

## Why should Australia recognise Palestine?

APAN calls on Australia to join 139 other countries in formally recognising Palestine.

### Australian recognition of Palestine would:

#### 1. Honour our commitment to the Palestinians

In 1947 Australia voted to divide Palestine, then recognised the state of Israel in 1948, but as yet has failed to recognise Palestine.

#### 2. Afford Palestine diplomatic equality

Palestine would have full Australian diplomatic representation and recognised as equal with other countries around the world.

#### 3. Act on our support of Palestinian rights

It would be an unequivocal message that we will act to support the rights of the Palestinians to have self-determination through our deeds, not just our words.

#### 4. Demonstrate Australia's opposition to Israel's illegal annexation of Palestine

It would show there are consequences for Israel continually expanding Jewish only settlements in the West Bank and other breaches of international law.

### What good would it actually do for Australia to recognise Palestine?

Australia is a close ally of Israel. If Australia recognises Palestine, it will put Israel on notice that even its close allies are not willing to forestall a just resolution forever. It would help elevate Palestine's status and create a more equal negotiating situation.



### What does it mean to 'recognise Palestine'?

The 1947 United Nations Partition Plan resolution, which Australia had a strong hand in drafting, stipulated there would be two-states established: Israel and Palestine.

As we know, Israel unilaterally declared statehood in 1948, which was subsequently supported by the United Nations (with Australia one of the first signatories), but Palestine still does not have sovereignty or self-determination.

Frustrated by the lack of progress towards self-determination, in 1988 the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) declared independence, but Australia has so far refused to recognise this independence.

Practically, the recognition of Palestine means establishing a formal diplomatic relationship with Palestine. Australia currently has an Ambassador to Israel, but only a Representative to Palestine.

Symbolically, recognising Palestine would be a declaration to Israel that it cannot dictate the terms of Palestine's relationship with Australia.

## Who has recognised Palestine?

**139 countries** have already recognised Palestine.

The Vatican, Sweden, Columbia, St Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis are the most recent to accord formal Palestinian Recognition.

There are significant moves in Europe towards recognition: The UK Labour Party platform is for immediate Palestinian Recognition; In 2014, the Irish Senate called on the government to recognise Palestine; Italy undertook a symbolic parliamentary vote in 2015; France has indicated it may recognise Palestine; and Spain indicated in late 2018 that it would be pursuing EU recognition of Palestine, and if it does not they will recognise Palestine directly.

## What do Australians think?

**73%**

of Australians want Palestine recognised as an independent State\*

## Australian party positions on Palestinian recognition

- Liberal/National Governments have indicated their policy is reliant on final negotiation of a two-state solution, and that Australia would not provide Palestine full diplomatic recognition until this time.
- The 2018 Australian Labor Party Conference called on the next Labor Government to recognise Palestine as a state; and expects this issue will be an important priority for the next Labor Government.
- The Australian Greens have been calling for Australian recognition of Palestine since 2011.

## Why now?

The Oslo Accords were signed more than 25 years ago (1993). These Accords were supposed to be temporary, and to compel Israel to progress negotiation of the final status issues within 5 years. This has not happened. Instead Israel and the US have increasingly put obstacles in the way of ending the occupation.

- The number of Israeli Jews living in illegal settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has swollen to more than **620,000**. There are now at least **131** settlements sanctioned by the Israeli Government, and another 110 'settlement outposts' located throughout the West Bank including East Jerusalem. (<https://www.btselem.org/settlements>)
- These settlements have direct and real effect on Palestinians – dispossessing Palestinians of their land and forcing them to leave the area, hindering their free movement, cutting off access to their farms, increasing harassment from illegal settlers and drawing a greater Israeli army presence.
- In the first 3 years of the Trump administration (2017–2019), the Israeli govt promoted plans for an average of **6,899** housing units/year, almost twice the average of the preceding three years (Peace Now: <https://peacenow.org.il/en/october-2019-approvals-2342-settlement-housing-units-advanced>).
- In 1980 Israel illegally annexed East Jerusalem – the capital of a future Palestinian state.
- In May 2018, the USA moved their Embassy to Jerusalem, asserting it as the capital of Israel, undermining 50 years of international law which has declared Israel's military occupation and annexation of East Jerusalem as illegitimate and calling on them to withdraw from that territory.
- In July 2018, Israel passed the **Nation State Basic Law**. (NYT: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/19/world/middleeast/israel-law-jews-arabic.html>) This law legalises apartheid inside Israel, and amongst other things declares that:
  - the State of Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people and only Jews have the right of self-determination in the country
  - Greater and united Jerusalem is the capital of Israel
  - Arabic loses its status as an official language
  - the State shall encourage, promote and establish Jewish settlements.