

Recognition of Palestine: Proactive Release

Date: 13 November 2025

The **scope** of this proactive release is:

- **Key advice:** Substantive guidance or recommendations provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs that directly inform the final advice provided to the Minister/ Cabinet. This includes formal briefing, submissions, informal notes, talking points and any Cabinet material sent between MFAT and our Ministers' offices. Routine updates, administrative information or duplicated information is not included.
- **Key correspondence:** Substantive communications between the Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and MFAT that directly inform or reflect decision-making, regarding policy development. This includes emails generated in relation to the development of advice on the recognition of Palestine between MFAT and Ministers' offices. This does not include administrative emails (e.g. emails that are organising meeting times).

Some parts of this information release would not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Where this is the case, the relevant sections of the Act that would apply have been identified. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Key to redaction codes:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis;
- 9(2)(a): to protect individuals' privacy;
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments;
- 9(2)(g)(ii): to protect officers and employees from improper pressure or harassment;
- 9(2)(f)(iv): the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials; and,
- 9(2)(h): to maintain legal professional privilege.

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Thursday, 7 August 2025 9:34 am
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc:

From MFAT secondee to
MFA Office to MFAT

Subject: RE: Palestine: Updated informal note on recognition [SEC=RESTRICTED]
Attachments: Informal Note - Israel-Palestine - New Zealand's approach - August 2025.pdf
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

As lodged version attached. Thanks again for all the work that went into this, s9(2)(g)(ii) and colleagues.

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Thursday, 7 August 2025 6:52 AM
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT to
MFAT secondee in
MFA Office

Subject: RE: Palestine: Updated informal note on recognition [SEC=RESTRICTED]

[SEEMAIL] [RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

Thanks for the ongoing work on this s9(2)(g)(ii)

I've included an updated version that incorporates your changes and a couple of refinements from us mindful of your point about wanting this note to be MFAT's scoping of the issue. Where I've altered your suggestions to moved them, I've left a comment explaining the rational.

Happy to discuss this morning if helpful.

Thanks,

s9(2)(g)(i)

RESTRICTED

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Wednesday, August 6, 2025 3:04 PM
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT secondee to
MFA Office to MFAT

Subject: RE: Palestine: Updated informal note on recognition [SEC=RESTRICTED]

Thanks s9(2)(g)

I think we are almost there! I have done a further edit, again through a lens of simplifying complex issues. This has allowed me space to add back in the division signature. We do want this paper to be considered an information paper from MFAT which simply scopes the issue, as opposed to MFA's blueprint for what the final answer to the question should be ... which is what his FPS paper of next month will do. Hope that makes sense.

Please find attached a further (final) iteration of this paper. I would appreciate you undertaking one final review / proofread and checking MFAT comfort with its content ... and then send back to me by 10am tomorrow. We will then proceed to lodge with Cabinet Office.

Best,

s9(2)(g)(ii)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

s9(2)(g)(ii) | Office of Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs | Minister for Racing | Minister for Rail

s9(2)(a)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

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From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Wednesday, 6 August 2025 11:48 AM
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT to MFAT
secondee in MFA
Office

Subject: Palestine: Updated informal note on recognition [SEC=RESTRICTED]

[SEEMAIL] [RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

Hi s9(2) ,
Thanks for your feedback and edits. We have accepted almost all of them, and in the couple of instances where we have suggested changes I've left a comment to explain why. We have also add some additional context about the role of Steve Witkoff, and suggested a sentence at the beginning of the New Zealand's drivers section to emphasis that this decision is ultimately a political one and thus appropriate for the cabinet paper that the paper is now proposing.

Reflecting that this is now a note for MFA to send his colleagues rather than MFAT's advice to MFA, I've removed the division signature. This also avoids breaking onto a further page.

Regarding MFA's question of what entity, we are being asked to recognise, we will ensure this is well addressed in the cabinet paper, being clear that the question of state recognition (including whether it has a government) is separate from recognising whether a government is the legitimate representative of a people.

Thanks,

s9(2)(g)(ii)

RESTRICTED

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Tuesday, August 5, 2025 11:41 AM
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT secondee
to MFA Office to MFAT

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Subject: Israel-Palestine: Cabinet process on recognition s6(a)

Hi s9(2)(g)

Thanks for the work to date on this note. It's looking good.

(I am copying my reply to s9(2)(g), so that he can see – perhaps on his flight home from PNG tomorrow – how this is tracking.)

Pleased find attached some suggested tracked changes for your consideration. These reflect a combination of:

- Using simpler/less technical language as many Cabinet Ministers will have no background on these quite complex issues;
- Providing what MFA would consider “balance” in some sections s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)
- Laying out a clearer indication of where MFA wants to go, process-wise, after the oral item discussion next Monday.

s9(2)(g)(i)

This will mean taking a paper to FPS on 9 September and then the full Cabinet on 15 September. I have written this into the informal note. (I will ask s9(2)(g) to come back to MEA separately with a timeline for the production of this paper.)

I would appreciate you taking a look at what I have done, and spending the next 24 hours updating/tweaking the paper, so you can send me an updated version midday tomorrow. This is to enable us to lodge with Cabinet Office on Thursday.

s6(b)(i)

In terms of MFA's response, he indicated that it was not a straightforward issue for the New Zealand Government. Our government was a coalition made up of three political parties, which had varying views on Israel/Palestine issues. It was therefore important that he run a conventional Cabinet process, s9(2)(g)(i) MFA also repeated s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i) including that it remained very unclear what entity we were being asked to recognise – and what sort of legitimacy it had – and that recognition was something that “can only be done once” so timing was important, in order to maximise the impact of movement.

(AUS: please share with CBA as appropriate, and ensure that briefing for the PM for this weekend reflects the above.)

Best

s9(2)(g)(i)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Office of Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs | Minister for Racing | Minister for Rail

s9(2)(a)
s9(2)(g)(ii)

Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

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From: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT to MFAT
seconded in MFA Office

[SEEMAIL] [RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

Resend at appropriate classification

RESTRICTED

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Sent: Monday, August 4, 2025 3:14 PM

To: ... s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT to MFAT
seconded in MFA Office

Subject: Informal Note - Israel-Palestine - New Zealand's approach to recognition of Palestine

s9(2)(g)(ii)
Hi

Please find attached the requested note on New Zealand's approach to the recognition of Palestine. As discussed with s9(2)(a)(ii) it is regrettably over the three pages we discussed. The length is required to address all the topics identified in s9(2)(g) structure, and subsequent emails, for an audience broader than MFA.

We have formatted it as an aide memoire but do let us know if a different format is preferred.

Happy to discuss.

Thanks,

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Middle East and Africa Division
New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

s9(2)(a)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

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From:
Sent: Monday, 11 August 2025 10:43 am
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT to MFAT secondees
in MFA Office

Cc:

Subject:

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

s9(2)(g)(ii) **thanks for your message just now. We will take a look. Meanwhile we had in parallel worked up the below to form the basis of the TPs you and s9(2)(g)(ii) requested as agreed points for 1pm today. s9(2) is bringing these to OMC now. We will tweak as necessary after OMC. Cheers,** s9(2)(g)(ii)

Proactive messaging (TPs or elements of a statement)

- New Zealand is a longstanding supporter of the two-state solution.
- We have been clear and consistent that Palestinian statehood is a question of when, not if.
- We have been waiting and hoping that agreement between Israel and Palestine would lead to a Palestinian state. That would have been the best outcome. But that hasn't happened.
- The current Israeli Government has passed a resolution opposing creation of a Palestinian state and the two state solution. PM Netanyahu has explicitly acknowledged that he "will not compromise full Israeli security control over the oPt", that "sovereign power will need to remain in Israeli hands" and that "this is contrary to a Palestinian state".
- Decades of failure to find a solution, compounded by what we are now seeing in Gaza, has demonstrated we have to find a different way forward.
- This includes whether the time is now right to recognise a Palestinian state, while working with the international community to maintain the safeguards necessary for a two-state solution.
- New Zealand is ready to be part of this discussion. Cabinet [will begin discussing / began discussing] this today.
- There are complex issues involved here, and it is not something we intend to rush.
- These include whether there is sufficient support, in Palestine and internationally, for a future Palestine to succeed as a state.
- A Palestinian state is going to require real reform by the Palestinian authority, and support from the international community to strengthen the key elements of statehood.
- We will also look closely at the region's views, and what timing would best support wider regional security.
- As a friend of Israel, we also want to be confident that there are meaningful steps in place to safeguard Israel's security.
- And it must be clear that Hamas can have no role in future political arrangements. A more functional and resilient state will be better able to resist groups like Hamas
- This is a complex discussion and we are taking it very seriously.
- We are discussing it with partners, and with the region. It will take time to decide what direction is right for New Zealand.

Possible Q and A:

Why are you doing this now?

- We have not taken a decision yet. However, while Israel is an important friend and partner to New Zealand, we can't wait any longer for it to support a Palestinian state. And we are very concerned by the Israeli government's steps to undermine one. We have had wars in this region for decades and something needs to change to break the current cycle of violence and failed negotiations.

What would it take for New Zealand to recognise?

- s9(2)(g)(i)
- We want to discuss what options we think will give the best chance to support a long-term sustainable peace in the region.
- We need to be clear whether recognizing now is best way for us to contribute to this, given the current circumstances, or whether there are other alternatives at this point.
- As a friend of Israel, we also want to be confident that there are meaningful steps in place to safeguard Israel's security.
- We need to be clear that Hamas can have no future role in future political arrangements.
- We also want to understand the region's views, and whether recognition could support wider regional security.
- This is a complex discussion. We are taking it very seriously. It will take time.

The UK, Canada [and Australia?] have already announced they intend to recognise. Is New Zealand isolated on this one now?

- We are in active discussions with all our partners. We are taking decisions in our own time, which is entirely appropriate. New Zealand needs to follow its own cabinet processes, which we are doing.
- Moreover, unlike those states, New Zealand doesn't normally make statements of recognition. Instead, recognition is inferred through our actions. We need to think through the precedents.
- Changing this approach isn't something we have wanted to rush into.

What would have to change for us to follow the UK, Canada [and Australia]?

