

France to Announce Palestinian State Recognition in September

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French President Emmanuel Macron has declared that France will formally recognise the State of Palestine in September, a move set to be confirmed during the United Nations General Assembly in New York. In a social media statement late Thursday, Macron framed the decision as part of France's longstanding commitment to fostering peace in the Middle East. "France will recognise the State of Palestine to support a just and lasting resolution to the conflict," he wrote.

This announcement has sparked sharp criticism from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who condemned the move as a dangerous misstep. In a social media response, Netanyahu argued that recognising a Palestinian state so soon after the 7 October 2023 Hamas attack, designated a terrorist act by the US and EU, which killed 1,200 Israelis and saw 250 hostages taken, effectively rewards terrorism. “This decision risks creating another Iranian proxy, much like Gaza has become,” Netanyahu stated, referencing the ongoing conflict where approximately 50 hostages remain in Gaza, with around 20 believed to be alive.

The decision comes amid mounting international concern over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where 2.1 million people face severe food insecurity and violence. The World Health Organisation’s Director General, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, recently highlighted the dire situation, stating, “Starvation is now a killer alongside bombs and bullets in Gaza.” Reports of malnourished children and desperate struggles for basic supplies like flour have intensified calls for action.

France, home to Europe’s largest Jewish and Muslim communities, has been vocal about its frustration with Israel’s restrictions on humanitarian aid and its military operations in Gaza. Macron had previously explored hosting a conference with Saudi Arabia to discuss Palestinian statehood, though it was postponed due to escalating tensions between Israel and Iran. French and Saudi officials are now preparing to lead a ministerial-level meeting next week in New York to further these discussions, though the US has confirmed it will not participate.

The Palestinian Authority’s leader, Mahmoud Abbas, was personally informed of France’s decision through a letter delivered by France’s consul in Jerusalem, according to the French foreign ministry.

While nations like Spain, Ireland, and Norway have already recognised Palestine, no other G7 member has followed suit, making France’s move significant. It also places pressure on the UK, where Prime Minister Keir Starmer faces calls from within his Labour government to consider similar recognition. Starmer has acknowledged Palestinian statehood as an “inalienable right” and suggested a ceasefire could pave the way, but. Still, heavily committed to a timeline—a stance that has drawn criticism for its ambiguity, especially given Labour’s broader foreign policy shifts.