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July 31, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate SD-511
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Democratic Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable James E. Risch
Chairman
United States Senate Committee
on Foreign Relations
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
United States Senate Committee
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423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Urgent Request for Unified Congressional Sanctions Against France, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Other Nations for Recognition of Palestinian Statehood

The State of Israel, and its sovereignty and standing in the international community, is of immense importance to the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ)¹ and its members. We write now to urge immediate congressional action to impose comprehensive sanctions against the Republic of France, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and other nations in response to their proposed recognition of Palestinian statehood. This precipitous action by our allies undermines longstanding U.S. foreign policy, violates established international legal principles, and threatens the stability of America's strategic interests in the Middle East. Congress should act to urge these nations to reconsider their conduct. To say that such a decision lacks any legal basis and rewards terrorist organizations, such as Hamas, would be to severely understate its gravity and repercussions. Recognizing Palestinian statehood after the horrific attacks of October 7, 2023, would reward the terrorist groups that do *not* seek a two-state solution but which, instead, are bent on eradicating the State of Israel and the Jewish people.

The pattern of terrorist violence that culminated in the October 7, 2023, attacks did not emerge in a vacuum but represents the escalation of decades of systematic terrorism against Israeli civilians. Hamas, since its founding in 1987, has perpetrated countless acts of terrorism including suicide bombings targeting buses, restaurants, and shopping centers throughout the 1990s and

¹ The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the defense of constitutional liberties secured by law. The ACLJ regularly monitors and informs the public about governmental activity. The ACLJ and its global affiliated organizations – including the European Centre for Law and Justice credentialed with Special Consultative Status at the UN ECOSOC – are committed to defending the national security of the United States and that of its critical ally Israel, as well as the ongoing viability of freedom and liberty in the United States and around the world.

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2000s. The organization has launched thousands of rockets indiscriminately at Israeli population centers, constructed extensive terror tunnel networks designed to facilitate attacks on civilians, and consistently violated ceasefires and international agreements. Other Palestinian terrorist organizations, including Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, have similarly engaged in decades of airplane hijackings, suicide bombings, and targeted assassinations of civilians. The Palestinian Authority itself has glorified and financially rewarded terrorism through its “martyrs’ fund” payments to families of terrorists, demonstrating institutional support for violence against Israeli civilians. This extensive history of terrorist activities, spanning multiple decades and involving systematic targeting of non-combatants, establishes an unambiguous pattern that reached its most horrific expression on October 7, 2023.

Since October 7, 2023, Hamas has continued its campaign of terror and lawlessness that began with the massacre of Israelis and foreign nationals and the abduction of innocent hostages, including American citizens. This Iranian-backed terrorist organization has systematically violated international humanitarian law through numerous war crimes and crimes against humanity, including summary killings and hostage-taking. The United States should use all legislative and executive authorities at its disposal to punish and deter Hamas’s terror, atrocities, and war crimes. These nations’ proposed recognition of a Palestinian state in the midst of this conflict is unconscionable and would enable—rather than deter—Hamas and its ilk’s genocidal goals.

Instead of holding terrorists accountable, in a reckless abandonment of established diplomatic protocols and alliance cooperation, French President Emmanuel Macron announced on July 24, 2025, that France will formally recognize Palestine as a state during the UN General Assembly in September,² directly undermining decades of American-led peace efforts and the fundamental principle that statehood must emerge through direct negotiations between the parties. This ill-advised decision represents a capitulation to extremist pressure at best, and an agenda at worst, rather than principled diplomacy. It has already drawn sharp condemnation from Israel, which correctly identifies this move as “a disgrace and a surrender to terrorism.”³ This unilateral action by an ally demonstrates a fundamental disregard for the careful diplomatic architecture that has prevented regional conflagration and demands immediate congressional response to preserve American credibility and alliance accountability.