- For New Zealand, recognizing Palestine has always been a question of when not if.
- Our focus has been on recognizing when doing so is most likely to contribute to a two-state solution. Cabinet will be looking at whether we are now at that point.
- I expect this will include whether the key elements of statehood are in place, or are being sufficiently developed, for a future Palestinian state to succeed and for Israeli security to be supported. We will look at the commitments already made by the Palestinian Authority, as well as responses from the broader region.
- We also need to make our own assessments of whether recognition now would help shift the dynamics in the wider region.

You have previously said you were looking at whether Palestine could govern itself, what's changed?

- The Palestinian Authority has made a number of commitments, which are very welcome.

- In discussions with key partners in recent days we have become more confident that with support the Palestinian Authority can reform and renew itself into a more functional and viable government for Palestinians.
- But we need to be realistic about the challenges they are facing, including the fact that Gaza is an active war zone.

If New Zealand doesn't normally recognise states, how will you recognise Palestine if you decide to?

- The practice of not making statements of recognition is a preference and our longstanding practice. But we take pragmatic decisions on a case by case basis so we do have the option to make a formal statement of recognition if we so choose. In an exceptional case like this the government could decide to announce recognition. Or we could continue with our existing practice and simply take steps that would allow recognition to be inferred through our actions, such as accrediting the Palestinian representative as an Ambassador.

s6(a)

- New Zealand's approach is not determined by the US, Israel, or any other partner. New Zealand's approach is determined by a long standing set of principles developed over a number of years. Our position has been clear and consistent for decades. This includes our unwavering support for a two state solution and the upholding of international law.

s6(a)

- Our policy is determined by a long standing set of principles guiding MEPP issues, not individual bilateral relationships. We have been guided by steady and consistent implementation of these principles for decades. This has enabled us to maintain a balanced, principled, and credible approach, grounded in international law.

s6(a)

Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Monday, August 11, 2025 10:29 AM
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Cc: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Subject: Palestine: recognition: possible MFA PR this afternoon
Importance: High

Hi team,

Please find attached a press release that MFA is considering putting out after the Cabinet discussion on Palestinian recognition this afternoon. s9(2)(g)(i)

I'd welcome feedback on this by midday please, noting that I really only want reactions to material you consider inaccurate – because MFA has already approved this

Best

s9(2)(g)(ii)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Office of Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs | Minister for Racing | Minister for Rail

s9(2)(a)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

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From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Saturday, 16 August 2025 8:56 am
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc:

From MFAT to MFAT
seconded in MFA Office

Subject: Palestine Recognition: Draft Cab Paper Purpose, Summary, and Recs [SEC=RESTRICTED]
Attachments: Palestine - Cabinet Paper Purpose Summary and Recs.docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

[RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

Good Morning s9(2)(g)(ii)

As requested, attached are the purpose, executive summary, and recommendations of our draft cabinet paper. I've left out the core sections of the body, which we are drafting now, as they remain a work in progress. If it would be helpful to see the direction of those sections I can share them but they are not yet in a coherent narrative. We will be working on pulling it all together today and tomorrow, so feedback welcome.

Thanks,
s9(2)(g)(ii)

RESTRICTED

Proposal

- 1 That New Zealand recognise the existence of the State of Palestine; and that New Zealand announce its recognition of Palestine during the United Nation's High-Level Week, beginning 22 September.

Executive Summary

- 2 The tide of international thinking on Palestinian statehood has shifted markedly in response to Hamas' terrorist attack of 7 October and Israel's ensuing response. Recognition of a state that cannot, under occupation, meet the common tests for recognition is unorthodox. However, Israel's actions are rapidly extinguishing any prospect of realising a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. This leaves recognition of Palestine as the only viable option to maintain New Zealand's long-standard support for a two-state solution.
- 3 This is the view of our closest international partners, s6(a), s6(b)(i)

. But with Israel's words and deeds eroding the viability of a two-state solution by the day, they have been compelled to view recognition as a protector of that outcome, not a consequence of it. They see recognition as the best available tool to isolate Hamas, and to build a Palestinian leadership that will engage seriously with Israel and provide it the necessary security guarantees. In taking this position, they join 147 other states, which have already recognised Palestine.
- 4 Recognition would not be without risk. Israel and the US are opposed to recognition, and Hamas is attempting to claim recognition as a victory. But these risks s6(a)

must be seen in the wider threat of the extinguishing of hope that a Palestinian State will ever be realised, despite the founding of Israel being predicated on the establishment of an Arab state side-by-side with Israel. Prime Minister Netanyahu has openly acknowledged that for Israel such an outcome means perpetual occupation and conflict.
- 5 Israel argues that recognition of Palestine would reward Hamas for terrorism. This argument s6(a) conflates Hamas with the Palestinian Authority. Like our partners who are moving to recognise Palestine, Arab states in the region argue for recognition as a means to isolate and end the threat of Hamas. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Recognition is also the pre-requisite for key states s6(a) to engage with the US led Abraham Accords, aimed at normalising relations and building security guarantees for Israel. Recognition is consistent with our support for the rules-based order, and a clear statements of principle on issues of international law and human rights.
- 6 New Zealand deciding not to join those recognising Palestine risks being seen as tacitly endorsing Israel's illegal acts. Leaving us in the company of an ever-reducing set of countries. Our partners across ASEAN and the Middle East

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

are almost

universally in favour of recognition.

Recommendations

The Minister for Foreign Affairs recommends that the Committee:

- 1 Note New Zealand's approach to the Israel-Palestine conflict is grounded in support for a two-state solution to the conflict, the need for a negotiated solution, Israel's right to exist in peace and security, the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and respect for international law.
- 2 Note that actions by Hamas and the Israeli government are deliberately undermining prospects for a negotiated solution and the viability of a Palestinian state.
- 3 Note that New Zealand has a pragmatic approach to state recognition, with decisions on recognition made on a case-by-case basis.
- 4 Note that key partners, s6(a) have reassessed their approach to recognition in order to protect and reset a path to a two-state solution, and to build an alternative to Hamas.
- 5 Agree recognition of Palestine is in NZ's foreign policy interests and is consistent with the longstanding principles that have guided NZ's approach to the Middle East.
- 6 Agree to recognise the State of Palestine predicated on the commitments to reform made by the Palestinian Authority, and the international support to ensure these commitments are delivered upon. s6(a)
- 7 Agree that the Minister of Foreign Affairs will announce New Zealand's recognition of Palestine at the United Nations in the week of 22 September.

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Saturday, 16 August 2025 9:27 am
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc:

From MFAT secondee in MFA Office to MFAT

Subject:

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Thanks s9(2)(g) Appreciate the thinking and writing that's going into this. Helpful to have MFAT's proposed direction of advice clearly laid out at a high level.

s9(2)(g)(i)

-the drafting is going to be an iterative and crowd sourced effort, with inputs from OMFA, s9(2)(g)(ii) DPMC as well as MFAT - as we seek to respond to / reflect events (internationally and within our government) that are happening during the drafting process and to generate a paper that MFA is happy to take to FPS (and thus reflects his views of the contours of the issue) and that we judge has some chance of proceeding through Cabinet; and

-the Ministerial / inter-party consultation is s9(2)(g)(i)

to hone a policy proposal which we hope might be broadly acceptable to Cabinet.

Another complication s9(2)(g)(ii) and I have is that this coming week is a sitting week ... but the two weeks following it are recess weeks. So, this coming week is going to be super important in terms of making progress on this issue before the politicians scatter.

Given all of that, I am expecting to do some drafting work this weekend (starting this afternoon) as I prepare for my first conversation on Monday with OMFA colleagues / MFA about direction of travel. I'd therefore welcome seeing whatever you've drafted in terms of the body of the paper by 2pm today.

I'll then come back to you before the end of the weekend with where I've got to.

s9(2)(g)(i)

Best
s9(2)(g)(ii)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Office of Rt Hon Winston Peters

New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs

Phone/WhatsApp: s9(2)(a)

Duplicate email chain removed

Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

s9(2)(g)(ii)

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Saturday, 16 August 2025 10:24 am
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc:
Subject: Cabinet Paper Exec Summary Dot Points sent to s9(2)(g)(ii) [SEC=RESTRICTED]
Attachments: Cabinet Paper Exec Summary Dot Points sent to docx
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

[RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

Hi s9(2)(g)(ii)

Per your separate email, attached is a copy of a longer form version that we sent to s9(2)(g)(ii) yesterday. This was refined into the executive summary that you received this morning.

This material is what we are now expanding into the fuller cabinet paper. That fuller draft is a bit chaotic right now, full of raw material and place holders. So we are sharing this with you in the hope that it provides a good sense of the direction of our core argument.

I'm going to continue to work on the substance, so if as you sit down to draft there if there are specific questions you want addressed its likely we have material that does that, just in a rough form.

s9(2)(g)(ii)

RESTRICTED

Executive Summary

In 1947 a UN Special Committee recommended partitioning Palestine into two independent states. One would be Jewish, and one Palestinian, with Jerusalem to be administered by the UN. This plan formed the basis for a UN resolution, which New Zealand supported. The plan was also supported by Jewish leaders at the time. The resolution provided the foundation of New Zealand's approach to the region. It also provided international legitimacy for the creation of the state of Israel, but the Palestinian state that it proposed has never been created.

The conflict that has beset the region since 1947 has further complicated the situation. In the decades since, Israel has expanded its territory beyond the borders set out in the original plan. It now occupies or controls several areas originally allocated to the Palestinian state, including Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem [see map]. Since the mid 2000s Hamas has been the dominant force in Gaza, with the West Bank continuing to be run by the internationally recognised Palestinian Authority. The international community has tried several times to bring Israelis and Palestinians to the table to negotiate a peace deal, without success. A deal would require agreement on a number of complex issues including: the borders of a Palestinian state, how to deal with refugees and displaced persons, the future of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and how to guarantee Israel's security.

New Zealand's long-standing approach to the conflict in the Middle East has been grounded in five key points. The first, underpinned by the 1947 plan, is the need for there to be a two-state solution to the conflict, with Israelis and Palestinians living side by side in peace. The second is an understanding that negotiations would be required to reach a peace deal. The third, that Israel has a right to exist in peace and security. The fourth, the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. The fifth, respect for international law. As such, we have sought to take a balanced approach to the conflict in the Middle East.

