

Demands Pressed for UK Recognition of Palestine Under Starmer

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Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer is facing mounting calls from across the political spectrum to formally recognise the State of Palestine, as the humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to deteriorate and the United Kingdom's (UK) stance on the two-state solution comes under scrutiny.

In March 2025, a group of 13 senior Members of Parliament (MPs) and peers from the Conservative Party, including Kit Malthouse, Sir Edward Leigh, and Simon Hoare, wrote to the Prime Minister urging immediate recognition of Palestine. They argued that statehood should not be treated as a distant bargaining tool, but rather as a necessary diplomatic step in line with international law. They emphasised that recognition would demonstrate the UK's support for the Palestinian people's inalienable rights.

On the Labour side, nearly 60 MPs, supported by the group Labour Friends of Palestine and the Middle East (LFPME), issued a similar appeal, warning that continued delay would undermine Britain's credibility on the world stage. They expressed concern that inaction could be interpreted as passive acceptance of ongoing displacement and annexation in Gaza.

Within the Cabinet, pressure is reportedly increasing. Justice Secretary Shabana Mahmood and Health Secretary Wes Streeting are among those said to be advocating for recognition. They argue that a shift in policy would demonstrate moral leadership and could strengthen international diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving a sustainable ceasefire.

In the House of Commons, Foreign Secretary David Lammy has been repeatedly questioned over Labour's commitment to recognising Palestine. MPs Paula Barker and Tahir Ali asked whether the Government would fulfil its manifesto pledge to grant recognition during the current Parliament. Lammy responded that the Government's approach would be strategic and timed to have maximum diplomatic impact. He also reaffirmed that recognition is the "inalienable right" of the Palestinian people.

Prime Minister Starmer has thus far maintained a cautious stance, stating that recognition should follow a ceasefire and be coordinated with the United States (US) and other international allies. He insists that premature action could compromise the UK's ability to influence peace negotiations.

Supporters argue that aligning with like-minded nations, such as France, would project strength and principle, while continued hesitation risks diminishing the UK's leadership role in resolving the conflict.

With the United Nations (UN) General Assembly preparing to revisit the issue of Palestinian statehood, pressure is growing on Downing Street to act decisively. Parliamentarians across party lines are clear: the time for symbolic support has passed; what's needed now is a concrete policy commitment.