

## UK, France, and Germany Urge Israel to Address Gaza Aid Crisis

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The leaders of Britain, France, and Germany have jointly called on Israel to permit unrestricted humanitarian aid into Gaza, citing an escalating crisis marked by starvation and suffering. This follows French President Emmanuel Macron's announcement that France will formally recognise a Palestinian state at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2025, a decision that has elicited criticism from Israel and the United States and prompted European debate.

In a joint statement following a “tripartite” emergency call on 25 July 2025, Macron, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz condemned as “unacceptable” the withholding of essential humanitarian aid to Gaza’s civilians. They pressed for an immediate ceasefire and a political process to secure lasting peace for both Israelis and Palestinians. However, the statement offered no concrete details on what further actions might be taken, raising questions about the resolve behind their words.

The call comes amid a deepening humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, with widespread hunger, critical shortages of therapeutic food, and reports of children suffering from acute malnutrition. The leaders’ statement, while firm in tone, treads familiar diplomatic ground, stopping short of outlining punitive measures or a clear roadmap for resolution.

Macron’s announcement that France will formalise recognition of a Palestinian state at the United Nations General Assembly in September has exposed divisions among the so-called E3: Britain, France, and Germany. While all three nations endorse a two-state solution in principle, Germany has explicitly stated it has no plans to follow France’s lead in the near term. Berlin views such recognition as a final step in negotiations, not a starting point.

In the UK, Starmer faces growing domestic pressure to recognise Palestinian statehood. A letter signed by 221 of the 650 MPs in the House of Commons, including members from both government and opposition parties, urged him to act decisively. “Since 1980, we have backed a two-state solution. Recognition would give that position substance,” the letter stated. Health Secretary Wes Streeting echoed this sentiment, remarking in a recent interview with *The Guardian* that the UK must act “while there’s still a state of Palestine left to recognise.”

Starmer, however, has remained cautious, insisting that recognition must be part of a broader plan for a two-state solution. “I am unequivocal about that,” he said after the E3 call, condemning the “disproportionate military escalation” in Gaza, alongside hostage-taking and settler violence. Yet, his reluctance to commit has drawn criticism from those who see his Labour government as dragging its feet on a long-standing promise.

France’s decision has drawn sharp rebukes from Israel and the United States, with the latter describing it as premature. Over 140 countries, including a dozen in Europe, already recognise a Palestinian state, but France’s move marks it as the first G7 nation to take this step. The UK, historically supportive of a two-state solution, has maintained that recognition

should emerge from negotiation, a process stalled for years, even before the Hamas attack on Israel on 7 October 2023, which killed 1,200 people and ignited the current conflict.

Germany, though historically close to Israel, has maintained that it has no immediate plans to recognise a Palestinian state and has emphasised discreet diplomatic pressure rather than public symbolic moves. A German government statement on Friday noted ongoing discussions with Israeli officials to push for increased aid and a ceasefire, hinting at “increased pressure” if progress stalls, though specifics remain vague.

In the UK, Starmer’s government has taken some steps, including halting certain arms sales to Israel, suspending free trade talks, and sanctioning far-right Israeli ministers and settlers. Yet, these measures have failed to quell demands for stronger action, particularly from within his party. Starmer must also balance relations with the United States, particularly ahead of President Donald Trump’s visit to Scotland, which adds to pressure on his cautious approach. The US has openly criticised France’s decision, adding complexity to Starmer’s balancing act.

Yossi Mekelberg, a Middle East expert at Chatham House, noted in a recent interview with The Times that Macron’s deferral of formal recognition until September “creates some space” for other nations to align. “The UK is close, but not there,” he said, suggesting that Starmer’s caution might shift if momentum builds.

The Gaza crisis, compounded by stalled peace talks and rising violence, underscores the urgency of the E3’s demands. Yet, the lack of unified action among European powers and the absence of concrete proposals risk rendering their statement a hollow gesture. For Starmer, the pressure to act decisively, without alienating key allies like the U.S.S.S., will only intensify as the humanitarian toll mounts.