Hamas's terrorist attack on Israel of 7 October 2023 profoundly disrupted any peace process, reshaped regional dynamics, and led to more polarised and strongly held views in the region. In response, Israel launched a military campaign focused on dismantling Hamas in Gaza. It has restricted the flow of humanitarian aid entering Gaza. It has also accelerated the process of constructing Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and publicly rejected the prospect of a Palestinian state. This includes the August announcement to separate the West Bank into smaller parts, divided by Israeli settlements, in the words of the Israeli Minister of Defence "to bury the idea of a Palestinian State". It has refused to release tax revenues to the Palestinian Authority, making it unable to govern effectively in the areas it still controls. Israel's actions in occupying Palestinian territories have been deemed unlawful by the International Court of Justice. In sum, Israel has undermined the territorial integrity needed for a Palestinian state, reduced the capacity of the Palestinian Authority to present itself as a viable government; and reduced any scope for discussions or negotiations. These actions have undermined the prospects for a two-state solution, and the foundations of New Zealand's current approach to the Middle East conflict. There is no peace process under way, nor any hope of one.

This has prompted a change in position by many international partners. Already 147 member states of the United Nations recognise Palestine, including China, India, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Ireland, Norway, and Türkiye. Prompted by Israel's actions to undermine the two-state solution, by the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and by the more recent announcements by the Israeli Government of further military action in Gaza, the UK, France, Canada, and Australia have now also announced that they will recognise Palestine. The purpose of this recognition is to prevent the prospect of Palestinian state from disappearing, and to build a strengthened and reformed Palestinian Authority that will respect Israel's needs and provide a clear alternative to the terrorists of Hamas. Recognition is also intended to draw in the wider region, who say recognition is a pre-requisite for them to recognise Israel (through the US led Abraham accords). This would in turn provide security guarantees for Israel through regional integration. The Palestinian Authority, with strong support from the region, has already made a set of commitments on this, including unequivocal opposition to Hamas having a role in government, demilitarisation of a future Palestinian state, commitments to reform and hold elections, and willingness to conclude a peace agreement with Israel. In choosing to recognise a Palestinian state now, these international

partners aim to build momentum that would push the key players back to the negotiating table, for the first time since the Oslo Accords were negotiated in the 1990s.

There are strong reasons for New Zealand to support this approach. A negotiated peace deal is the only option to stop the conflict in the region, but there will be no prospect of this unless the international community intervenes to create a new way forward. Without that the counterfactual is likely to be a further deterioration in the conflict and the end of any prospect for a two state solution. In addition, we would not want to see a negotiation with the current players in the region, as that would include Hamas, in the absence of a strong Palestinian alternative. This approach aims to support the moderate voices for peace in the region, undermine extremism, and remove Hamas from power in Gaza. It would do so by strengthening the Palestinian Authority, as the de facto government of Palestine. This approach would also accord with the principles that have historically underpinned our approach to the Middle East.

The approach has strong regional support, including from the Gulf countries, particularly Saudi Arabia. The Arab League has called on Hamas to end its rule in Gaza and surrender its weapons to the Palestinian Authority. s6(a)

In recent weeks, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar, s6(a)
have issued Ministerial statements welcoming New Zealand's consideration of this issue. s6(b)(i)

There is also a risk that New Zealand will be isolated if we do not move with the tide of international thinking on this issue. New Zealand has always been known for taking a balanced and constructive position on Middle East issues. The countries we usually work with on Middle East issues have now all changed their approach, including France, Australia, Canada, and the UK. These are the partners with whom we have made frequent statements on the conflict, including jointly by our Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers. s6(a)

The approach of recognising Palestine would also come with risks, s6(a)
Israel has made strong statements against the recent announcements by Australia and others. The US has also. s6(a)
Moving together as part of a coordinated international effort will reduce our risk.

While there are customary international legal principles that help to define the key elements of statehood, recognition is primarily a political rather than a legal matter. The situation in the Middle East is uniquely complicated, and there are no clear precedents to deal with a case where the state is under occupation. In terms of how to recognise, New Zealand has full flexibility. Our current practice is to take a case by case and pragmatic approach. In most circumstances we allow the recognition of states to be inferred through our actions, such as accrediting an ambassador rather than making statements. s6(a)
s6(a)
We also have the option of making an explicit statement, where that has particular value.

In this case, New Zealand would make the greatest contribution to supporting the two state solution by making an explicit commitment to recognition, which could be made at the UN General Assembly in September. Like s6(a)
in order to put maximum pressure on the Palestinian Authority New Zealand should note, that recognition is based on these commitments, as well as ongoing international support, and that the practical implementation of our recognition (e.g. an accreditation of an ambassador and our level of support and engagement with the Palestinian Authority) will be tied to progress on these commitments.

Recommendations
Duplicate material removed

Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Saturday, 16 August 2025 1:29 pm
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc:

From MFAT to MFAT secondee
in MFA Office

Subject: Palestine Recognition: Draft Cab Paper at 1330 16 August [SEC=RESTRICTED]
Attachments: Recognition Cabinet Paper August 2025.docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

[RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

Hi s9(2)

Attached is where our draft currently stands. As outlined below, beyond the executive summary we have added in substance, but it does not yet form a narrative, is very unpolished, and it needs revision to language more appropriate for a Cabinet paper. Which is to say significant work remains to be done. In normal times I would continue working on this and submit a completed and polished draft next week, but as you say these are unusual circumstances. I will leave this with you for now and if you wish to discuss please give me a call s9(2)(g)(ii)

Thanks,

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Duplicate email chain removed

Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Saturday, 16 August 2025 5:01 pm
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc:

From MFAT secondee in MFA
Office to MFAT

Subject:
Attachments: Palestine - Cabinet Paper Proposal and Recs - from OMFA.docx
Importance: High
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

s9(2)(g)(ii)
Hi

Thanks again for sending this all over.

s6(a)

If he is to take a recognition proposal to Cabinet, it is going to need to be s9(2)(g)(i) different s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

At the moment, I am less focused on the body of the paper/argumentation – and more focused on how to s9(2)(f)(iv) and what the actual recommendations in the Cabinet paper would be.

I have therefore written the recommendations out in much greater detail than they may ultimately appear in the paper (and to reflect the points I made about MFA views above) s9(2)(g)(i)

My hope is that if/once we have agreement from MFA to what the recommendations should be, then the paper itself can be developed/massaged to reflect that. Anyway, take a look at what I have drafted, and see what you think.

I am interested in MFAT's view on whether how I have framed our possible recognition of the state of Palestine (but constraining engagement with the government of Palestine) would be tenable/coherent – and if not what we'd need to change about it to make it tenable/coherent.

Happy to discuss over the phone if that's easier than coming back in writing.

Warm regards

s9(2)
/s/

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Office of Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs | Minister for Racing | Minister for Rail

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Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Sunday, 17 August 2025 11:41 am
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc:

From MFAT secondee in
MFA Office to MFAT

Subject: RE: Palestine Recognition: Cabinet Paper recommendations
Attachments: Palestine - Cabinet Paper Proposal and Recs - from OMFA.docx
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Thanks s9(2)(g)(ii)

Please work through/provide comment on the attached, revised version.

My edits today:

- Seek to reflect s9(2)(g)(ii) feedback;
- Anticipate MFA's focus on calling out Hamas' 7 October attacks/hostage taking; and
- Make clear that we are not winding back our current engagement settings with the Palestinian Authority; rather, we are retaining current engagement settings with the PA whilst recognising the State of Palestine.

Best

s9(2)(g)(ii)

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Sunday, 17 August 2025 11:13 AM
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT to MFAT
secondee in MFA Office

Cc: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Subject: RE: Palestine Recognition: Cabinet Paper recommendations

[SEEMAIL] [RESTRICTED]

Hi s9(2)(g)(ii)

Thanks for your message. s9(2)(g) are in the office now working through this. We will come back to you (and legal) with some considered thoughts over the course of today.

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Duplicate email chain removed

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Sunday 17 August 2025 5:27 pm
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc:
Subject:
Attachments: Copy for s9(2)(g)(ii) MEA table with cabinet paper recommendation comments as at Sunday 17 August.docx; Palestine - Cabinet Paper Proposal and Recs - MEA comments on OMFA draft.docx; What is the PA.docx
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi s9(2)(g)(ii) (and all)

Many thanks for sending through your updated draft recs. A lot of work in there!

MEA has had a good look at these. In order to be as helpful as possible (I hope) we have put together a table with comments on each recommendation where we have suggestions. The table:

- Sets out what we think the objective is (or should be) and any relevant information we need to consider
- Identifies any fishhooks
- Suggests an approach
- Provides draft alternate language where relevant

I am also attaching your document with MEA's suggested alternatives added in red. I didn't do in track changes as thought it would be too hard to make a comparison. Sorry this doesn't yet reflect s9(2)(g)(ii) suggestions (just to hand, but which align with what we were trying to get at slightly less eloquently.)

Two overarching comments:

1. MEA continues to strongly recommend full recognition without conditions. s9(2)(g)(i) want to make this point clearly in the interests of free and frank advice. Our concern is that the application of conditions or partial implementation/roll out of recognition risks undermining the overarching purpose of recognition. This approach would also be difficult to implement and would be difficult for the international community (and the NZ public) to understand. The messaging would be complex and open to misinterpretation and potential manipulation s6(a)
2. In the event that s9(2)(g)(i) , MEA recommends that Ministers still be given both options, that is, the option of 'clean' recognition (as per our draft proposals of 16 August) as well as the second option, with our proposed amendments.

