



Written by [James Murphy](#) on May 10, 2024

UN General Assembly Backs Palestinian Bid to Become a Full Voting Member

On Friday, the United Nations General Assembly [voted in favor](#) of a resolution allowing Palestine to become a full voting member, recognizing its qualifications as a nation-state. Almost three-quarters of the members — 143 nations — voted for the Palestinian bid to join the community of nations and recommended that the Security Council “reconsider the matter favorably.”

Both the United States and Israel were among the nine no votes; 25 other nations abstained.

Palestine has been a “non-member observer” in the UN since 2012, but full membership would give the Palestinians the right to be seated among member states in alphabetical order; give them the ability to submit and introduce proposals and amendments; and grant them “full and effective participation in United Nations conferences and international conferences and meetings convened under the auspices of the General Assembly or, as appropriate, under the auspices of other organs of the United Nations.”



Basil D Soufi/Flickr
UN General Assembly

The United States [made clear](#) why it voted the way it did. “We’ve been very clear from the beginning there is a process for obtaining full membership in the United Nations, and this effort by some of the Arab countries and the Palestinians is to try to go around that,” said U.S. Deputy Ambassador Robert Wood on Thursday. “We have said from the beginning the best way to ensure Palestinian full membership in the U.N. is to do that through negotiations with Israel. That remains our position.”

“There is no other path that guarantees Israel’s security and future as a democratic Jewish state. There is no other path that guarantees Palestinians can live in peace and dignity in a state of their own,” [Wood added](#).

The General Assembly’s vote is strictly advisory, as only the Security Council can grant full membership in the world body. Last month, the United States blocked a similar measure brought forth in the Security Council, and Wood promised further Security Council action would end similarly.

“This resolution does not resolve the concerns about the Palestinian membership application raised in April in the Security Council ... and should the Security Council take up the Palestinian membership



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application as a result of this resolution, there will be a similar outcome,” Wood said.

In April, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas [criticized the U.S.](#), calling its veto “unfair, immoral, and unjustified,” and saying it “defies the will of the international community, which strongly supports the State of Palestine obtaining full membership in the United Nations.”

As for today’s vote, it’s being hailed as a victory for the Palestinian movement despite objections from many nations.

“Such a prospect is unacceptable and Switzerland reaffirms its opposition to such an operation,” said Swiss Ambassador Pascale Baeriswyl, who cited the fact that Palestine is currently involved in a proxy war against Israel via terrorist group Hamas.

“Safety of civilians must be ensured. All hostages must be released immediately and unconditionally. And safe, rapid and unhindered access for humanitarian aid must be allowed via all crossing points,” [she stressed](#).

The U.K. chose to abstain, stating that certain conditions of the current conflict between Hamas and Israel must be sorted out first prior to any discussion of statehood.

“We are abstaining from this resolution because we believe the first step towards achieving this goal is resolving the immediate crisis in Gaza,” said U.K. Ambassador Barbara Woodward. She further stated that the quickest way to get such an action approved was “to secure a deal which gets the hostages out and allows for a pause in the fighting,” adding that “Recognizing a Palestinian State, including at the UN, should be part of that process.”

Prior to the vote, Palestinian UN Ambassador Riyad Mansour [addressed](#) the General Assembly, saying, “We want peace, we want freedom. A yes vote is a vote for Palestinian existence, it is not against any state. ... It is an investment in peace.”

Israel’s representative at the UN, Gilad Erdan spoke after Mansour and had a different take, theatrically shredding a copy of the UN Charter to make his feelings known.

“As long as so many of you are ‘Jew-hating,’ you don’t really care that the Palestinians are not ‘peace-loving’,” Erdan said. “Shame on you.”

The vote comes as several nations are considering recognizing a Palestinian state. Spain has announced that it will recognize Palestine on May 21. Ireland, Slovenia, and Malta have also said they are getting ready to recognize a Palestinian state, but, as of yet, have not said when.



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