

U.S. Sanctions UN Official Francesca Albanese Over ICC-Linked Allegations

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The United States has imposed sanctions on Francesca Albanese, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories, citing actions deemed inconsistent with U.S. foreign policy interests.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio confirmed the decision on July 9, 2025, under Executive Order 14203. The measures include freezing Albanese's U.S.-based assets, revoking her

travel privileges to the country, and restricting her ability to conduct business with U.S. entities.

According to the U.S. State Department, Albanese's public criticisms of countries such as Israel and other NATO members exceeded the scope of her official UN mandate. Her recent report accused more than 60 firms of profiting from what she termed a "conflict economy" in Gaza and included allegations of war crimes by Israeli leaders. The report is currently under review by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The U.S., which is not a signatory to the ICC, has consistently disputed the court's jurisdiction over Israel. Officials argue Albanese's actions jeopardise impartiality and reflect overreach.

The sanctions have prompted strong backlash from several international human rights organisations. Amnesty International condemned the decision as "an attack on international legal mechanisms," while the UN Human Rights Office urged the U.S. to reconsider, noting that UN-appointed rapporteurs are afforded protections under international law, including the Host Country Agreement.

This marks the third instance in 2025 of the U.S. sanctioning international legal personnel. Earlier in the year, travel bans were imposed on ICC Chief Prosecutor Karim Khan and several judges amid ongoing jurisdictional disputes.

Supporters of Albanese warn the move could undermine the independence of UN-led investigations. Legal analysts highlight the potential conflict between U.S. domestic measures and its obligations as the host nation of the UN.

Secretary Rubio defended the decision, calling Albanese's work "irresponsible" and inconsistent with expected standards of neutrality in international reporting.

The development has attracted growing international attention, with legal institutions and foreign governments monitoring the broader implications for international law and the role of global watchdogs.