Finally, I'm also attaching a handy note s9(2)(g)(ii) has put together on the different actors in Palestine (the PA, PLO, Fatah etc) which you might find helpful s9(2)(g)(i)

We are on standby to talk all and any of this through. We have tried our best to give effect to what might help get things over the line for you without creating a different set of problems. Not easy and no doubt this will require a few more iterations. As you say, a messy week ahead. But a fascinating one ☺

Talk soon
s9(2)(g)(ii)

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Sunday, August 17, 2025 4:30 PM
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT to MFAT
seconded in MFA Office

Cc: ... s9(2)(g)(ii)

Subject: RE: Palestine Recognition: Cabinet Paper recommendations

Hi s9(2)(g)(ii)

Thanks for circulating the updated paper. I would suggest you think about adding the following at para 4:
s9(2)(h)

Thanks again
s9(2)(g)(ii)

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Sunday, August 17, 2025 11:47 AM
To: ... s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT to MFAT
seconded in MFA Office

Cc: ... s9(2)(g)(ii)

Subject: RE: Palestine Recognition: Cabinet Paper recommendations

Thanks s9(2) That takes care of my key concern that we would unintentionally wind back our existing engagement. We also need to be very careful about s9(2)(g)(i)

. We are working through our set of responses and will revert later this afternoon. Cheers, s9(2)(g)(ii)

Duplicate email chain removed

Recommendation	Our objectives	Fishhooks	Proposed approach	Proposed alternate MEA language
Proposal	Send a clear international signal that New Zealand believes Palestinian statehood must be preserved, is legitimate and that we recognise a Palestinian state.	Lack of clarity about whether or not we are recognising	Make a clear statement that New Zealand recognises the State of Palestine. Frame any qualification in the positive (eg practical implementation of our recognition will be tied to progress on key commitments made by the Palestinian Authority and the international community) without listing specific conditions.	That New Zealand recognise the State of Palestine, and that practical implementation of our recognition will be tied to progress on key commitments made by the Palestinian Authority and the international community. [Ideally it would be good to also include a flavour of the core reasons here if not too long ie. protect a path to a two-state solution, build alternative Palestinian leadership to Hamas, and prevent the current Israeli Government and Hamas from achieving their stated aims of destroying all prospects for a two-state solution.]
1.	Ground our approach in the 1947 commitments to a two state solution. Ensure NZ's position reflects that Palestine was originally promised 45% of the previous territory of British mandated Palestine, but given Israel's occupation of greater territory since 1967, is now seeking just 23%.	Avoid framing that suggests parity or equivalence of behaviour with respect to the territorial and sovereignty claims (i.e that <i>both</i> sides have tried to take more than was agreed).	Make a more general statement noting that the unresolved partition of Palestine in 1947 to create a Jewish and Palestinian state has resulted in decades of war, suffering and instability.	Note that the unresolved partition of Palestine in 1947, aimed at creating a Jewish and Palestinian state, has resulted in more than 80 years of war, suffering and instability.
4.	Ensuring clarity that recognition is ultimately a political decision and not a legal one. Being clear that the Montevideo Convention is not a set of hard and fast rules but is simply a part of customary international law along with a whole lot of other (more inherently political) things. Being clear that the MV criteria have not been heavily weighted by others in making this decision.	Suggesting there is a legal definition or algorithm that provides a clearcut tool to measure whether or not Palestine qualifies for statehood.	Avoid overemphasising Montevideo convention, instead focusing on their use as guidelines internationally.	Note that the international consideration of statehood draws in part on the Montevideo Convention of 1933, which lists: a permanent population; a defined territory; a government; and the capacity to enter relations with other states [as part of what is ultimately a political decision?].
9	Be clear that there is now a very high risk that a Palestinian state may shortly not be viable.			Note that as a result of these extremist ideologies and recent actions such as the extension of settlements, forced displacement and deliberate fragmentation of territory, a future Palestinian state may shortly no

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-23(1)(a)

Commented

The customary legal definition of statehood from the Montevideo Convention of 1933 lists: a permanent population; a defined territory; an effective government that exercises legal authority over its population and territory; and the capacity to conduct international relations with other States. The Montevideo Convention was only signed by states in North and South America. It has been accepted as customary international law but is not binding on New Zealand.

				longer be viable.	
11.	Underscore that Hamas can never have any role in the governance of Palestine, ensuring Ministers are clear that Hamas is only one actor in the Palestinian context.	Avoid feeding any perception that recognition of Palestine is tantamount to recognition of Hamas.	Broaden out the references.	Agree that New Zealand will not accept Hamas as having any role, now or in the future, in the governance of Palestine.	
23	Ensure Ministers are clear about what the Palestinian Authority is, and what it isn't. Provide clear advice about the structural role and status of the Palestinian Authority – it is the <i>structure</i> of the government, not the <i>members</i> of the government. Ensure Ministers understand that the PA is an institutional mechanism which does currently function, albeit in a constrained way. [See separate note explaining this.]	Avoid assisting Hamas (and Israel) by questioning the legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority, as the one available alternative to build a moderate Palestinian partner for Israel. Avoid conflating legitimacy with popular political support (as this is not a test we apply elsewhere). Falling to distinguish between the PLO and Fatah (as political movements) vs the Palestinian Authority, and its (largely) technocratic new cabinet		Note that the Palestinian Authority, has been recognised by the international community including Israel and New Zealand, and functions as the government of Palestine.	
23 bis	Acknowledge that the Palestinian Authority (the Oslo structure which has executive control over Palestinian controlled territory) is not able to exercise all the rights that we associate with full sovereignty (eg. Parts controlled by Israel, settlements and Gaza, where Hamas has de-facto control.)		Acknowledge that over time these will need to be resolved, for example how to return PA governance authority over Gaza.	Note that the Palestinian Authority is currently unable to fulfil <i>all</i> roles of a fully sovereign government.	
23 ter	Acknowledge that there are political support questions inside Palestine, which will need to be addressed with the support of the international community but that these are not a barrier to statehood.	Avoid conflating the Oslo accords political structures with the Palestinian political parties. Avoid making popular-political support (in an electoral sense) the criteria for recognition. Rather the question should be whether there are institutions of state which function, even if they will need further improvement.	Surface and acknowledge that there are complex internal political questions that will need to be resolved if Palestine is to thrive as a state. Acknowledge that political representation is a question for the Palestinians to resolve for themselves (ruling out participation of terrorists).	Note that while political representation is a question for Palestinians to resolve for themselves, strong and publicly supported institutions of state will be essential to the long term stability and fulfilment of the two state solution.	

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Commented [sic] The Palestinian Authority operates under the auspices of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, which is recognised internationally as the representative of the Palestinian people, including by Israel.

24	To prevent any interpretation of New Zealand's recognition as in some way rewarding Hamas, and to provide ways to mitigate this.	As currently drafted this runs the risk of appearing as if we think this might be a legitimate argument for Hamas to make.		Note that Hamas may seek to claim that our recognition of the State of Palestine helps to legitimate it and that this can be robustly mitigated by underscoring our opposition to Hamas and affirming the role of the Palestinian Authority.
26.	Publicly state New Zealand's condemnation of Hamas and confirmation that it can have no role in the governance of Palestine	Avoid publicly suggesting Hamas could have a role in Palestinian governance, or conflicting Hamas with Palestine	Have public messaging reflect recommendation 11.	Agree that New Zealand should reiterate publicly its condemnation of Hamas' perpetration of the 7 October terrorist attacks and its ongoing hostage taking, and restate that New Zealand will not accept Hamas as having any role, now or in the future, in the governance of Palestine.
27	In the event that Ministers actively seek an alternate option to the above, MEA recommends that Ministers be given both options, that is, the option of 'clean' recognition as per our draft proposals on 16 August as well as the second option contained here.	Need to avoid reducing New Zealand's current engagement with Palestine both because it would limit our ability to work with them and to have impact, and because it would undermine the overall goal of empowering the PA within Palestine to build an alternative to Hamas.	Defer to legal on the wording of this. MEA's advice under this option is to take at least one step forward in engagement but preserve space not to take all steps immediately (ie. as a form of leverage conditionality).	Note that, in international law, a distinction is [can?] be made between a state and a government, that it is possible to recognise a state without having full diplomatic relations with its government and that New Zealand retains the ability to decide where and how it engages with any state it recognises.
28	As above	As above	MEA preference is to flip this and frame it in the positive. Rather than focus on constraining bilateral engagement (which implies less than the status quo), we recommend framing it in terms of actively controlling the timing by which we implement recognition in a series of future steps.	Note that in the case of Palestine, New Zealand has the option of maintaining its current level of engagement, and moving to the practical implementation of recognition at the time of its choosing.
29	As above	s6(a)	Provide Ministers with a full spectrum of New Zealand's approach to engagement. At one end of the spectrum are states we recognise but will not engage with due to opposition to their current governments (e.g. Taliban). At the other end are countries we engage fully with but do not, for political reasons, recognise as states s6(a)	Note that New Zealand maintains varying degrees of engagement with different states; from declining to engage with states we recognise such as Afghanistan, to engaging fully with states we don't, s6(a)
30	Confirm that New Zealand's recognition of Palestine is premised on fulfilment of a series of commitments by the PA and	Avoid leaving our engagement with Palestine able to be decided by Hamas or Israel through their blocking of Palestinian Authority	Frame as positive commitment and (where possible) keep them realistic and practical by tying to the commitments that the PA has already made and have the active support of	Agree that in addition to recognition of a State of Palestine New Zealand should make clear that practical implementation of our recognition will be tied to progress on key commitments made by the Palestinian

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	the international community.	reform or ongoing military action. Avoid reducing New Zealand's current engagement with Palestine. Avoid exposing New Zealand to criticism that this is a double standard not applied to other countries (eg authoritarian states).	the international community to help deliver.	Authority and the international community. This will include:
30.1	Encourage Palestinian elections	Avoid insisting on the holding elections when the conflict in Gaza makes full participation impossible	As above	Preparations to deliver on elections when they can be held with the participation of the residents of Gaza
30.2	Highlight New Zealand's desire to see reform within the Palestinian Authority		As above	Reform of Palestinian Authority governance institutions, including police and education
30.3			As above	Reforms to strengthen good governance, transparency, and human rights
30.4		Avoid ignoring the Palestinian Authority's already made commitment to demilitarisation	As above	Support for disarming Hamas and a commitment to a demilitarized Palestinian state
30.5		Avoid the suggestion that the Palestinian Authority has not recognised Israel. Avoid giving Israel a veto over our implementation of recognition by refusing to engage in and agree peace negotiations.	As above	Willingness to conclude a peace agreement with Israel that includes a clear and binding timeline.
31	To create a series of meaningful steps towards recognition	To avoid any backwards steps in the current level of engagement we have with the PA.	Suggest we approach this by stating that certain steps are not being contemplated at this time. In practice we can then consider each one in the moment as they arise against the commitments referred to in recommendation 30.	Agree that the following steps by New Zealand are not being contemplated at this time, and would be considered against the commitments referred to in recommendation 30:
31.1				
31.2				
31.3	Identify that increasing engagement beyond our current levels would be a decision for us to make in due course	Avoid reducing New Zealand's current level of political engagement with Palestine, whereby New Zealand Foreign Ministers and Prime Ministers have already for some time engaged with their Palestinian counterparts in various ways.	Frame as not increasing (rather than constraining)	Increased political level engagement between New Zealand and Palestine

