

Ireland, Norway and Spain recognise Palestine as a state—A cynical gesture to conceal support for genocide

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As Israel carries out its “Final Solution” in Gaza, three European states—Ireland, Norway and Spain—announced they would recognise the state of Palestine.

Announcing the decision last week in Dublin, Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris said, “It is a statement of unequivocal support for a two-state solution, the only credible path to peace and security for Israel, for Palestine and for their peoples.” Other countries were expected to follow suit in the coming weeks, he said, noting that 139 of 193 United Nations member states have already recognised the non-existent state of Palestine.

Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre said there could not be peace in the Middle East without the recognition of a Palestinian state, “with all the rights and obligations that entails.”

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez told parliament in Madrid, “We are going to recognise Palestine for many reasons, and we can sum that up in three words: peace, justice and consistency,” adding, “We have to make sure that the two-state solution is respected and there must be mutual guarantees of security.”

This is gesture politics at its most cynical, with Sanchez, Harris and Støre trying to deceive workers and young horrified by Israel’s genocidal violence and their governments’ complicity into believing they are sympathetic to the plight of the Palestinians and are “listening” to the masses. Their overarching fear is that the global popular support for the Palestinians will coalesce with the growing anger over the deteriorating social conditions of their own citizens.

But no one can seriously believe that the long-dead and bankrupt proposal of a mini-Palestinian statelet achieved via a “two-state solution” can be revived given Jerusalem’s proven intent to establish a Greater Israel, through mass murder and ethnic cleansing.

This chimera—promised ever since the signing of the Oslo Accords by Yasser Arafat in 1993—has produced nothing

more than a prison for the Palestinians, overseen by the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority (PA) of President Mahmoud Abbas in the West Bank and the besieged and now largely destroyed Hamas-controlled enclave in Gaza.

Israel has subjected the Palestinians to de facto military rule and launched repeated military attacks to reinforce a system of discriminatory and violent apartheid rule. It has now slaughtered at least 36,000 people in Gaza and allowed settlers to commit pogroms in the West Bank under military and state protection.

What is offered by the meaningless commitment to a two-states solution sometime in the future is only a smokescreen behind which governments internationally, the imperialist powers and corrupt Arab regimes above all, can continue allowing Israel to do whatever it wants.

To the extent it is meant to have any practical significance, the proposal is bound up with discussions over “what happens next”, when Israel and its sponsors in Washington finally determine that it has achieved all it can through bloody violence. It provides the PA, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States with an opportunity to step-in and police the ruins of Gaza under the watchful eye of Washington and the European Union.

It is a desperate attempt by the European powers to find a political mechanism for maintaining “security” by suppressing all opposition throughout the region to Israel’s continued military occupation of the Palestinian territories, and preventing the eruption of a wider regional conflict that would threaten not only Israel but the Arab states that have colluded for decades with Israel. It helps smooth the path for the Arab regimes to join Israel in escalating imperialist military aggression against Iran, as part of the West’s preparations for war on China.

Norway and Spain are members of the NATO alliance and have backed the US in its wars over the last 30 years. Only the Republic of Ireland is nominally neutral, but it has no genuine independence from US imperialism. It sent troops to

join the NATO-led operation against Afghanistan; allowed US fighter and transport planes to refuel at Shannon airport during the US invasion and occupation of Iraq; issued no condemnation of NATO's eastward expansion against Russia; and given diplomatic and political support to Ukraine against Russia.

In addition, Dublin has maintained since 1978 a small number of troops as part of the United Nation's "Interim Force in Lebanon" that assists the Lebanese Armed Forces in policing a "blue line"—defined after Israel's attack on Lebanon in 2006, and since October 7 the site of escalating hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah.

While all three, to varying degrees, have expressed their "concerns" about Israel's slaughter of the Palestinians, not one of them has sought to sever diplomatic and trading relations, ban arms sales to Israel or impose sanctions on Israel's leaders, banks, financial institutions and corporations, much less label it a "terrorist state."

It was Norway, which is not a member of the European Union, that acted as the mediator for the 1992-1993 talks between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). This led to the Oslo Accords that was supposed to lead to a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Since then, Norway has chaired a donor group coordinating international assistance to the Palestinian territories, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC), and made pro-forma attempts to reopen a "diplomatic channel" between Israel and the Palestinians. Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide warned that work on a two-state solution was becoming urgent as the conflict was spreading in the region, but that only the US and the Israeli people could influence Israel's position.

Spanish premier Sanchez said that recognition was essential "for peace and security", insisting the move was "not against anyone, least of all Israel". The decision, he stressed, reflected Spain's "outright rejection of Hamas, which is against the two-state solution."

But a mini-Palestinian statelet is anathema to Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his Likud Party and far-right coalition partners who rejected the two-state solution when it was first mooted in 1993, cheering on the crowds calling Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin—one of the signatories to the agreement—a traitor and baying for his blood just weeks before he was assassinated by an ultra-orthodox nationalist in November 1995.

Netanyahu lashed out, denouncing the move by Norway, Ireland and Spain as a "prize for terrorism." "This would be a terrorist state. It would try to carry out the October 7 massacre again and again—and that, we shall not agree to," he declared.

Foreign Minister Israel Katz recalled Israel's ambassadors to Ireland and Norway and warned that further "severe

consequences" could follow. It had already recalled its ambassador to Spain in November after Sanchez accused Tel Aviv of violating international humanitarian law in its war on Gaza.

Bezalel Smotrich, finance minister and fascistic leader of the Religious Zionism Party, ordered punitive measures against the PA, cancelling Israel's arrangement with Norway to collect taxes on behalf of the Palestinians and transfer funds to the PA, and announced he would "revoke all VIP permits for PA officials indefinitely at all crossings and impose additional economic sanctions on senior PA officials and their families." He then approved 10,000 new housing units in the occupied West Bank and issued a directive to build a settlement for each country that recognises Palestine.

Both the PA and Hamas welcomed Ireland, Norway and Spain's announcement that came the day after International Criminal Court prosecutor Karim Khan applied for arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant to face charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed since October 7.

Earlier in May, an overwhelming majority of the UN General Assembly passed a non-binding resolution approving Palestine's eligibility to become a full member and urged the Security Council to "reconsider the matter favourably" after the US vetoed full Palestinian membership.

The only genuinely international force that can prevent the drive to war and ensure "peace and stability" in the region is the international working class, but only if its struggles are unified globally and orientated towards the fight for socialism and the abolition of the nation state system in the Middle East and throughout the world—including the dissolution of the existing Israeli state and the creation of a new bi-national socialist federation.



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