Likewise, compounding France’s egregious abandonment of diplomatic principles, the United Kingdom has now followed suit with an equally reckless ultimatum that demonstrates a profound erosion of Western alliance solidarity. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced on July 29, 2025, that the United Kingdom will formally recognize Palestine as a state in September unless Israel takes “substantive steps” to end its operations in Gaza and commits to halting West Bank activities.⁴ This conditional threat represents a fundamental departure from Britain’s historically measured approach to Middle East diplomacy and constitutes diplomatic blackmail against America’s most reliable democratic ally in the region. The timing of this

² *Macron Says France to Recognize Palestinian State in September*, TIMES OF ISRAEL (July 24, 2025), https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/macron-says-france-to-recognize-palestinian-state-in-september/.

³ *French Plan to Recognise Palestinian State Draws Fire from Israel, US*, REUTERS (July 25, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/french-plan-recognise-palestinian-state-draws-fire-israel-us-2025-07-25/>.

⁴ Alex Leff, *The United Kingdom Will Recognize a Palestinian State If Israel Doesn’t Agree to a Gaza Ceasefire*, NPR (July 29, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/07/29/nx-s1-5484001/uk-palestinian-state-israel-hamas-gaza>.

announcement—following immediately after France’s similar declaration—reveals a coordinated European effort to undermine American leadership in Middle East peace efforts and demonstrates a stunning disregard for the lessons of October 7th. Other nations have also threatened to follow suit, including Ireland and Canada.⁵

The democratic will of the Israeli people has been unambiguously expressed through their elected representatives in the Knesset, which voted overwhelmingly on February 21, 2024, by a margin of 99-11 to reject any unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state by other nations.⁶ This decisive vote demonstrated that Israel will continue to oppose unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state, with such recognition in the wake of the October 7th massacre being viewed as “a massive and unprecedented reward to terrorism” that would “prevent any future peace settlement.”⁷ France, the United Kingdom, Ireland, or any other nation’s decision to proceed with recognition despite this clear expression of democratic opposition from America’s closest Middle Eastern ally represents a profound disrespect for Israeli sovereignty and self-determination.

I. INTERNATIONAL LAW REQUIRES THE PARTIES TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT THEMSELVES, AND UNILATERAL RECOGNITION VIOLATES THIS PRINCIPLE.

France, the United Kingdom, or any other nation’s unilateral recognition of Palestinian statehood constitutes a fundamental breach of the diplomatic consensus that has governed Middle East peace efforts for decades. This action directly contravenes the framework established by the Oslo Accords, the Road Map for Peace, and numerous UN Security Council resolutions that explicitly call for a negotiated two-state solution between the parties themselves. By recognizing Palestinian statehood absent direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and agreement, these nations have undermined the very foundations of the peace process that the international community, including France, the United Kingdom, and Ireland themselves, have repeatedly endorsed. This represents a betrayal of solemn international commitments and frameworks that they previously supported.

It is important to note that the 1949 *armistice lines* which define the West Bank and Gaza Strip (frequently referred to as the pre-’67 lines) have never been regarded as international boundaries. From 1949 until 1967, the portions of Palestine not under the control of the State of Israel remained under belligerent military occupation by Egyptian and Jordanian armed forces. *No Arab Palestinian State has ever existed in these territories.*

As a result of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, Jordanian and Egyptian forces retreated from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, respectively, and Israel acquired control of those territories. Following

⁵ *Canada and Malta to Recognize Palestinian State, Joining France and Possibly Britain*, NPR (July 31, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/07/31/nx-s1-5486587/canada-malta-palestinian-state>.

⁶ Sam Sokol, *Knesset Votes Resoundingly Against Unilateral Palestinian State Recognition*, TIMES OF ISRAEL (Feb. 22, 2024), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/knesset-votes-resoundingly-against-unilateral-palestinian-state-recognition/>.