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Commented [a2]c(a)(9) Its worth noting that popular support for different groups in Palestine is now in flux. S6(a)

31.4	Avoid getting caught out by a post recognition vote at the UN this Sept (or beyond). s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)	Secure guidance for voting on any immediate recognitions, while maintaining the ability to consider Palestinian's UN membership question at a future time.	Support for Palestine's immediate full membership of the United Nations; and
31.5	Avoid reducing New Zealand's existing government to government engagement with and development support assistance for the Palestinian Authority, which is aimed at strengthening governance.	Frame as not increasing (rather than constraining)	Increase formal government-to-government cooperative agreements.

s6(a)

Palestinian Entities

Organisation or Institution	Nature and purpose	New Zealand engagement
Palestinian Authority	Provides civil administration for Palestinian territories. Small "g" government of Palestine. Created by Oslo Accords by PLO.	New Zealand provides support for Palestinian governance, e.g. through the office of the quartet.
Palestinian Liberation Organisation	Umbrella organisation for Palestinian political parties, of which Fatah is by far the largest. Recognised internationally (including by Israel) as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people follow 1988 decision by Arab League. Represents the PA internationally. Opposes Hamas	New Zealand has a "Representative" to the PA and received Palestine's Canberra-based "Representative". New Zealand Ministers and Prime Ministers have met their counterparts.
State of Palestine	Name of PLO within some UN bodies, including the General Assembly where it is an Observer State alongside the Holy See.	New Zealand supported the name change in the general assembly, and regularly engaged with the Palestinian delegation on relevant issue.
Fatah	Palestinian nationalist party. Largest political party within the PLO and holds most of the influence within the Palestinian Authority. Won 41.43% of votes in 2006 and formed national unity government following Hamas' refusal to recognise Palestine	No formal relationship, in line with New Zealand approach of not having formal relationships with specific parties in other states. The Reference here to 'Palestine' should read 'Israel'
Hamas	Not part of PLO. Rejects Oslo Accords. Won 44.45% of the vote in 2006 and subsequently took over Gaza after refusing to recognise Israel under Oslo Accords. Opposes PLO.	Designated terrorist group.

New Zealand engagement with Palestine

New Zealand has engaged with and recognised the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the representative of the Palestinian people since 1988. Following the creation of the Palestinian Authority (PA), New Zealand has engaged with the PA, and supported Palestinian governance. This includes maintaining a "Representative to Palestine" and accepting the Palestinian "Representative to New Zealand" (who Mr Peters has met with). Previous New Zealand Foreign Ministers have met their counterparts, as did Prime Minister Key.

What is the Palestinian Authority?

PA is the administrative government of the Palestinian territories. It was created in 1994 following the Oslo Accords between Israel, and the PLO. It was established to administer the Palestinian controlled areas of the West Bank and Gaza. As part of the Oslo Accords the PLO recognised Israel, and Israel recognised the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people.

The PA has executive and legislative branches, and maintains ministries responsible for core aspects of governance, including justice, police, finance, health, education, and youth and sport. Most New Zealand ministries have Palestinian counterparts in the PA.

Legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority

The legitimacy of the PA was established by its creation under the Oslo Accords by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, which is **internationally acknowledged as the representative of the Palestinian people, including by Israel.**

PA elections were held in 1996 and 2006. They have not been held since, due to Hamas' seizer of control in Gaza, Israel's occupation, and periodic violence. PA President Abbas as committed to hold elections.

The Palestinian Authority, and Fatah as the leader of the governing coalition, became increasingly unpopular after 2006. The low public approval for the PA is, accordingly to public surveys, driven by the PA's inability to advance Palestinian statehood, and ongoing security coordination and cooperation with Israel, including joint counterterrorism operations against militants in the West Bank.

How can Palestine have two international legal entities?

The existence and recognition of the PA and PLO in parallel is **unusual but not unique**. The arrangement is similar to that of the Holy See and Vatican City. The Holy See is the international legal entity of the Catholic Church; it is an Observer State of the UN General Assembly, but in itself does not have sovereign territory. The Holy See provides the Government of the Vatican City, a sovereign territory that is internationally recognised as a state but is not a separate member of international organisations.

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Recognition of State of Palestine: Possible Cabinet Paper recommendations

Proposal

That New Zealand recognise the State of Palestine, whilst preserving constraints on how we engage with Palestinian political representatives until a fully viable and legitimate Palestinian Government emerges.

That New Zealand recognise the State of Palestine to protect a path to a two-state solution, build alternative Palestinian leadership to Hamas, and prevent the current Israeli Government and Hamas from achieving their stated aims of destroying all prospects for a two-state solution.

OR

That New Zealand recognise the State of Palestine, while preserving constraints by ensuring that practical implementation of our recognition be tied to progress on key commitments made by the Palestinian Authority and the international community.

Recommendations

The Minister for Foreign Affairs recommends that the Committee:

- 1 Note that Jews and Palestinians have had conflicting territorial and sovereignty claims in the Middle East for over 80 years, resulting in decades of war, suffering and instability;

Note that the unresolved partition of Palestine in 1947, aimed at creating a Jewish and Palestinian state, has resulted in more than 80 years of war, suffering and instability.
- 2 Note that New Zealand's long-standing approach to this issue has been grounded in the idea that Israelis and Palestinians should live side-by-side in peace and security, both with an internationally-recognised state;
- 3 Note that while Israel achieved statehood in 1948, the Palestinian people remain stateless almost 80 years later;
- 4 Note that the conventional approach to state recognition in international law, drawn from the Montevideo Convention of 1933, is that a state should possess: a permanent population; a defined territory; a government; and the capacity to enter into relations with other states;

Note that international consideration of statehood draws in part on the Montevideo Convention of 1933, which lists: a permanent population; a defined territory; a government; and the capacity to enter relations with other states [as part of what is ultimately a political decision?].
- 5 Note that New Zealand, along with our close partners on Middle East issues, has traditionally held the view that the creation and recognition of a Palestinian state should be one outcome of a comprehensive political settlement negotiated between Israelis and Palestinians;
- 6 Note that many attempts brokered by the international community over decades to conclude such a comprehensive settlement resulting in a two-state solution have failed;
- 7 Note that events in the Middle East over the past two years have been driven by extremist Israeli and Palestinian political leaderships dedicated to destroying all prospects for a two-state solution, creating a situation of perpetual instability and immense human suffering;
- 8 Note that Hamas and the current Israeli political leadership both explicitly seek a one-state solution – i.e. an outcome where their side gains total victory and the other side's aspirations for a country are wiped out;

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9 Note that New Zealand has demonstrated its opposition to these extremist political leaderships by designating Hamas in its entirety as a terrorist organisation and by sanctioning Israeli Ministers taking tangible steps to undermine prospects for a two-state solution;

9 bis Note that as a result of these extremist ideologies and recent actions such as the rapid expansion of settlements, forced displacement and deliberate fragmentation of territory, a future Palestinian state may shortly no longer be viable.

10 Note that Hamas, the perpetrator of the heinous terrorist attack on 7 October 2023 and ongoing holder of Israeli hostages, has shown flagrant disregard for both Israeli and Palestinian life;

11 Agree that New Zealand will never recognise Hamas as the legitimate government of Palestine;

Agree that New Zealand will not accept Hamas as having any role, now or in the future, in the governance of Palestine.

12 Note that New Zealand's long-standing practice is to take a pragmatic approach to state recognition, with decisions on recognition made on a case-by-case basis;

13 Note that there are instances where states have been recognised which do not fully comply with all four criteria of the Montevideo Convention;

14 Note that around three-quarters of the world's states (147), including all Arab states and almost all ASEAN countries, currently recognise the State of Palestine;

15 Note that, in the past year, 15 new states have recognised the State of Palestine or indicated an imminent intention to do so – including a number of New Zealand's key traditional partners on Middle East issues, France, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom;

16 Note that, in explaining their changed approach, our traditional partners underline that they seek to protect a path to a two-state solution, build alternative Palestinian leadership to Hamas, and prevent the current Israeli Government and Hamas from achieving their stated aims of destroying all prospects for a two-state solution;

17 Note that some of our key partners in Asia – including s6(a) and are currently considering whether to move towards recognition in light of recent events;

18 Note that the preponderance of New Zealand's international partners s6(a), s6(b)(i) recognise the State of Palestine;

19 Note that s6(a) recognise the State of Palestine, though s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

20 Note that opting not to recognise the State of Palestine at this time would risk perceptions, damaging to New Zealand's international reputation, that we are taking an unbalanced approach to Israel-Palestine issues, s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

21 s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

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22 Agree that New Zealand should recognise the State of Palestine, on the grounds that it is in our overall foreign policy interests to do so and is consistent with our long-standing advocacy of a two-state solution;

23 Note that the Palestinian Authority does not currently hold all the attributes necessary for it to be viewed as the legitimate government of the State of Palestine, including the popular support of the Palestinian people;

Note that the Palestinian Authority, has been recognised by the international community including Israel and New Zealand, and functions as the government of Palestine.

Note that, as a state under occupation, the Palestinian Authority is currently unable to fulfil all roles of a fully sovereign government.

Note that while political representation is a question for Palestinians to resolve for themselves, strong and publicly supported institutions of state will be essential to the long term stability and fulfilment of the two state solution.

24 Note that Hamas may seek to claim that our recognition of the State of Palestine helps to legitimate it;

Note that Hamas may seek to claim that our recognition of the State of Palestine helps to legitimate it and that this can be robustly mitigated by underscoring our opposition to Hamas and affirming the role of the Palestinian Authority.

