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News / World / Spain, Ireland And Norway Will Recognize A Palestinian State On May 28. Why Does That Matter?

Spain, Ireland and Norway will recognize a Palestinian state on May 28. Why does that matter?

Also, the move lends additional prominence to the Middle East issue ahead of June 6-9 elections to the European Parliament, when some 370 million people are eligible to vote.

By: **AP**
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The leaders of Spain, Ireland, Malta and Slovenia said in March they were considering recognizing a Palestinian state as “a positive contribution” toward ending the war. (AP photo)

Spain, Ireland and Norway said Wednesday that they would recognize a Palestinian state on May 28, a step toward a long-held Palestinian aspiration that came amid international outrage over the civilian death toll and humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip following Israel's offensive.

The almost simultaneous decisions by two European Union countries, and Norway, may generate momentum for the recognition of a Palestinian state by other EU countries and could spur further steps at the United Nations, deepening Israel's isolation. Malta and Slovenia, which also belong to the 27-nation European Union, may follow suit.

Some 140 of 190 represented in the UN countries have already recognized a Palestinian state.

Here's a look at how and why the new European announcements could be important:

Why does it matter?

bids for UN membership have been denied.

The United States, Britain and other Western countries have backed the idea of an independent Palestinian state existing alongside Israel as a solution to the Middle East's most intractable conflict, but they insist Palestinian statehood should come as part of a negotiated settlement. There have been no substantive negotiations since 2009.

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Though the EU countries and Norway won't be recognizing an existing state, just the possibility of one, the symbolism helps enhance the Palestinians' international standing and heaps more pressure on Israel to open negotiations on ending the war.

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Also, the move lends additional prominence to the Middle East issue ahead of June 6-9 elections to the European Parliament, when some 370 million people are eligible to vote and a steep rise of the extreme right is on the cards.

Why now?

grant new “rights and privileges” to Palestine in a sign of growing international support for a vote on full voting membership. The Palestine Authority currently has observer status.

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

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said Wednesday, “This recognition is not against anyone, it is not against the Israeli people,” he said. “It is an act in favor of peace, justice and moral consistency.”

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What are the implications of recognition?

While dozens of countries have recognized Palestine, none of the major Western powers has done so, and it is unclear how much of a difference the move by the three countries might make.

Even so, their recognition would mark a significant accomplishment for the Palestinians, who believe it confers international legitimacy on their struggle. Little

What is Israel's response?

Israel reacted rapidly Wednesday by recalling its ambassadors to Ireland, Norway and Spain. The Israeli government slams talk of Palestinian independence as a “reward” for the Hamas October 7 attack on southern Israel that killed 1,200 people and led to the abduction of over 250 others. It rejects any move to legitimize the Palestinians internationally.

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Also Read | [Israel says it's recalling ambassadors from Ireland and Norway over recognition of Palestinian state](#)

Steps like the ones by the three European countries Wednesday will harden the Palestinian position and undermine the negotiating process, Israel says, insisting that all issues should be solved through negotiations.

Israel often responds to foreign countries' decisions deemed as going against its interests by summoning those countries' ambassadors and also punishing the Palestinians through measures such as freezing tax transfers to the cash-strapped Palestinian Authority.

Who recognizes Palestine as a State?

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Some major powers have indicated their stance may be evolving amid the outcry over the consequences of Israel's offensive in Gaza, which has killed more than 35,000 Palestinians according to Gaza's Health Ministry. The ministry does not distinguish between noncombatants and fighters in its count.

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British Foreign Secretary David Cameron said no recognition of Palestine could come while Hamas remains in Gaza, but that it could happen while Israeli negotiations with Palestinian leaders were in progress.

French President Emmanuel Macron said in February it's not "taboo" for France to recognize a Palestinian state.

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