

## **Recognition of Palestine Statement by Norway**

On 22 May, Norway announced its decision to officially recognise Palestine as a state. It came into effect on 28 May.

Recognition of the State of Palestine follows from Norway's long-standing commitment to the two-state solution as the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in line with international law and relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. Norway considers the legal criteria for statehood to be fulfilled.

With this recognition, Norway aims to contribute to the realisation of the two-state solution, where a democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine lives side by side with the State of Israel in peace, within secure and internationally recognised borders.

The basis for the territorial demarcation between the State of Israel and the State of Palestine should be based on the pre-1967 borders, i.e. the demarcation line set out in the 1949 Armistice Agreements, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States and without prejudice to a final settlement on borders, which could include land swaps.

A two-state solution requires an Israeli and a Palestinian state, as outlined by the UN partition plan of 1947. As a member of the Security Council, Norway voted in favour of Israeli membership of the UN in 1949. Norway formally recognised the State of Israel the same year. Since then, Norway has been a steadfast supporter of Israeli statehood and security.

Our support for Israel and the two-state solution entails that we now grant the same rights and obligations to Palestine. The Palestinian people have a legitimate right to self-determination.

The first Oslo Accord in 1993 provided an important step towards mutual recognition and an end to the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Since then, material and normative support have been critical in the effort to promote Palestinian statehood. Norway has led on both fronts. We have helped to build Palestinian institutions with financial support and through our chairmanship of the AHLC. We have voted in favour of upgrading Palestine's standing in the UN several times.

More than 30 years later, however, we must acknowledge that the two-state solution has not materialised. Norway's long-standing position has been that we would recognise Palestine as a state at the end of a political process towards peace. This strategy has not worked.

While Norway is changing its strategy with this recognition, our goal remains the same. Norway believes that the two-state solution is the only viable way to freedom, peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians alike. Establishment of a Palestinian state in the context of the two-state solution is also key to regional normalisation.

With statehood comes responsibilities. Norway recalls the commitments made by the Palestine Liberation Organization on 9 September 1993, and the commitments made by the State of Palestine in its application for UN membership. A commitment to peace, international law and

the UN Charter are fundamental tenets of statehood. These principles will form the basis of Norway's interactions with the State of Palestine, as they do in our enduring relations with the State of Israel.

Norway supports a Palestinian leadership that is committed to the two-state solution. Norway will continue to work with the Palestinian Authority and support its efforts to reform and strengthen Palestinian institutions, so that the people of Palestine can enjoy rule of law and human rights. The Norwegian recognition of the State of Palestine is a sign of support to the moderate forces in both Palestine and Israel, who support the two-state solution.

Norway renounces terrorism and we strongly condemned the terror attack conducted by Hamas on 7 October.

Norway acknowledges that we are far away from a viable two-state solution today. It has over time come under increasing pressure, in particular from the illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Many issues remain to be resolved for a viable two-state solution. This includes the settlement of all outstanding final status issues, including relating to borders, security, the status of Jerusalem, and refugees.

At the same time, there is now greater momentum to take concrete steps towards a two-state solution. On 10 May, Norway, together with 143 countries, voted in favour of the General Assembly resolution which backed a Palestinian bid for full UN membership. We also note current efforts by key Arab countries to facilitate a process towards a two-state solution by establishing an Arab vision for regional peace. Two decisive aspects of the plan are the establishment of a viable Palestinian state and the normalisation of relations between Arab countries and Israel, including recognition of the state of Israel. We support these Arab countries in their attempt to create a more peaceful Middle East.

A recognition at this time will hopefully also strengthen the Palestinian Authority in the upcoming discussions about the "day after" in Gaza. Statehood, with all its rights and obligations, means that the Palestinian side can negotiate from a stronger and more legitimate position in their future dealings with Israel.

Over 140 countries have now recognized the State of Palestine. We encourage other countries to do the same.

With this statement, Norway reaffirms its commitment to the State of Palestine and the State of Israel on their journey towards a sustainable two-state solution.