Lawmakers Warn Palestinian Actions Could Suspend US Aid

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Two lawmakers are warning the Palestinian Authority (PA) that its economic assistance from the United States could be suspended because of its decision to initiate charges against Israel at the International Criminal Court (ICC).

“By formally submitting allegations against Israeli forces to the ICC Chief Prosecutor, President [Mahmoud] Abbas has triggered a provision in U.S. law that suspends all economic assistance to the PA,” Rep. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.), the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, said in a statement.

On Thursday, the PA submitted evidence to the ICC of alleged Israeli war crimes in an effort to speed up an ICC inquiry into abuses that might have occurred during last summer’s conflict in Gaza, according to reports.

Lowey said Congress crafted the law to prevent U.S. tax dollars from rewarding “purposely provocative, unilateral steps” that threaten peace negotiations.

“Not only do President Abbas’ actions indicate his abandonment of a two-state agreement, they reveal his willingness to try to discredit Israel in the international community at the expense of the economic and humanitarian wellbeing of the Palestinian people,” Lowey added.

Lowey and other top appropriators have repeatedly warned the PA against taking actions against Israel at the ICC.

Rep. Kay Granger (R-Texas) authored a bill that would include language for PA assistance in the next fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1. On Thursday, she sent out a reminder that the language includes limitations contingent on the PA’s actions.

“The bill prohibits economic assistance to the Palestinian Authority if they initiate or actively support an International Criminal Court investigation that subjects Israeli nationals to an investigation for alleged crimes against Palestinians,” she said in a statement.

In April, the PA became a member of the ICC, which the U.S. has said is not legitimate.