opinion. But any real court, even one as biased as the ICC against Israel will also have to look at the far more credible criminal charges that can be laid at the feet of both sets of Palestinian tyrants. Once investigations begin, PA is as vulnerable as Hamas no matter how much sympathy they generate in a Europe where anti-Semitism is on the rise. By going to court, they have opened a Pandora’s Box with consequences that few can predict.

Meanwhile, even an administration that is as biased against Israel as that of President Obama must look on this pointless exercise with dismay. Those who refuse to admit that the Palestinians are not interested in peace have ignored their repeated refusals to accept offers of statehood from Israel. But ignoring an effort to prosecute Israel rather than negotiate with it won’t be quite as easy. It’s time for President Obama to do more than have spokespersons condemn the court gambit. He needs to warn Abbas that he stands to be finally cut loose by an administration that has wasted too much political capital and good will in fruitless efforts to aid the Palestinians at Israel’s expense.