

UK Supports Future Palestinian Statehood Only Within Wider Peace Framework

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The United Kingdom (UK) has reiterated its long-standing position that it will recognise a Palestinian state only as part of a negotiated peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians. Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and Foreign Secretary David Lammy have both underlined that while the UK remains committed to a two-state solution, immediate recognition without meaningful progress toward peace would be counterproductive.

Speaking on the government's position, Lammy stated that recognition should come "at a time that has the greatest impact," not as a symbolic gesture. He emphasised the need for a ceasefire, release of hostages, and full access for humanitarian aid in Gaza before any recognition is considered. British officials at the United Nations (UN) echoed this sentiment, affirming that recognition should not wait until final talks are complete, but must still occur at the right moment to support peace.

The UK's cautious approach stands in contrast to France, which announced it would recognise a Palestinian state at the upcoming UN General Assembly meeting in September. France is poised to become the first member of the Group of Seven (G7) to take this step, increasing pressure on other Western nations, including the UK, to follow suit. However, the British government has made clear it will not be rushed into a position that could undermine its diplomatic standing or security interests.

Domestically, the Labour-led government faces increasing calls for recognition. A private member's bill introduced by Liberal Democrat peer Baroness Northover seeks to formalise UK recognition of Palestinian statehood. Meanwhile, the government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Palestinian Authority (PA), pledging £101 million in aid and recognising the PA as the legitimate governing body of the West Bank and Gaza.

Despite this, Conservative voices and centre-right commentators have raised concerns that recognition without a secure peace process in place could damage relations with the United States (US) and lead to unintended diplomatic consequences. They argue that any recognition should be strategically timed, rather than politically driven.

The UK remains focused on immediate humanitarian priorities and the groundwork for a sustainable peace. As international leaders prepare for a summit on the Gaza crisis in New York later this month, the UK is expected to maintain its pragmatic stance: statehood in principle, but only when it contributes to long-term stability.