



[Israeli Officials Revoke the Permit of Palestinian Foreign Minister al-Maliki](#)

Israeli officials have revoked the travel permit of Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki as retaliation for support of the International Criminal Court's (ICC) investigation into Israeli war crimes in the illegally-occupied Palestinian territories. The move coincided with al-Maliki's return to the West Bank from a diplomatic trip to Europe, which included a visit to the ICC and its Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda. During his meeting with Bensouda, al-Maliki stressed the importance of expediting the probe in order to hold Israel accountable for its destructive policies and ensure justice for Palestinian victims and their families. Independent human rights groups and experts have praised the prospect of an investigation, stating that it is a positive step forward in the decades-long advocacy efforts to end impunity regarding Israel's actions in its illegal occupation of Palestinian territory. Thus, the decision to revoke al-Maliki's permit for expressing a position that has a wide array of support is problematic, as the international community widely views Israeli behavior such as settlement expansion and other violations as major obstacles to the peace process.

Upon his return from the trip to Europe earlier this week, al-Maliki was stopped as he attempted to enter the West Bank from Jordan through the Israeli-controlled crossing, with his travel permit being seized by authorities. The credentials are important because they allow the foreign minister to move easier through the military checkpoints into and out of the occupied West Bank. Agents from Israel's Shin Bet intelligence service held up and questioned al-Maliki for around half an hour while also doing the same to members of his staff as well. After cancelling and confiscating the foreign minister's permit, Israeli officials declined to provide a reason for the move – lending to the conclusion that it was purely revoked as retaliation for al-Maliki's meeting with Bensouda and support of the potential ICC investigation into Israeli war crimes in the illegally-occupied Palestinian territories.

The ICC probe has been lauded by impartial human rights organizations, and if carried out, would allow for the investigation of several credible past allegations including war crimes committed by Israel during the 2014 assault against the Gaza Strip, the killing and wounding of thousands of largely unarmed demonstrators during the Great March of Return in 2018 and 2019, and Israel's continued illegal settlement expansion in the West Bank. Amnesty International, for example, called it a "momentous breakthrough for justice after decades of non-accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity." The group added that the investigation provides a historic opportunity to finally put an end to the impunity that has driven major Israeli violations in the illegally-occupied Palestinian territories for over 50 years. Additionally, Human Rights Watch stated that it opens a long-awaited path to justice for victims of serious abuses and war crimes. They also highlighted the critical role that the court can play in uncovering grave violations due to its independent status. If a formal probe is initiated and leads to convictions, the affected parties could be subject to international arrest warrants upon travel abroad.

Since the potential ICC investigation has the support of these reputable aforementioned entities, it is regrettable that Israeli officials decided to revoke the travel permit of Palestinian Foreign Minister al-Maliki on the basis of his similar stance. In the end, it is just the latest example of the Israeli government relying on the use of threats and intimidation to try and suppress legitimate concern regarding their controversial policies.