

# [***Spain, Norway and Ireland's recognition of a Palestinian state is likely to have little impact on Israel***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C34-B9P1-DY7V-G10J-00000-00&context=1516831)

CNN Wire

May 22, 2024 Wednesday 12:03 PM GMT

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**Length:** 598 words

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**Dateline:** (CNN)

**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; Europe has struggled over the Middle East for a very long time.

The decision by Ireland, Spain and Norway to [*recognize a Palestinian state*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/22/middleeast/palestinian-statehood-spain-norway-ireland-intl/index.html) tells us more about the domestic ***politics*** of those countries than anything else.

Obviously, the decision of three European nations to take this step is newsworthy and will have repercussions diplomatically, perhaps putting pressure on their allies to take a firmer stance on the Israel-Hamas conflict.

However, it is also reasonable to say that thus far, no amount of pressure from even the US has had a major impact on the thinking of [*Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/21/middleeast/israel-netanyahu-interview-icc-intl-latam/index.html). Israel responded by recalling the ambassadors of the three countries, accusing them of rewarding terror with the decision.

Conversations about what recognition of statehood practically means and how helpful it is to the Palestinian cause in the long run are all entirely valid. But the reality is that the stakes are quite low for the majority of European countries when it comes to issues relating to Israel and the Palestinians.

In Ireland, Spain and Norway, support for a Palestinian state chimes with the broader electorate and is unlikely to receive any political blowback. That isn't necessarily the case in other European countries. While supporting a peaceful two-state solution in the long-term, Germany has been consistent in its support for Israel, as have Hungary, Poland, the UK and others.

The main consequence of this is military support, which inevitably raises questions about complicity in the war against Hamas - namely weapons being used to kill civilians. The UK government is currently under pressure to publish legal advice on whether or not selling arms to Israel falls foul of international law.

But these are largely domestic issues. For a long time, European governments have mostly considered the Middle East - especially Israel - to be something that the US deals with, in part due to the US's military operations in the region.

European countries simply do not have a huge amount of influence in this area. The Middle East was not something that dominated European thinking in a major way until the fallout from the Arab Spring led to an enormous influx of migrants into continental Europe. Aside from the practical implications of mass migration, it also presented a security risk, with terror groups hiding among refugees and carrying out atrocities across the continent.

That isn't to say Europeans didn't care about the Middle East, specifically the Palestinian cause. Large sections of Ireland are supportive of Palestine due to its own history of occupation, while Norway mediated the famous [*Oslo accords.*](https://www.cnn.com/2013/09/03/world/meast/oslo-accords-fast-facts/index.html)

The European Union has historically sent huge amounts of humanitarian aid into Palestinian territories and supported a two-state solution. Indeed, the European Commission responded to Wednesday's news: "The European Union has a long-standing commitment to the vision of an independent and sovereign state of Palestine, living side by side with Israel in peace and security."

Whether this pushes any kind of peace process along or not remains to be seen. This is not a coordinated European effort. Norway is not a member of the EU and the idea that 27 member states would all be willing to go as far as Ireland and Spain seems extremely unlikely. Yes, it might put pressure on bigger players to take a stand. But Europe doesn't speak with one voice and is unlikely to any time soon.

Analysis by Luke McGee, CNN

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**Load-Date:** May 22, 2024

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