25 Agree that New Zealand's recognition of the State of Palestine should be explicitly framed publicly as a decision taken in opposition to moves by extremist Israeli and Palestinian political leaders aimed at destroying a two-state solution;

26 Agree that New Zealand should reiterate publicly its condemnation of Hamas' perpetration of the 7 October terrorist attacks and its ongoing hostage taking, and restate that it will never recognise Hamas as the legitimate government of the State of Palestine;

Agree that New Zealand should reiterate publicly its condemnation of Hamas' perpetration of the 7 October terrorist attacks and its ongoing hostage taking, and restate that New Zealand will not accept Hamas as having any role, now or in the future, in the governance of Palestine.

27 Note that, in international law, a distinction is made between a state and a government, and it is possible to recognise a state without having full diplomatic relations with its government;

Note that, in international law, a distinction is [can?] be made between a state and a government, that it is possible to recognise a state without having full diplomatic relations with its government and that New Zealand retains the ability to decide where and how it engages with any state it recognises.

28 Note that where New Zealand has concerns about the legitimacy or viability of a government or other political institutions in a particular state, then it has the option to demonstrate this through constraints on bilateral engagement;

Note that in the case of Palestine, New Zealand has the option of maintaining its current level of engagement, and moving to the practical implementation of recognition at the time of its choosing.

29 Note that New Zealand follows this approach currently in both Afghanistan and Myanmar – i.e. New Zealand recognises the existence of the states of Afghanistan and Myanmar but refuses

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Page 4 of 5

to recognise, respectively, the Taliban and Myanmar's military junta as the legitimate governments of those states;

Note that New Zealand maintains varying degrees of engagement with different states; from declining to engage with states we recognise such as Afghanistan, to engaging fully with states we don't, s6(a)

- 30 Agree that New Zealand should couple its recognition of the State of Palestine with a public statement that significant progress would be required, including in the following areas, for New Zealand to normalise its relations with the Palestinian Authority or any other regime purporting to be the government of the State of Palestine:

Agree that New Zealand should recognise the State of Palestine

OR

Agree that in addition to recognition of a State of Palestine New Zealand should make clear that practical implementation of our recognition will be tied to progress on key commitments made by the Palestinian Authority and the international community. This will include:

- 30.1 Elections to ensure representative leadership

Preparations to deliver on elections when they can be held with the participation of the residents of Gaza

- 30.2 Institution-building;

Reform of Palestinian Authority governance institutions, including police and education

- 30.3 Reforms in the areas of good governance, transparency and human rights;

Reforms to strengthen good governance, transparency, and human rights

- 30.4 Commitment to non-violence and demilitarisation; and

Support for disarming Hamas and a commitment to a demilitarized Palestinian state

- 30.5 Recognition of, and normalisation of relations with, the state of Israel via the conclusion of a peace treaty.

Willingness to conclude a peace agreement with Israel that includes a clear and binding timeline.

- 31 Agree that the following steps by New Zealand are not being contemplated at this time, and would require progress against the benchmarks referred to in recommendation 30:

Agree that the following steps by New Zealand are not being contemplated at this time, and would be considered against the commitments referred to in recommendation 30:

s6(a)

s6(a)

32

33 Agree that, should the above decisions be confirmed by Cabinet at its meeting of 15 September, then:

33.1 The Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs will jointly announce the broad parameters of New Zealand's decisions on this issue on 15 September;

33.2 s6(a)

33.3 The Minister of Foreign Affairs will make a formal statement and explanation of New Zealand's recognition of the State of Palestine, alongside other countries intending to do so, at relevant meetings during the United Nations Leaders' Week in New York in the week of 22 September.

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Sunday, 17 August 2025 5:54 pm
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc:
Subject: Providing the Updated Annotated Draft - Palestine Recognition: Cabinet Paper recommendations
Attachments: Palestine - Cabinet Paper Proposal and Recs - MEA comments on OMFA draft.docx
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi all,

With apologies please use **this** version of MEA's comments on the OMFA draft, which has the annotations setting out our comments on the recommendations.

Cheers, s9(2)(g)(ii)

Duplicate email chain removed

Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Sunday, 17 August 2025 6:04 pm
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc:

From MFAT secondee in
MFA Office to MFAT

Subject:

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Thanks s9(2) and s9(for all the work that you have put into these (on a Sunday no less), which will be helpful s9(2)(g)(i). There are lots of useful editing suggestions you've made which I will seek to incorporate.

In response to your overarching comments, I would note:

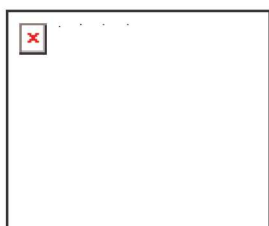
1. MFA well understands that MFAT is recommending full/clean recognition. s9(2)(g)(i)
s9(2)(g)(i)
s9(2)(g)(i)

2. Given the above, I am interested in MFAT's view on what is preferable in policy terms: a recognition framed more or less as I have framed it; or no recognition at all at this time (i.e. a continuation of the status quo). s9(2)(g)(i)

Given the phone calls with s6(a) which touch upon these issues tomorrow, I would expect to talk to MFA about this tomorrow afternoon - so would welcome reaction to the above question by midday tomorrow.

Best

s9(2)
(g)(ii)



s9(2)(g)(ii)

Office of Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs | Minister for Racing | Minister for Rail

DDI: s9(2)(a)
Email: s9(2)(g)(ii) Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

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Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Sunday, 17 August 2025 9:46 pm
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc:

From MFAT secondee in
MFA Office to MFAT

Subject: RE: Palestine Recognition: Cabinet Paper recommendations
Attachments: Palestine - Cabinet Paper Proposal and Recs - from OMFA.docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hello again,

Attached is an updated version of the document we've been working on this weekend. It seeks to reflect MEA/LGL's feedback to the extent possible s9(2)(g)(i)

However, in reacting to this, I suggest you only focus on the seven "agreeing" recommendations. s9(2)(g)(i)

Best,

s9(2)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

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Duplicate email chain removed

Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Monday, 18 August 2025 3:21 pm
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc:

From MFAT secondee in
MFA Office to MFAT

Subject: Palestine Recognition: Cabinet Paper: options and timing

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi team,

Further to my various conversations with MFA & MEA today (and so that s9(2)(g)(ii) has full visibility), MFAT is going to deliver to OMFA/DPMC by **close of play Thursday** a full draft paper which presents three options to FPS/Cabinet on the Palestine recognition issue, those being:

- The status quo (i.e. no move on recognition)
- Caveated recognition (i.e. the recommendations we worked on over the weekend)
- Full recognition

The paper will present the benefits and risks of each option, without making a clear recommendation s9(2)(g)(i)

Once we have that paper, s9(2)(g)(i)

Hope that's clear; and happy to discuss further if helpful!

Best,

s9(2)
() (ii)

s9(2)(g)(ii)
s9(2)(g)(ii) | Office of Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs | Minister for Racing | Minister for Rail

DDI: s9(2)(a)
Email: s9(2)(g)(ii) Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz
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From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Thursday, 21 August 2025 10:50 am
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc:

From MFAT secondee in
MFA Office to MFAT

Subject: Palestine: Cabinet paper options
Attachments: Cabinet paper on Recognition of Palestine - Options.docx
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

s9(2)(g)(ii)
Hi

As discussed, attached are the three options that MFA has approved to be distributed to his colleagues for Ministerial/inter-party consultation via a draft Cabinet Paper. (These options have also been shared with DPMC/PMO).

Look forward to seeing your draft Cabinet paper later today. (Please feel free to copy it to s9(2)(g)(ii) when you send it across.)

Best

s9(2)
(b)(1)

s9(2)(g)(i)

Office of Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs | Minister for Racing | Minister for Rail

DDI s9(2)(a)
Email: s9(2)(g)(ii) Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz
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From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
To:

Subject: Draft Cabinet Paper: Recognition of Palestine
Date: Thursday, 21 August 2025 5:14:00 pm
Attachments: [Recognition Cabinet Paper August 2025 Draft as at 5pm 21 August .docx](#)

Good evening everyone

Please find attached the first draft copy of the Cabinet Paper on Recognition of Palestine. A huge thank you to everyone who has inputted into this. As you know, this has necessarily been a very iterative process and we have been working hard to reflect a wide range of considerations and views. Working to three different options, and the requests to lean into the risks section have made the paper longer than originally planned. It will need a good prune (some parts are repetitive because of the way in which the advice iterated) but at this stage we felt better to get it to everyone than to continue to wordsmith.

In terms of next steps, my understanding from s9(2) (please confirm) is that you will look at this 'direction of travel' draft between now and Monday morning. s9(2)(g)(ii) and OCE will also look at the draft at the same time. MFAT will then send its final version to OMFA for Tuesday morning, allowing any further changes by MFA in advance of the COB Wednesday deadline to being 'consultations'.

Regards
s9(2)
()

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Thursday, 21 August 2025 11:13 pm
To:

From MFAT secondee
in MFA Office to MFAT

Subject: RE: Draft Cabinet Paper: Recognition of Palestine [SEC=RESTRICTED]
Attachments: Recognition Cabinet Paper - OMFA edit.docx

Hi s9(2)

Thanks for all the work that has gone into this – a lot of great stuff in here!

I recognise that this is a very challenging Cabinet paper for us to write, due to the complexity of the issues and s9(2)(g)(i)

The main work I have done on the paper this evening has been to re-organise s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

My OMFA colleague s9(2)(g) and I will do further work on this paper during the course of our Friday, and then pass it back to you for another edit. In the meantime, in case useful, please see where I have got to in the attached. (Please note that I have not yet edited the table in Annex 1 – but it will ultimately need to be changed to reflect the reformulated paper.)

Anyway, will be in touch tomorrow.

