

# *Swedish King Congratulates National Day of 'State of Palestine'*

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Stockholm, November 17 (RHC)-- The king of Sweden has congratulated the national day of the "State of Palestine" to become the first European monarch to officially mark the Palestinian 1988 declaration of independence.

"On the occasion of the National Day of the State of Palestine, I wish to convey to your Excellency my best wishes for your health and happiness and for the prosperity of the people of the State of Palestine," King Carl XVI Gustaf wrote in a Saturday letter to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

The Palestinians consider November 15th as their national day after they declared an independent state within the 1967 borders. The letter came days after Sweden became the first major European state to officially recognize Palestine as an independent state amid fury from the Israeli regime over the move.

Sweden has joined 130 other nations, including Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia, that had already made a similar decision. The Israeli regime has been sorely irked by the move.

In response to Sweden's recognition of Palestine, Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said in October that "the Swedish government should understand that Middle East relations are more complex than a piece of self-assembled IKEA furniture, and the matter should be handled with responsibility and sensitivity."

Avigdor's Swedish counterpart Margot Wallstrom was unmoved by the analogy, saying: "I will be happy to send Israel Foreign Minister Lieberman an IKEA flat pack to assemble. He'll see it requires a partner, cooperation and a good manual."

Hugh Lovatt, the Israel/Palestine Project coordinator at European Council on Foreign Relations, said on Friday that more European countries are expected to follow in Sweden's footsteps and recognize Palestine as an independent state.

Lovatt noted that European states are taking a more pro-Palestinian stand as they believe that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is not interested in peace with the Palestinians.

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