

UK Signals Recognition of Palestinian State Unless Gaza War Ends

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In a significant policy shift, the United Kingdom is preparing to formally recognise the State of Palestine at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2025, unless Israel takes verifiable steps to end the conflict in Gaza. The move is conditional on several demands, including a permanent ceasefire, unimpeded humanitarian access, halting settlement expansion in the West Bank, and progress toward a two-state solution.

Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer framed the initiative as a necessary step towards lasting peace in the region, stating that Palestinian statehood is an “inalienable right.” However, recognition is not unconditional; it will only be granted if Israel changes course. This mirrors a recent announcement by France and reflects growing frustration among European governments over Israel’s conduct in the conflict.

More than 200 Members of Parliament from multiple parties have expressed support for recognising Palestine, citing the worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Starmer, however, maintained that while he understands these concerns, recognition should form part of a broader diplomatic effort to end the violence and establish a path toward peace.

Israel has strongly condemned the UK’s stance, accusing it of rewarding Hamas and undermining negotiations. Israeli officials argue that granting recognition at this stage interferes with efforts to bring an end to the war and secure the release of hostages held by militant groups.

Conditions in Gaza continue to deteriorate, with over 60,000 Palestinian deaths reported and United Nations agencies warning of widespread famine, especially among children. The UK government is calling on Israel to permit the entry of at least 500 aid trucks per day and on Hamas to release all hostages, disarm, and surrender control of Gaza.

While the UK’s recognition of a Palestinian state may be symbolic, given its historic role in the region, such a move carries significant diplomatic weight. Critics argue that it risks being superficial if not backed by genuine progress on the ground.

A UN-led peace conference scheduled in New York for late July could prove pivotal, with several Western nations expected to join the UK and France in extending recognition if Israel does not meet the stated conditions.

This development reflects growing international impatience and a strategic recalibration. While avoiding a blanket endorsement of the current Labour government's foreign policy, the UK is making clear that its support for Israel is not without limits.