Best

s9(2)(g)(ii)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

s9(2)(g)(ii) | Office of Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs | Minister for Racing | Minister for Rail

DDI: s9(2)(a)
Email: s9(2)(g)(ii) Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

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Duplicate material removed

Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
To:
Cc:
Subject: FW: Draft Cabinet Paper: Recognition of Palestine [SEC=RESTRICTED]
Date: Friday, 22 August 2025 2:49:47 pm
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[Recognition Cabinet Paper - OMFA edit.docx](#)

[RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

Hi Team MEA,

Having just read s9(2)(g)(ii) version of the paper (and done a bit of a compare and contrast to your version that went across at 5.15pm yesterday), I had a few observations on things we should probably push back on, should they appear again in the version s9(2)(g)(ii) sends us later today. You will no doubt have spotted them already, but I thought I'd record them anyway so you can make sure you work through them when you send your feedback:

- Para 10 (repeated in para 34) – a one-sided articulation of the risks and certainly doesn't list the risks as set out in your table
- s6() seems to have fallen out of the list of countries that already recognise Palestine s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

- Para 27 – the ref to “moral posturing.” This could be interpreted as a comment on the s6(a) , in which case it is unduly pejorative – while s6(a) do face domestic pressure, they also seem prepared to work hard and spend money on making the PA viable/legitimate s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

It would be better to say something like “so a decision to recognise.... may not make any tangible difference in the short term”

- The second dot point in the same paragraph is also unduly negative as it overlooks the whole point behind recognition, i.e. to build a stronger PA as an alternative. It also misses out the good points you made in your paras 33 and 34 – and I think they should be reinserted somehow;
- The 5th dot point in the same para says s9(2)(g)(i) I am not sure we could stand behind such a categorical decision. s6(a)

- The 6th dot point in the same para includes the sentence “For example, s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i) s6(a) . This really needs a factual qualifier, along the lines of “Although anti-Semitic incidents have been occurring s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i) The most serious s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

- I think we'd also have difficulty with the characterisation in para 33 first dot point that the halfway option could be presented as “moderate, compromise, balanced.”
- Other bits of your version which had merit but have disappeared from s9(2)(g)(ii) option: your para 39 (“proponents of recognition argue that the very purpose.. is to create new conditions that will enable the US and Israel to (re) engage over time,” 40 (“These risk can be mitigated by clear, public communications on NZ's unequivocal condemnation of Hamas, and on the purpose of recognition”)
- Plus the “full recognition” option in s9(2) version appears not to be “predicated on the commitments made by President Abbas.....” (your para 42), which makes it arguably more extreme than we intend.

As I say, you will have spotted these already, but I'd be grateful if you could keep an eye on them, on my behalf, as the paper further iterates.

To reiterate (I have told s9(2)(g)(ii) , but for those of you not around to hear it), he was also keen to have s9(2)(g)(ii) update the MIM next week on the process we are working through on this issue (with Q and A to be provided to DMs who want a bit more info as they talk to their teams); and comms products for the options in the Cab Paper, which should include a formal statement (so s9(2)(g)(i) The comms might also (or might not – for you to judge) a possible heads up to key partners of our decision.

Good luck for next week!

s9(2)(g)(ii)

RESTRICTED

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Friday, 22 August 2025 3:04 pm
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Subject: RE: Draft Cabinet Paper: Recognition of Palestine [SEC=RESTRICTED]

[RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

s9(2)(g)(ii)
Hi

Thanks for sharing this draft with us. We have had a good look and will have a number of comments to make. We note that there have been a significant number of points taken out of the earlier draft, and a lot added in, leaving the paper substantively different from the earlier version. We are aware s9(2)(g) is looking at this now, so will respond once we have seen that version.

Cheers
s9(2)(g)(ii)

RESTRICTED

Duplicate email chain removed

Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Friday, 22 August 2025 4:19 pm
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT secondee
in MFA Office to MFAT

Cc:
Subject:
Attachments: Recognition Cabinet Paper - OMFA edit.docx
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Thanks s9(2)
() (ii)

Attached is a new version of the paper, which reflects s9(2)(g)(ii) feedback. I have not amended the table in Annex 1 to reflect the revised body of the paper and would appreciate someone having a go at doing that.

In providing comments on this paper, please bear in mind that MFA has provided clear direction to me and s9(2)(g)(ii) that he wants the paper to present status quo, full recognition and qualified recognition “warts and all”. That is, he wishes for the paper to include the strongest possible expression of the case for each option, and the sharpest possible expression of the risks of each option. For further context, s9(2)(g)(i)

So, in seeking your feedback, I am not looking for MFAT’s view on what our policy on the recognition question should be (that view has already been tendered). Rather, I am asking for you to read MFA’s Cabinet paper and provide feedback from a perspective of:

- Is the paper factually accurate?
- Have the best arguments for and against each option been presented as clearly as possible?

I would also observe that, at 11 pages, the paper is already long enough (actually, slightly too long). So if you think material is missing from the paper, we’ll need to find offsetting material to remove.

s9(2)(g)
(ii) is keen to kick the paper out for Ministerial consultation on Tuesday, so I would welcome feedback by midday Monday so we have the afternoon to edit the paper based on your feedback.

Best

s9(2)(g)(ii)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

s9(2)(g)(ii) | Office of Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs | Minister for Racing | Minister for Rail

DDI: +s9(2)(a)
Email: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz

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Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Monday, 25 August 2025 1:01 pm
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Cc: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Subject: RE: Draft Cabinet Paper: Recognition of Palestine [SEC=RESTRICTED]
Attachments: Recognition Cabinet Paper - OMFA s9(2)(g)(ii) Edits with MEA comments.docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

[RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

Hi s9(2)(g)(ii)

Attached is a version of the cabinet paper with MFAT's comments on OMFA's revisions.

Happy to discuss.

Thanks,

s9(2)(g)(i)

Duplicate email chain removed

s9(2)(g)(ii)

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Monday, 25 August 2025 2:44 pm
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Cc: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Subject: RE: Draft Cabinet Paper: Recognition of Palestine [SEC=RESTRICTED]
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi s9(2)(g)(ii)

Given how intensively this paper is being negotiated, I'm loth to comment and further complicate the process. So, I'll limit my comments.

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Because we only want to engage with a Palestinian Government that excludes Hamas and that commits to live in peace & security with Israel, s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s9(2)(g)(i)
breaches the 10-page rule), s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

While the paper is already too long (it

Cheers,
s9(2)(g)(ii)

s9(2)(a)

Duplicate email chain removed

Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Monday, 25 August 2025 6:51 pm
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Subject: RE: Draft Cabinet Paper: Recognition of Palestine [SEC=RESTRICTED]

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

9(2)
(g)(ii)
Hi just picking up your point for a smaller audience, and hoping to be helpful rather than irritating

In designing option 2, two things to have in the back of your mind are that :

- (1) the Palestinian Authority is already the existing, and internationally recognised, de facto government of the oPt. Its legitimacy and status stems from the Oslo Accords, which NZ fully supported and has acted on the basis of ever since. s9(2)(g)(i)

s9(2)(g)(i), s6(a)

s9(2)
(g)(i)

s9(2)(g)(i), s6(a)

- (2) s9(2)(g)(i)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Out of scope

Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Out of scope

Duplicate email chain removed

Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Tuesday, 26 August 2025 10:51 am
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT secondee in
MFA Office to MFAT

Cc: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Subject: RE: Draft Cabinet Paper: Recognition of Palestine [SEC=RESTRICTED]
Attachments: Recognition Cabinet Paper - for MFA feedback.docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi everyone,

Thanks again for your feedback. For your information, attached is the draft Cabinet paper on which we are seeking MFA feedback with a view to starting Ministerial/inter-party consultation on Thursday.

I'll come back to you next week, ahead of lodgement on Thursday 4 September, seeking a final MFAT review of whatever draft emerges from these consultation processes.

Best

s9(2)(g)(ii)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

s9(2)(g)(ii) | Office of Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs | Minister for Racing | Minister for Rail

DDI: s9(2)(a)
Email: s9(2)(g)(ii) Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz
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From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Wednesday, 27 August 2025 2:01 pm
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Subject: RE: Draft Cabinet Paper: Recognition of Palestine [SEC=RESTRICTED]
Attachments: Infographic - recognition.pptx

s9(2)(g)(ii)
Hi

Yes sure thing – see attached. I just took a screenshot of it to put into the document.

Cheers,
s9(2)(g)(ii)

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Wednesday, August 27, 2025 1:54 PM
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT secondee to
MFA Office to MFAT

Subject: RE: Draft Cabinet Paper: Recognition of Palestine [SEC=RESTRICTED]

Hi s9(2)(g)(ii)

Thank you for this. 😊

Might you be able to share an editable version?

Best wishes,

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Office of Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs | Minister for Racing | Minister for Rail

M: s9(2)(a)

[restricted]

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Tuesday, 26 August 2025 7:07 PM
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT to MFAT secondee in MFA
Office

Subject: RE: Draft Cabinet Paper: Recognition of Palestine [SEC=RESTRICTED]

[SEEMAIL] [RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

Hi s9(2)(g)(ii)

We've made an update to annex 3 to communicate recognition as part of a reform package visually instead of as a table. See attached.

Best,
s9(2)(g)(ii)

RESTRICTED

Duplicate email chain removed

Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

From: s9(2)(g)(ii) (MEA)
Sent: Friday, 29 August 2025 5:23 pm
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Subject: Israel: policy options toolkit for OMFA/PMO [SEC=RESTRICTED]
Attachments: Israel-Palestine Policy Toolkit for PMO and OMFA, August 2025.docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi s9(2)(g)(ii)

As promised, attached is a list of further policy options New Zealand could take in response to the Israel-Hamas conflict. We **attach** a list for your consideration, including pros/cons of each. The file is a "long list", with 25 suggestions. We would be happy to narrow this down if needed, but for now thought you might appreciate the widest possible list of options. Many thanks to s9(2)(g)(ii) who worked this up from a wider rolling list the team maintains.

Ngā mihi,

s9(2)
(g)



RESTRICTED

Israel-Palestine Policy Toolkit

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i) Document withheld in full

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From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Monday, 1 September 2025 6:11 pm
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc:
Subject: Palestinian Statehood - Draft Comms (non-recognition option)
Attachments: Palestinian statehood - Government Communications Plan (1).docx
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi all

As promised, attached is a first cut at key messages in the event of a decision in favour of non-recognition. We will send a similar version to cover qualified recognition tomorrow. Once we have the key messages agreed, they will be the basis of pretty much all future products so keen on your feedback. Then we can send you any revisions tomorrow.

