

EU Nations Push for Bloc's Recognition of State of Palestine

Meanwhile, the US said its ambassador to Israel will lead a U.S.-Israel committee on annexing Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank.

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A group of European Union (EU) countries led by Luxembourg is planning to present Monday to the EU's foreign affairs ministers, an initiative for the recognition of the state of Palestine by the bloc, Haaretz reported Sunday.

Luxembourg's Foreign Affairs Minister **Jean Asselborn** has already discussed the proposal with his counterparts from Ireland, France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, Malta, and Slovenia.

The plan comes as a response to United States **President Donald Trump's** 'peace' deal for the Middle East, which was rejected by the Palestinian Authority (PA), [the Arab league](#) and a large part of the international community.

EU's new Foreign Policy Chief **Josep Borell** had said that Trump's plan questions "the 1967 border, as agreed by both parties, with State of Israel and an independent, viable state of Palestine, living side-by-side in peace, security, and mutual recognition."

According to Haaretz, Israeli ambassadors in Europe were asked to pressure the foreign ministries in the countries where they are set, to not reject Trump's plan.

Nine out of the 28 EU member states recognize Palestine but the bloc as a whole does not.

In 2014, Sweden became the first EU country to recognize Palestine. Malta and Cyprus had recognized Palestine before joining the EU, as did a number of Eastern and Central European states when they were part of the Soviet Union.

However, some of these countries, like the Czech Republic, for instance, have emerged as Israel's closest allies in Europe. Cyprus for its part is not taking part in the current initiative due to the close relations it has developed with Israel.

Israeli **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's** government hopes thus that Europe will not be able to take action. In the past, Eastern and Central European members, led by Hungary, blocked a number of initiatives intended to force Israel to comply with international law and United Nations resolutions. The Jewish state hopes the same thing will happen again this time.

US Ambassador to Lead Israeli Annexing Committee

In the meantime, the U.S. said Sunday that its ambassador to Israel [David Friedman](#) will lead a joint U.S.-Israel committee on annexing Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank.

The committee was announced last month by Trump following the [unveiling](#) of his plan. The White House issued a map detailing the annexations that would leave a fragmented archipelago of Palestinian-controlled zones in the West Bank.

Trump said the committee's objective would be to "convert the conceptual map" into a "more detailed and calibrated rendering so that recognition can be immediately achieved."

According to polls published by Israeli media, most Israelis are in favor of annexing the settlements.

The U.S. proposal for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the product of three years of effort by Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, Jared Kushner. Apart from the annexation of all the settlements in the occupied West Bank, the plan allows Israel to annex the strategic Jordan Valley and grants the Jewish state the whole city of Jerusalem as a capital.

The Palestinians are offered limited self-rule in Gaza, small chunks of the West Bank, a village in the outskirts of Jerusalem as a capital, and some desert areas of Israel, in exchange for complying with a long list of conditions.

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