



**Statement of ASIL President Mélida Hodgson
Regarding the United States and the International Rule of Law**

February 13, 2025

Founded in 1906 by U.S. Secretary of State Elihu Root, the American Society of International Law has advanced a vision of international relations based on two simple ideas—law and justice. Indeed, working together for nearly 120 years, the members of our Society have been architects of the modern international legal order.

That legal order is now under direct assault, both at home and abroad. The list of U.S. initiatives that undermine the international legal order is long and includes: the proposed forcible transfer of two million Palestinians out of Gaza; direct threats to the sovereignty and integrity of a growing list of countries and territories; the abrupt and procedurally flawed withdrawal from international institutions and instruments, such as the World Health Organization and the Paris Agreement on climate change; disregard for binding legal obligations to asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants; as well as the retraction of foreign aid allocated by the U.S. Congress—assistance that relieves suffering, saves lives, advances American values, and makes Americans safer.

Moreover, the use of sanctions against the International Criminal Court to punish people working to safeguard international law is pernicious, especially given that such sanctions were rejected by the U.S. Congress. Those working with and for the International Criminal Court, a court designed to exact accountability for the most egregious crimes—genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the crime of aggression—perform a function critical to the free world. These sanctions directly affect members of our Society and their families, and more broadly, they have a chilling effect on freedom of speech and association for those who work in the field of international criminal justice, whether as attorneys, academics, or government officials.

The United States has led the world in constructing an international legal framework that reflects American values, nurturing broader peace and prosperity. This retreat from international law is an unparalleled abdication of American responsibility and leaves a vacuum that will only invite chaos, conflict, and violence, ultimately weakening the United States. Our Society remains committed to a more peaceful and just world under international law.

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ABOUT THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

The American Society of International Law (ASIL) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, educational membership organization founded in 1906 and chartered by Congress in 1950. Its mission is to foster the study of international law and to promote the establishment and maintenance of international relations on the basis of law and justice.