

Political and Practical Implications of the International Recognition of a Palestinian State

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Historical Background

- In May 1939, the British government, then administering Palestine under mandate, issued an official commitment (the White Paper) that effectively marked a reversal from the Balfour Declaration, pledging instead the establishment of an independent Palestinian state over all Palestine within ten years. This commitment, however, was subsequently abandoned in November 1945, following the end of World War II.
- On 29/11/1947, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 181 (the Partition Plan for Palestine) without consulting the Palestinian people, who constituted 68.3% of the population and owned 94% of the land in Palestine. By contrast, most Jewish residents were immigrants who had arrived in Palestine under British protection during the period of its occupation.
- Resolution 181 allocated approximately 54.4% of Palestine to a Jewish state and around 45% to a Palestinian state; however, Zionist forces, supported by the US and Western powers, managed to occupy 77% of Palestine's territory and proclaimed it as the "State of Israel."
- The Palestinians declared the independence of Palestine on 1/10/1948, which was recognized by most Arab states. However, Jordan took control of the West Bank (WB), and Egypt controlled Gaza Strip (GS), effectively preventing the establishment of a Palestinian state. In 1967, Israeli forces occupied WB and GS (the remainder of Palestine), as well as the Syrian Golan Heights and the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula.
- On 15/11/1988, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) declared the independence of Palestine, despite the ongoing effective control of Israel over its territory. Approximately 120 countries recognized this declaration of independence.
- According to the 1993 Oslo Accords, negotiations between the PLO and Israel were supposed to lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state in the WB and GS. However, Israel used the peace process to further Judaize the land, expand settlements and practically undermine the possibility of a Palestinian state.

- In the wake of al-Aqsa *Intifadah*, which erupted in 2000, the US administration proposed a roadmap for the creation of a Palestinian state by the end of 2005. Although the proposal received international support in 2003, Israel ultimately thwarted the plan.
- On 29/11/2012, Palestine was granted the status of a “non-member observer state” at the United Nations (UN), with a majority of 138 votes; this represented a *de facto* recognition of the sovereign State of Palestine within the UN.
- With the formation of Israel’s most extreme government at the end of 2022, led by Netanyahu in coalition with religious Zionism, a clear Israeli orientation emerged to decisively resolve the conflict with the Palestinians, annex the WB, and close the Palestine issue.

Implications of Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the War on Gaza

Operation al-Aqsa Flood, which began on 7/10/2023, delivered a profound shock and once again brought the Palestine issue to the forefront of the global agenda. It revived calls for a two-state solution and encouraged additional recognition of the State of Palestine. By late September 2025, at least 156 countries, representing approximately 81% of the 193 UN member states, had officially recognized Palestine.

The recent wave of recognitions was marked by a distinctly European and Western character, encompassing the traditional strongholds of Israeli and Zionist influence. In May 2024, Spain, Norway and Ireland recognized the State of Palestine, followed by Slovenia in the subsequent month. In September 2025, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Portugal, France, Belgium, Malta, Luxembourg, Monaco and Andorra also announced their recognition.

The New York Declaration

An international conference was held in New York under the auspices of the UN, focusing on the peaceful resolution of the Palestine issue and the implementation of the two-state solution, during the period 28–30/7/2025, under French and Saudi sponsorship. The conference succeeded in mobilizing strong international support toward the establishment of a Palestinian state, with the participation of a significant bloc of European countries. It was a conference that explicitly condemned Israel’s aggression against GS and the targeting of civilians, called for the delivery of



humanitarian aid, sought to prevent displacement, and endeavored to return the peace process to the traditional path it has followed for more than thirty years.

Key Positives

1. The increasing international recognition of Palestine serves to intensify global pressure on Israel, thereby preventing it from annexing the remaining Palestinian territories.
2. Such recognitions contribute to Israel's growing international isolation, effectively rendering it a pariah state.
3. Collectively, these recognitions and related resolutions advance efforts to halt aggression against GS, prevent forced displacement, lift the blockade, and facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance.
4. These recognitions delegitimize Israeli actions in *al-Aqsa* Mosque and East Jerusalem, as well as the processes of annexation, Judaization, settlement expansion and forced displacement in the WB and GS.
5. They underscore support for international institutions concerned with Palestinian affairs, such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), as well as humanitarian and relief organizations that help meet the needs of the Palestinian people living under occupation.

