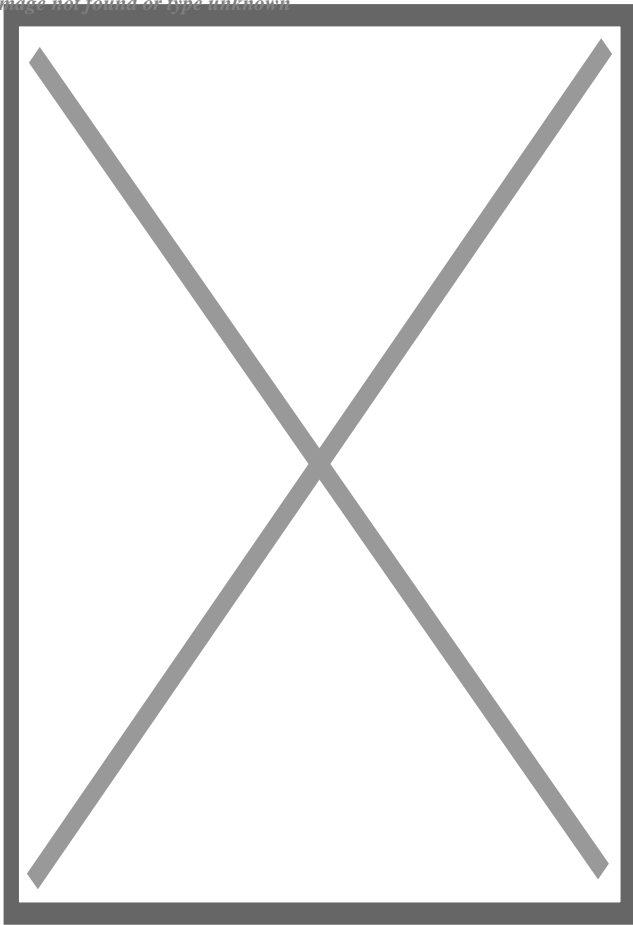


Spanish prime minister says Palestinian state is the only route to peace

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Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez delivers a speech to announce that Spain will recognize Palestine as a state on May 28, at the Congress of Deputies in Madrid on May 22, 2024. THOMAS COEX / AFP

Madrid, May 28 (RHC)-- The establishment of a Palestinian state is "the only route to peace" in the Middle East, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez says. Sanchez spoke on Tuesday before a cabinet vote to

formally recognize a Palestinian state. Ireland and Norway are set to take the same step, provoking fury from Israel.

The Spanish prime minister called the move “a matter of historical justice.” “The only route towards establishing peace is the establishment of a Palestinian state, living side by side with the state of Israel,” he said.

“The state of Palestine must be viable with the West Bank and Gaza connected by a corridor and with East Jerusalem as its capital.”

Madrid will not recognize any changes to pre-1967 borders unless agreed to by both parties, he said. The occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip were among the territory Israel seized in 1967 in the Arab-Israeli War.

The Spanish cabinet certifies the formal recognition after a meeting on Tuesday. Ireland and Norway are expected to follow suit. Malta and Slovenia have also suggested they will take the same step although not immediately.

The leaders of Spain, Ireland, Malta and Slovenia said in March that they were considering recognising a Palestinian state as “a positive contribution” towards ending the war in Gaza, drawing the ire of Israel.

Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz accused Sanchez of being a “partner to incitement” to Jewish “genocide.”

Commenting on X, Katz drew a parallel between Spanish Second Deputy Prime Minister Yolanda Diaz on the one hand and Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and Hamas Gaza chief Yahya Sinwar on the other after her call for a free Palestine “From the river to the sea.”

Spain, Ireland and Norway announced their plan to formally recognise Palestine last week, prompting Israel to recall its ambassadors from all three countries. Palestine has already been recognised by 144 other countries.

Of the 27 members of the European Union, Sweden, Cyprus, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria have already recognised a Palestinian state.

Britain and Australia have said they are considering recognition, but France has said now is not the time while Germany joined Israel’s staunchest ally, the United States, in rejecting a unilateral approach, insisting that a two-state solution can be achieved only through dialogue.

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