

Cross-Party Pressure Mounts on Starmer to Recognise Palestinian State

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A total of 221 Members of Parliament (MPs) have signed a cross-party letter urging Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer to officially recognise the State of Palestine, in what they describe as a step toward securing peace in the Middle East. The letter arrives ahead of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in September, where France is expected to lead a push for international recognition of Palestinian statehood.

The initiative was coordinated by Labour MP Sarah Champion, Chair of the International Development Committee. Among those supporting the letter are prominent names across parties, including Labour MPs Emily Thornberry, Jess Phillips and Diane Abbott; Liberal Democrat (Lib Dem) leader Sir Ed Davey; Conservative MPs Kit Malthouse and Sir Edward Leigh; Scottish National Party (SNP) Westminster leader Stephen Flynn; Green MP Caroline Lucas; Plaid Cymru MP Liz Saville Roberts; and Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) leader Colum Eastwood. The signatories include 131 MPs from the Labour Party, with the remainder drawn from the Lib Dems, Conservatives, SNP, Green Party, Plaid Cymru, SDLP, and independent MPs.

Champion noted that while recognition alone would not end the violence or humanitarian suffering in Gaza, it would represent a “meaningful gesture” towards a two-state solution and signal the UK’s commitment to Palestinian self-determination. She stressed the urgency of action ahead of the international summit.

Prime Minister Starmer has maintained that recognition should occur at a time of “maximum utility,” stressing the importance of a ceasefire, the release of hostages, and guaranteed humanitarian access to Gaza. His stance echoes that of the United States (US), which continues to support a two-state solution but has not yet endorsed recognition of Palestinian statehood.

Senior figures within Starmer’s Cabinet are openly backing the call. Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, Home Secretary Yvette Cooper, Health Secretary Wes Streeting, and London Mayor Sadiq Khan have all expressed support for formal recognition.

France's decision to recognise Palestine at the upcoming UN meeting would make it the first country in the Group of Seven (G7) to do so. Germany, while joining calls for a ceasefire and aid access, has stopped short of full recognition.

While critics warn that premature recognition could risk diplomatic alignment with the US and complicate security relations, the growing support in Parliament signals a shift. Recognition, once viewed as a fringe demand, is now being positioned as a necessary step in response to an escalating humanitarian crisis.