⁷ *Prime Minister MK Netanyahu to Knesset Plenum: Government has Agreed Unanimously that the Establishment of a Palestinian State Will Not Be Dictated To Us—Certainly Not After October 7 Massacre*, KNESSET (Feb. 20, 2024), <https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press200224r.aspx>

the 1967 war, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 242.⁸ Note that the Resolution requires “secure . . . boundaries”⁹—something that did not exist prior to 1967 as evidenced by the persistent attacks mounted against Israel from Arab-controlled territory and would not exist today if the *status quo ante* were reinstated. Note, also, that the Resolution calls for the termination of all “states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area . . .”¹⁰ Furthermore, following the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 338,¹¹ which reiterates the call to implement the terms of Resolution 242. Subsequent resolutions as well as agreements made under the auspices of the international community have cited Resolution 242 as the basis for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Each of the principles set forth in Resolution 242 is predicated on negotiations between Israel and its neighbors, not unilateral recognition by a country like France, the United Kingdom or Ireland. What the Palestinians have attempted to do by approaching these countries directly is to forego the concessions that negotiations require to determine what a future Arab Palestinian state will look like. In so doing, they are seeking to undermine the terms of Resolution 242. A Palestinian attempt to unilaterally effect change in the status of the territory and adopt the 1949 armistice lines as internationally recognized boundaries explicitly runs counter to Resolutions 242 and 338. Instead of supporting the terms of Resolution 242, the French or British government’s recognition of a Palestinian state undermines them and puts both Palestinians and Israelis—and American interests—in danger. The premature recognition effectively rewards unilateral actions and removes incentives for Palestinian authorities to engage in meaningful negotiations with Israel. These actions set a dangerous precedent that threatens to collapse the entire structure of negotiated conflict resolution in the region.

II. THESE ACTIONS THREATEN U.S. STRATEGIC INTERESTS

These nations’ recognition directly threatens core U.S. strategic interests and foreign policy objectives in the Middle East. The United States has invested billions of dollars and decades of diplomatic effort in facilitating direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. Their unilateral action undermines these investments and threatens to further destabilize the region. This recognition emboldens extremist elements within Palestinian society who reject negotiated solutions in favor of unilateral international pressure by less principled actors. By providing international legitimacy to such approaches, They effectively encourage the abandonment of peaceful negotiation in favor of international forum shopping and diplomatic pressure campaigns.

Furthermore, their actions threaten to trigger a cascade of similar recognitions by other nations, potentially isolating Israel diplomatically and undermining America’s ability to serve as an honest broker in future peace negotiations. This would fundamentally alter the strategic balance in the region in ways contrary to established U.S. interests.

⁸ S.C. Res. 242 (22 Nov. 1967), <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/resolutions-adopted-security-council-1967>.

⁹ *Id.* ¶ 1(ii).

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ S.C. Res. 338 (22 Oct. 1973), <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/resolutions-adopted-security-council-1973>.

Their recognition may inadvertently contribute to increased regional instability by removing incentives for negotiated resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Historical experience demonstrates that unilateral actions in this conflict typically lead to increased violence and extremism rather than peaceful resolution. The recognition may embolden terrorist organizations operating within Palestinian territories by providing them with enhanced international legitimacy and diplomatic protection—all while they starve and exploit the residents of Gaza. This poses direct security threats to both Israeli civilians and American interests in the region.

III. THESE NATIONS' ACTIONS CONTRADICT INTERNATIONAL LEGAL STANDARDS ABOUT STATEHOOD

France, the United Kingdom, and Ireland's recognition violates established principles of international law governing state recognition. Under the traditional Montevideo Convention criteria, Palestinian claims to statehood remain fundamentally deficient. The so-called "state" of Palestine has never met the four indicia of statehood set forth in the Montevideo Convention, which are considered to reflect the requirements for statehood under customary international law. Article 1 of the Montevideo Convention established four prerequisites to statehood: (a) permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) a government; and (d) a capacity to enter relations with other states.¹²

The Palestinian Authority (PA) fails to meet at least three of these criteria. While even Israel agrees that the Arab population in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank has the right to self-determination and has made numerous attempts to materialize their desire to have a state of their own, the reality on the ground is that Palestinians lack at least three Montevideo criteria, albeit due to their own actions. The attack of October 7, 2023, is just one example of such actions.