Key Negatives

1. The recognition process suffers from a lack of substantive mechanisms or guarantees to enforce the international community's will on Israel. No effective sanctions or binding resolutions (such as those under Chapter VII of the UN Charter) exist to compel Israel to withdraw from the WB and GS or to comply with the two-state solution.

For the 77 years since its establishment, Israel has consistently disregarded international resolutions, positioning itself as a "state above the law," confident in the backing of the US for its actions. By April 2025, the UN General Assembly had adopted 914 resolutions, the Security Council 299, and the Human Rights Council 98... yet Israel has neither respected nor implemented any of them!!

2. The call to resume negotiations on the two-state solution and to revive the peace process represents a fruitless return to the path initiated 32 years ago (in 1993), which has yielded no results. This is because it is based on flawed and ineffective foundations that ensure Israel's continued occupation and the imposition of *faits accomplis*, leaving outcomes dependent on the "good faith" of Israel, which has consistently "managed the negotiations" while using them as a cover to advance its own agenda.
3. Many states, particularly in Europe, tend in their recognition of a Palestinian state to condition it on the removal of Hamas from the Palestinian political scene and the disarmament of the resistance. At its core, this constitutes a unilateral measure that advances one of Israel's primary objectives in its war on GS. Since the international community lacks binding mechanisms to hold Israel accountable, this effectively provides Israel with the opportunity to persist in its occupation, consolidate its control, and continue its programs of Judaization and settlement without resistance, thereby advancing the erasure of the Palestine issue. Thus, in the New York Declaration, which endorses this approach, Israel is rewarded and its objectives facilitated, while the Palestinian party, the victim of occupation, is effectively penalized rather than supported.

This behavior contravenes the legal rights affirmed by the UN, which recognized "the right of the Palestinian people to regain its rights by all means" (see Resolution 3236 of 1974).

4. Conditioning the recognition of a Palestinian state by certain countries on the removal of Hamas from the Palestinian political scene and the disarmament of the resistance constitutes, in itself, a form of imposed guardianship over the will of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination and independent decision-making. This linkage exacerbates the Palestinian schism and privileges one party at the expense of another, even though public opinion polls over the past two years indicate Hamas's leading position and suggest it would prevail in any potential free and fair democratic elections. Moreover, these countries do not apply the same conditions to Israeli parties that reject the two-state solution, insist on the continuation of the occupation, advocate for a "Greater Israel," and employ all forms of repression and subjugation against the Palestinian people.
5. Unfortunately, these recognitions have not been accompanied by any practical measures to halt the war in GS, stop massacres or prevent Israeli acts of destruction and displacement. Some observers have viewed this as an evasion by certain European states of taking effective sanctions against Israel, while

seeking to absorb growing domestic public anger through measures that lack tangible, on-the-ground impact.

6. The proposals put forward at the New York Conference, and the broader trajectory of supporting recognition of a Palestinian state, reflect an effort to rehabilitate Israel and reintegrate it into the region, including the activation of normalization programs. This approach overlooks holding Israel accountable for its crimes against the Palestinian people and disregards attempts to impose its security hegemony over the region. It also seeks to “wash” and sanitize the horrific image Israel presented to the world, not only through its aggression against GS, but also in its actions across the rest of Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Iran and Qatar.

Conclusion

Global recognition of a Palestinian state appears to be a step in the right direction, potentially contributing to increased pressure on Israel to halt its annexation, Judaization and efforts to erase the Palestinian issue, placing it in a state of international isolation and compelling it to cease its aggression against GS. However, mere recognition has proven insufficient, as it has not been accompanied by any binding international resolutions or effective sanctions capable of compelling Israel to comply. Furthermore, recognition should neither interfere with the Palestinian people’s right to build their legislative, representative and executive institutions according to their free will, nor with their legal right, affirmed under international law and UN resolutions, to resist occupation by all available means, including armed struggle.

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