

EU states announce formal recognition of Palestinian state

May 28, 2024

Online Desk :

The establishment of a Palestinian state is “the only route to peace” in the Middle East, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has said as his country announced formal recognition, alongside Norway and Ireland.

Sanchez spoke on Tuesday before a cabinet vote that approved the previously announced plan to recognise a Palestinian state. Norway’s recognition has also taken effect, while Ireland was due to follow suit later in the day.

Spanish government spokesperson Pilar Alegria announced that the cabinet had “adopted an important decision to recognise a Palestinian state”, which had “one objective: to help Israelis and Palestinians achieve peace”.

The Spanish prime minister called the move “a matter of historical justice”.

“The only route towards establishing peace is the establishment of a Palestinian state, living side by side with the state of Israel,” he said.

“The state of Palestine must be viable with the West Bank and Gaza connected by a corridor and with East Jerusalem as its capital.”

Madrid will not recognise any changes to pre-1967 borders unless agreed to by both parties, he said. The occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip were part of the territory Israel seized in 1967 in the Arab-Israeli War.

‘Inciting genocide’

The leaders of Spain, Ireland, Malta and Slovenia said in March that they were considering recognising a Palestinian state as “a positive contribution” towards ending the war in Gaza.

As Oslo’s recognition took effect, Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide said in a statement, “For more than 30 years, Norway has been one of the strongest advocates for a Palestinian state. Today, when Norway officially recognises Palestine as a state, is a milestone in the relationship between Norway and Palestine.”

Meanwhile, the Palestinian flag was raised in Dublin outside the seat of the Irish parliament.

“This is an important moment and I think it sends a signal to the world that there are practical actions you can take as a country to help keep the hope and destination of a two-state solution alive at a time when others are trying to sadly bomb it into oblivion,” Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris said before a cabinet meeting that was set to formally sign off on the decision.

Malta and Slovenia have suggested they will also take the same step, although not immediately.

The announcements provoked fury from Israel, widening its disagreements with some European Union states over the continuing war in Gaza.

Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz accused Spain's Sanchez of being a "partner to incitement" of Jewish "genocide".

Commenting on X, Katz drew a parallel between Spanish Second Deputy Prime Minister Yolanda Diaz on the one hand and Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Hamas chief Yahya Sinwar on the other after her call for a free Palestine "from the river to the sea".

Spain, Ireland and Norway announced their plan to formally recognise Palestine last week, prompting Israel to recall its ambassadors from all three countries.

Palestine has already been recognised by 144 other countries.

Of the 27 members of the EU, Sweden, Cyprus, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria have recognised a Palestinian state.

The United Kingdom and Australia have said they are considering recognition, France has said now is not the time while Germany joined Israel's staunchest ally, the United States, in rejecting a unilateral approach, insisting that a two-state solution can be achieved only through dialogue.