

Israel Summons Swedish Envoy Over Palestine Recognition

By [Middle East Monitor](#)

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Prime Minister Stefan Lofven [pictured] announced on Friday his intention to recognize Palestine

Israel has summoned the Swedish ambassador to protest plans by Sweden to recognize the state of Palestine.

In a statement, the Israeli Foreign Ministry said that the Swedish envoy has been summoned for a meeting on Monday after Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven announced on Friday his intention to recognize Palestine.

Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said Saturday night that Lofven's announcement was "unfortunate", according to Israeli daily *Yediot Aharonot*.

"Swedish Prime Minister Lofven needs to understand that no declaration and no step by an outside player can replace the direct negotiations between the sides and a solution that will be part of a comprehensive agreement between Israel and the entire Arab world," Lieberman said.

On Friday, Lofven, Sweden's newly elected prime minister, said that he would recognize Palestine as a state, which would make it the first longstanding E.U. member-state to do so.

"The conflict between Israel and Palestine can only be solved with a two-state solution, negotiated in accordance with international law," Lofven told parliament on Friday.

"A two-state solution requires mutual recognition and a will to peaceful coexistence. Sweden will therefore recognize the State of Palestine," he said.

The decision comes less than a month after Sweden's Social Democrats - in alliance with the Greens and the Left Party - swept September 14 parliamentary polls.

A handful of European countries - including Hungary, Poland and Slovakia - have already recognized Palestine as a state. They did so, however, before joining the E.U.

In late 2012, Palestine was granted non-member observer status at the United Nations.

The roots of the Israel-Palestine conflict date back to 1917, when the British government, in the now-famous "Balfour Declaration," called for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people."

Israel occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank during the 1967 Middle East War. It later

annexed the holy city in 1980, claiming it as the capital of the self-proclaimed Jewish state – a move never recognized by the international community.

Palestinians, for their part, continue to demand the establishment of an independent state in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, with East Jerusalem – currently occupied by Israel – as its capital.

British MPs are set to [vote on recognising the State of Palestine on October 13th, 2014](#).

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