Territorial Control: Palestinian authorities lack effective control over the territories they claim, with significant portions under Israeli administration and other areas controlled by competing Palestinian factions.

Governmental Authority: The division between Hamas-controlled Gaza and the Palestinian Authority-controlled portions of the West Bank demonstrates the absence of unified, effective governmental control.

International Relations Capacity: The Palestinian entities' dependence on external funding and their inability to fulfill basic governmental functions independently raise serious questions about their capacity to maintain international relations as required for statehood.

By recognizing or threatening to recognize Palestinian statehood despite these deficiencies, France, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and other nations have abandoned established legal standards in favor of political expedience, thereby undermining the integrity of the international legal system.

¹² Seventh Int'l Convention of Amer. States, Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, art. 1, 26 Dec. 1933, 165 LNTS 19 [hereinafter Montevideo Convention].

IV. RECOMMENDED SANCTIONS FRAMEWORK

Given the severity of these nations' violation of established diplomatic frameworks and international law, the ACLJ respectfully urges Congress to implement, to the fullest extent of its authority, a comprehensive sanctions regime including:

Economic Sanctions:

- Suspension of all preferential trade arrangements between the United States and France, the United Kingdom, and Ireland
- Imposition of targeted tariffs on French, British and Irish goods and services
- Suspension of bilateral economic cooperation agreements and joint development projects

Diplomatic Sanctions:

- Downgrading of diplomatic relations with France, the United Kingdom, and Ireland, to reflect the breach of alliance cooperation
- Suspension of France, the United Kingdom, and Ireland's participation in sensitive intelligence sharing arrangements
- Exclusion of France, the United Kingdom, and Ireland, from key bilateral and multilateral diplomatic initiatives
- Public diplomatic censure

Military and Security Cooperation:

- Suspension of joint military exercises and training programs with French, British, and Irish forces
- Restriction of defense technology transfers and military sales to France, the United Kingdom, and Ireland
- Exclusion of France, the United Kingdom, Ireland, from sensitive NATO planning activities affecting Middle East operations
- Review and potential suspension of French, British, and Irish, access to U.S. military facilities and logistics support

International Organization Sanctions:

- Opposition to French, British, and Irish, candidates for leadership positions in international organizations
- Blocking resolutions sponsored by these nations in the UN Security Council and other international bodies
- Coordination with allies to isolate France, the United Kingdom, and Ireland, diplomatically until recognition is withdrawn

These sanctions should be imposed on all nations who engage in similar conduct. France and the United Kingdom's disregard for Israel does not occur in a vacuum. It has international consequences. True allies respect each other's core interests and refrain from actions that undermine established partnership frameworks. Their unilateral recognition demonstrates a fundamental disregard for American interests and established alliance cooperation principles. Failure to respond decisively to this action would signal to other allies that they may similarly

disregard U.S. interests. This would fundamentally undermine America's ability to maintain coherent alliance relationships and could encourage similar unilateral actions by other nations. These sanctions should also be applied to any nation that may act in the same way.

The precedent established by congressional response to France, the United Kingdom, and Ireland's recognition will determine whether the United States maintains credible deterrent capacity against allied nations that choose to undermine American interests. Strong sanctions would demonstrate that alliance relationships carry mutual obligations and that violations of those obligations are unacceptable.

V. CONGRESSIONAL DUTY TO PROTECT AMERICAN INTERESTS

Congress has a constitutional duty to protect American interests and to ensure that foreign nations understand the consequences of actions that undermine those interests. France, the United Kingdom, and Ireland's recognition of Palestinian statehood represents a direct challenge to established U.S. policy that demands clear congressional response.

