

# Norway, Ireland, Spain to recognise Palestinian state

May 22, 2024

Online Desk :

The leaders of Norway, Ireland and Spain have said their countries will formally recognise Palestine as a state next week for the sake of “peace in the Middle East“, prompting Israel to immediately recall its envoys.

Norway’s Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store said on Wednesday that a two-state solution was in Israel’s best interest, adding that the recognition would come as of May 28.

“There cannot be peace in the Middle East if there is no recognition,” he said.

“In the midst of a war, with tens of thousands killed and injured [in Gaza], we must keep alive the only alternative that offers a political solution for Israelis and Palestinians alike: Two states, living side by side, in peace and security,” Gahr Store added.

“Recognition of Palestine is a means of supporting the moderate forces which have been losing ground in this protracted and brutal conflict,” he said.

“This could ultimately make it possible to resume the process towards achieving a two-state solution and give it renewed momentum,” he added.

Shortly after Norway’s announcement, Ireland’s prime minister Simon Harris said his country would also recognise a Palestinian state.

“Today, Ireland, Norway, and Spain are announcing that we recognise the state of Palestine,” Harris said at a news conference. “Each of us will now undertake whatever national steps are necessary to give effect to that decision.”

“I’m confident that further countries will join us in taking this important step in the coming weeks,” he added.

Foreign minister Micheal Martin said on X that the recognition will take place on May 28.

Spain’s Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said on Wednesday that the country’s council of ministers would also recognise an independent Palestinian state on May 28.

Speaking in the Spanish parliament, Sanchez accused his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu of putting the two-state solution in “danger” with his policy of “pain and destruction” in Gaza.

Al Jazeera’s Imran Khan, reporting from Amman, Jordan, because Israel’s government has banned Al Jazeera, said that Malta and Slovenia were also expected make similar announcements.

“This is a momentous occasion for the Palestinians,” he said.

“It’s perhaps unsurprising that Norway have taken the lead on this because they were behind the Oslo Accords – the agreement in 1993 that really did two things: It recognised the Palestine Liberation Organization, the PLO, as the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people,” Khan added. Israeli warning

Israel immediately announced it was recalling its envoys to Ireland and Norway for “urgent consultations”.

“Today, I am sending a sharp message to Ireland and Norway: Israel will not go over this in silence,” Foreign Minister Israel Katz said in a statement, adding that he planned to do the same with the Spanish ambassador.

The Israeli foreign ministry had earlier posted a video message addressed to Ireland on X warning that “recognising a Palestinian state risks turning you into a pawn in the hands of Iran and Hamas”, adding the move would “only fuel extremism and instability”.

Israel has said plans for Palestinian recognition constitute a “prize for terrorism” that would reduce the chances of a negotiated resolution to the war in Gaza, which began on October 7 when Palestinian fighters stormed into southern Israel.

Hussein al-Sheikh, the secretary-general of the executive committee of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), posted on X: “Historical moments in which the free world triumphs for truth and justice after long decades of Palestinian national struggle, suffering, pain, occupation, racism, murder, oppression, abuse and destruction to which the people of Palestine were subjected.”

Hamas called the decision by the three European countries an “important step”.

Palestinian politician Mustafa Barghouti said it was a “powerful political and symbolically significant step” that moved the achievement of “freedom and justice” closer for the Palestinian people.

“This is also a blow to Netanyahu and his extreme government, and to the fascists in his government ... It means the acts of fascism and extremism in the Israeli government has no future,” he told Al Jazeera.