



Inter Press Service, By [Thalif Deen](#) June 21, 2024, quoting Dr. Stephen Zunes

A Move to Out-Maneuver US Veto on Palestine

UNITED NATIONS, Jun 21 2024 (IPS) - The United States—which has continued to use its veto power to block Palestine from UN membership —may be out-manuevered by a growing new campaign by some UN member states planning to establish full political and diplomatic relations with Palestine outside the confines of the United Nations.

The latest recognitions of the Palestinian territory as a sovereign State are by Norway, Ireland, Spain and Slovenia, which comes after the General Assembly overwhelmingly voted — with 143 votes in favour to nine votes against- – to back Palestine’s bid to become a full-fledged member of the United Nations on last month.

But, as expected, the resolution before the Security Council was vetoed by the United States last month—and will continue to be vetoed.

Mercifully, the US does not have a veto power to prevent countries from recognizing Palestine as a sovereign nation state, even though it could threaten to cut off economic and military aid, particularly developing nations.

“In the midst of a war, with tens of thousands killed and injured, we must keep alive the only alternative that offers a political solution for Israelis and Palestinians alike: Two states, living side by side, in peace and security,” Norway’s Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre said.

How many of the remaining 24 European Union (EU) member states will follow Ireland, Spain and Slovenia in establishing diplomatic relations with Palestine?

The 24 include: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Sweden.

Stephen Zunes, Professor of Politics and chair of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of San Francisco, told IPS this underscores how, despite the Biden administration’s claims that it supports a two-state solution, it has worked hard to prevent the United Nations from recognizing Palestine.

In addition to vetoing the recent UN Security Council resolution admitted Palestine as a member and voting against the General Assembly resolution to upgrade its status, the United States was one of only two countries in the 47-member UN Human Rights Council to vote against a resolution in early April which **“reaffirmed its support for the solution of two States, Palestine and Israel, living side by side in peace and security.”**

“It has been U.S. policy since 1990 to withdraw funding from any United Nations agency which grants Palestine full member status and the recently passed 2024 Appropriations bill promises to cut all U.S. funding for the Palestinian Authority if “the Palestinians obtain the same standing as member states or full membership as a state in the United Nations or any specialized agency thereof outside an agreement negotiated between Israel and the Palestinians,” he pointed out.

The Biden administration and Congress have long taken the position that Palestinian statehood is only acceptable on terms voluntarily agreed to by Israel in bilateral negotiations.

“However, given how there have been no such negotiations since 2015 and the Israeli government categorically rules out allowing any kind of Palestinian state, this appears to simply be a way of continuing to deny Palestine’s right to self-determination”, declared Zunes.

Among the G20, nine countries Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Turkey have recognized Palestine as a sovereign state.

China, one of the five permanent members of the Security Council has recognized the State of Palestine since 1988 and has declared that it supports Palestine's bid for full UN membership.

Meanwhile, in a statement released June 3, a group of UN human rights experts say, "the State of Palestine was recognized by the vast majority of Member States of the United Nations".

All States must follow the example of the 143 UN Member States, and recognise the State of Palestine, and use all political and diplomatic resources at their disposal to bring about an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the UN experts said.

"This recognition is an important acknowledgement of the rights of the Palestinian people and their struggles and suffering towards freedom and independence," the experts said.

They insisted that Palestine must be able to enjoy full self-determination, including the ability to exist, determine their destiny and develop freely as a people with safety and security.

"This is a pre-condition for lasting peace in Palestine and the entire Middle East – beginning with the immediate declaration of a ceasefire in Gaza and no further military incursions into Rafah," the experts said.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka, a former chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Palestine going back to the 1970s.

Dr Palitha Kohona, former Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the UN, and until recently Ambassador to China, told IPS Sri Lanka has consistently backed the two-state solution to the situation involving Israel and Palestine and to bring peace to the Middle East.

Despite the elimination of the anti-Israeli leaders of Iraq (Saddam Hussein) and Libya (Muammar Gaddafi), the violent changes resulting from the Arab Spring, and the diplomatic efforts at reconciliation between Arab countries and Israel, the situation in the occupied territories remains as dire as ever, he said.

"Consistent with our position", he pointed out, "Sri Lanka was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Palestine with a Palestinian ambassador based in Colombo since 1975 whose costs are met by the Government of Sri Lanka".

Sri Lanka maintains a diplomatic presence in Ramallah with a fully-fledged ambassador, and is also the chair of the "UN Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories",

"During my period as Permanent Representative, we came under intense pressure from Israel to quit as chair of this Committee. Sri Lanka has consistently supported the call for Palestinian statehood at the United Nations," declared Dr Kohona.

Ian Williams, President of the Foreign Press Association, told IPS the Coalition of the Appalled that supports Palestinian membership is more compelling than the US's Coalition of "the willing" that the US dragooned to support its war in Iraq.

A vote on "recognizing" Palestine is as superfluous as a vote on accepting the gravity – it exists! It should be superfluous to counter the arguments of Israel and its supporters but en passant Israel itself has not had accepted boundaries since its admission.

Micronesia, the Marshalls and Palau, consistent supporters of Israel and the US have no real sovereignty over their foreign policy, while US and UK fought hard to maintain "Kampuchean" membership of the UN when Pol Pot controlled a tent in Thailand across the border, said Williams, former president of the UN Correspondents Association (UNCA) and author "The UN For Beginners".

"And many of the Governments who took part in the wartime negotiations on the UN Charter were in exile from their occupied territory. This is not about legal recognition, it is about Palestine, as the ghost of the Naqba, sitting at the table shaking its hoary locks at the Zionist murderers and their accomplices".

Maybe other members should resolve to refuse recognition to the Israeli holders of positions that swell Gilad Erdan's head – like the various vice presidencies and committees or assumed membership of the West European Group that Erdan is so proud of. Time to tweak the desert vulture's feathers, declared Williams.