

## France Declares Plan to Recognise Palestinian State

August 1, 2025

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France has announced its intention to formally recognise the State of Palestine, marking a notable development in the ongoing Israel–Palestinian conflict. President Emmanuel Macron confirmed the move on 24 July, ahead of the United Nations General Assembly session scheduled for September.

The decision, which aligns France with a growing number of European nations, was communicated directly to Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas. Palestinian officials welcomed the declaration, describing it as a reaffirmation of France's support for the principle of self-determination and respect for international law.

French officials have stated the recognition is in line with the country's longstanding foreign policy goal of promoting a two-state solution and regional stability. President Macron noted France's "historic commitment to peace in the Middle East," framing the decision as symbolic but diplomatically significant.

Israel responded with sharp criticism. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu condemned the move as one that could "reward terror," particularly in light of the Hamas-led attacks on Israel on 7 October 2023. Netanyahu also warned that the recognition could embolden regional adversaries and undermine Israeli security.

France's stance follows similar steps by Spain, Ireland, and Norway earlier this year. Additional countries, including Slovenia and Antigua and Barbuda, have also declared support for Palestinian statehood, citing humanitarian concerns and limited access to aid in Gaza.

Currently, more than 140 countries recognise Palestine. Among European Union member states, only seven have done so, most prior to joining the EU. France's recognition carries added weight given its role as a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

The Palestinian state, as commonly defined by recognition efforts, would include the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem territories that have been under Israeli control since the 1967 Six-Day War. Despite the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, Israel maintains military and administrative control over large portions of these areas. East Jerusalem, in particular, remains a focal point of tension.

The ongoing conflict in Gaza, now in its tenth month, has contributed to shifting public and diplomatic opinion in Europe. Macron, who has previously expressed support for Israel, has increasingly voiced concern over the humanitarian toll of the conflict.

In parallel developments, the United States has withdrawn from recent ceasefire talks in Qatar, citing a lack of progress. France, in coordination with Saudi Arabia, plans to co-host a

UN conference aimed at renewing focus on the two-state solution, an approach still supported by the UK, US, and several EU nations.

While the practical impact of France's recognition may be limited in the short term, it adds to international pressure on Israel to re-engage in negotiations. Diplomatic observers suggest the move could influence future EU and UN discussions on the matter.

Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide has argued that recognition should not be viewed as an endpoint, but rather as a diplomatic push toward restarting stalled peace efforts. As geopolitical tensions continue and international focus remains on the Middle East, France's announcement contributes to a growing shift in global diplomatic priorities.