The failure to respond decisively would signal American weakness and encourage further unilateral actions by allies and adversaries alike. The President must demonstrate that the United States will defend its interests and policy positions against all challenges, regardless of their source. This is not merely a matter of Middle East policy, but a fundamental question of whether the United States will allow allied nations to freely undermine American foreign policy objectives. The precedent established by congressional action in this case will influence American credibility and effectiveness globally.

Furthermore, the PA's (failed) attempts to reconcile with Hamas,¹³ an internationally declared terrorist organization¹⁴ that refuses to even recognize the right of UN Member State Israel to exist,¹⁵ reflect on Palestinian leaders. This is especially true since the PA has not demanded that Hamas modify its Charter which includes, among numerous objectionable and racist provisions, a call for the destruction of Israel. This establishes beyond doubt that the PA is not serious about resolving its disagreements with Israel. The PA must not be rewarded for disregarding fundamental principles of international law and allying itself with the unreformed terrorist organization, Hamas.

Additionally, in light of the barbaric Hamas attacks of October 7, 2023, on innocent men, women, and children, the PA clearly cannot control a large portion of the so-called "state of Palestine," including Hamas terrorists whose goal remains the total elimination of the State of Israel. Moreover, the brutal images that followed this attack as well as the social media posts of

¹³ Khaled Abu Toameh, *Abbas refuses reconciliation until Hamas cedes control of Gaza — PA ex-minister*, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL (16 Feb. 2018), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/abbas-refuses-reconciliation-until-hamas-cedes-control-of-gaza-pa-ex-minister/>.

¹⁴ See, e.g., BUREAU OF COUNTERTERRORISM, U.S. DEP'T OF STATE, COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM 2022 (2022), https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Country_Reports_on_Terrorism_2022-v3.pdf (detailing the United States' categorisation of Hamas as a terrorist organisation); Council Common Position (EU) 2009/468, 2009 O.J. (L 151/16) 45 (EN), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32009E0468> (detailing the EU's recognition of Hamas as a terrorist organisation).

¹⁵ See The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement – Hamas, art. 28 (1988), <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/50/1609.htm>.

Hamas terrorists gleefully massacring innocent men, women, and children, raping women and young girls, and kidnapping children and the elderly, are damning evidence that Hamas desires the complete annihilation of the Jewish state.

CONCLUSION

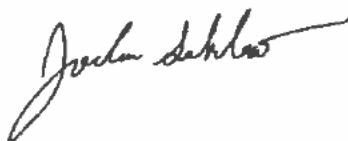
France, the United Kingdom, and Ireland's recognition, among other nations, of Palestinian statehood represents a fundamental breach of alliance cooperation and a direct challenge to established U.S. foreign policy. The action threatens American strategic interests, undermines established diplomatic frameworks, and contradicts established principles of international law.

Until Palestinians negotiate in good faith, unequivocally denounce Hamas and other terrorist organizations that are bent on eliminating Jews and Israel, acknowledge Israel's right to exist, and the terrorist organizations stop targeting defenseless civilians and cease committing war crimes against both Israelis and their fellow Palestinians in Gaza, any recognition of a Palestinian state will make those states that support it complicit in the serious crimes the terrorist organizations are committing.

Congress must respond decisively through comprehensive sanctions that demonstrate the costs of undermining American interests and providing cover for grotesque and ongoing human rights violations. The proposed sanctions framework would impose meaningful consequences while providing France, the United Kingdom, and Ireland, with clear incentives to reverse their recognition.

The ACLJ urges swift congressional action to implement these measures to pressure these nations diplomatically until they withdraw their recognition and return to established diplomatic frameworks. America's credibility and effectiveness in international affairs depend upon decisive and unified action in response to this challenge.

Very respectfully,



Jordan Sekulow



Jeff Ballabon



Nathan Moelker