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Comms Plan: decision not to recognise a Palestinian State

The material below will inform the following products. It comprises key messages and

- Script for MFA for post-Cab statement
- Q&A for PM for post-Cab media standup
- Joint PM/MFA press release
- X Posts by the PM and MFA

Overarching Narrative

- New Zealand has always, and will always, support a two state solution.
- But with a war raging, Hamas still in place and no clarity on next steps, now is not the time.
- Today's decision in no way lessens our strong opposition to Israel's increasingly horrifying actions on the ground.
- We remain appalled by the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza.

Key messages

- After careful consideration and consultation, the Government has decided not to recognise a Palestinian state at this time.
- New Zealand's long-standing approach is that Palestinians and Israelis should live side-by-side, in peace, both with an internationally recognised state.
- But we are not there yet.
- The conflict in Gaza is ongoing; Palestinians are divided physically and politically between the West Bank and Gaza.
- Hamas, a terrorist group, is entrenched in Gaza. We are not yet confident of Hamas' exclusion from future Palestinian governance arrangements.
- We can only recognise once and doing so now would be symbolic only.
- This isn't the final word – New Zealand's position is still that recognition is a matter of "when" not "if"
- We want to focus on the immediate issues:

- securing a ceasefire, release of the hostages and the immediate, unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid.
 - Agreeing a plan for the stabilisation and reconstruction of Gaza. We welcome the leadership of the region, France and Saudi Arabia, [the United Kingdom], and others on proposals to this effect.
- Today's decision in no way lessens our strongly held view that Israel's actions are completely unacceptable.
 - The humanitarian toll of this conflict, now including famine, is appalling and completely unacceptable. The deliberate obstruction of aid is unacceptable.
 - The targeting of civilians including journalists and healthcare workers is reprehensible, and New Zealand utterly condemns it.
- The acceleration of annexation of the West Bank and the forced displacement of citizens in Gaza is appalling, and illegal. And all the more dangerous because it has the deliberate objective of imperilling a two-state solution by changing facts on the ground.
- s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a)

s6(a)

s6(a)

s6(a)

Media Points for the PM and ministers

What does New Zealand need to see to recognise the state of Palestine? If not now, then when?

• s6(a)

•

•

•

If New Zealand is not recognising Palestine what else is it doing to make clear its concerns about what is happening?

- New Zealand's concerns are well-established on the public record.
- New Zealand has consistently condemned the 7 October attacks, urged Hamas to release hostages, called for a ceasefire in Gaza, and emphasised that all parties must abide by international law.
- This includes being very clear that we do not accept actions by Israel to try to erode a Two State Solution.
- s6(a)
- We've repeatedly advocated for these core principles through 80+ Ministerial statements, at institutions like the UN, and in direct engagements with Israel and the Palestinian Authority.
- We've also given \$37.25 million in humanitarian aid, opposed illegal settlements, and put travel bans on extremist Israeli settlers and Ministers.

Is New Zealand turning a blind-eye to the suffering in Gaza?

- We have been clear that the human suffering in Gaza is totally unacceptable.
- That's why we've given \$37.25 million in humanitarian support and advocated for safe, rapid, and unimpeded humanitarian access as well as the protection of humanitarian workers.
- It's also why we've repeatedly emphasised that all parties must abide by their international legal obligations.

Is New Zealand accepting Israel's actions that seek to undermine prospects for a two-state solution such as illegal settlement activity?

- Absolutely not. New Zealand has consistently opposed the establishment of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and has long held the view that settlements are illegal under international law.
- Israel cannot veto the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.
- We do not accept actions designed to prevent a political solution and the viability of a Palestinian state.

s9(2)(g)(i)

Is New Zealand out of step with the 160+ countries that have or will recognise a Palestinian state?

- There is a broad range of strongly held views on this issue. New Zealand's position is based on our principles, values and national interest. Other countries will make their own assessments.

- There are more than 25¹ countries that have not decided to recognise a Palestinian state, including several with similar views to New Zealand.
- Some of New Zealand's close partners have opted to recognise a Palestinian state, and some have not

Has New Zealand succumbed to US pressure, forgoing our independent foreign policy?

- No. s9(2)(g)(i)
- We will revisit our position if that changes.

Is New Zealand undermining the Palestinian Authority by saying it is not fully legitimate and viable?

- New Zealand has a good relationship with the Palestinian Authority. We talk to them regularly and they understand our position.
- Our concern is not with the Palestinian Authority, which faces very difficult circumstances. Our concern is with Hamas.
- New Zealand is doing our part to strengthen the Palestinian Authority's capability. [Reference funding for the Office of the Quartet. And Manaaki Scholarships for Palestinian officials.]
- We look forward to seeing the Palestinian Authority continue to make progress on its reform efforts.

Is New Zealand giving Hamas what it wants – by accepting a status quo in which it is the de facto government of Gaza? Isn't t this the best chance to undercut them?

- Hamas is a terrorist organisation that can have no place in a future Palestinian State.

¹ s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

- Hamas' ongoing role in Gaza is one reason that New Zealand will not recognise a Palestinian state at this time.
- Choosing not to recognise right now does not limit our ability to support the PA in any ways we can.

Does New Zealand accept that the two-state solution is dead?

- No. The alternative is perpetual war.
- We will support partners, including Arab States in the region, France, the UK and Saudi Arabia on a credible peace plan that establishes governance and security arrangements for Palestine and ensures the security of Israel.

Joint MFA/PM Press Release

MFAT Recommendation: MFAT recommends that consideration be given to issuing a joint PM/MFA Press Release on New Zealand's recognition decision.

XX September 2025

New Zealand

[To be drawn from agreed language on main announcement]

Prime Minister Christopher Luxon and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Winston Peters announced today that New Zealand would not yet recognise a Palestinian state.

Social Media

MFA X Post – to be posted on X September

[To be drawn from agreed language on main announcement]

PM X Post – to be posted on X September

[To be drawn from agreed language on main announcement]

Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
To:
Cc:
Subject: RE: Palestinian Statehood - Draft Comms (non-recognition option) [SEC=RESTRICTED]
Date: Wednesday, 3 September 2025 9:48:07 am

Hi s9(2)
() (ii)

If Cabinet decides now is not the time to recognise, I wonder if the logic flow is something like the following:

s9(2)(g)(i)

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What do you think? s9(2)(g)(i)

s9(2)(g)(i)

Hope that helps,

s9(2)(g)(i)

s9(2)(a)

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Sent: Monday, September 1, 2025 6:11 PM

To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT to MFAT
seconded in MFA Office

Subject: Palestinian Statehood - Draft Comms (non-recognition option) [SEC=RESTRICTED]

[SEEMAIL] [RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

Hi all

As promised, attached is a first cut at key messages s9(2)(g)(i)

Once we have the key messages agreed, they will be the basis of pretty much all future products so keen on your feedback. Then we can send you any revisions tomorrow.

s9(2)(g)(ii)

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From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Wednesday, 3 September 2025 9:22 am
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc:
Subject: RE: Palestinian Statehood - Draft Comms (non-recognition option) [SEC=RESTRICTED]
Attachments: Recognition press release MFAT comments as at 2 Sept.docx
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi s9(2)(g)(ii) attached are consolidated comments on the press release, reflecting thoughts from s9(2)(g)(ii) myself. I'll revert on the Q and A shortly but sending this one now so you can review early s9(2)(g)(ii)

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 11:40 AM
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT secondee
to MFA Office to MFAT

Subject: RE: Palestinian Statehood - Draft Comms (non-recognition option) [SEC=RESTRICTED]

Thanks s9(2)(g)(ii)

As discussed, please see attached a draft PR and Q&A document – which s9(2)(g) intend to discuss with MFA on Thursday. Welcome feedback by midday Wednesday.

Once we know MFA's overall approach to comms s9(2)(g)(i)

(including with DPMC/PMO). we can then engage more widely

Best

s9(2)

Duplicate email chain removed

RESTRICTED

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Wednesday, 3 September 2025 11:48 am
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Subject: MEA comments on non-recognition Q and A draft
Attachments: Palestine (non) recognition - Q + A s9(2)(g)(ii) comments.docx
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi s9(2)
(-)/:;\

Attached some comments on the Q and A draft. I haven't suggested any addition questions on the basis that these are the ones you want, but let me know if you want me to think up any others.

s9(2)(g)(i)

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Palestine recognition announcement: Q & A

Questions are provided to media on background. Answers can be attributed to a spokesperson for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

What has the New Zealand Government decided?

While we remain committed to a two-state solution and Palestinian self-determination, New Zealand has decided that it will not be recognising the State of Palestine at this time.

Why has New Zealand taken this decision?

With a war raging, Hamas remaining in place as the de facto government of the Gaza Strip, and absolutely no clarity on next steps, our judgment remains that there is currently not a fully legitimate and viable State of Palestine for New Zealand to recognise. Too many questions remain about aspects of a future State of Palestine – including its government, population and territory – for it to be advisable for New Zealand to recognise the State of Palestine at this time.

We are also concerned that a focus on recognition at this time could be counter-productive. That is, we worry that the international community could, by moving ahead with recognition in the current circumstances, be unwittingly complicating and even delaying efforts to secure a ceasefire by pushing Hamas and Israel into even more intransigent positions.

If not now, then when? What does New Zealand need to see in order to recognise the state of Palestine?

Our future decision-making around recognition will depend on developments on the ground and between the parties. We hope to recognise the State of Palestine at a time when conditions offer greater prospects for peace and negotiation than at present.

In particular, we will be looking for:

- real progress towards the viability and legitimacy of the State of Palestine, rather than mere commitments in that direction – including in the areas of governance, democracy, and institution-building;
- the release by Hamas of all the hostages it holds, followed by the group's disbanding and disarmament; and
- the renunciation of violence by all Palestinian leaders, and an acceptance that any Palestinian state will be based on a peace treaty with and security guarantees for Israel.

Is New Zealand simply accepting the status quo of Hamas and Israel both taking actions which are leading to immense suffering and pushing the two-state solution further and further away?

Absolutely not. We abhor what is happening.

RESTRICTED

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Commented We remain concerned about the use of this phrasing for all the reasons set out in previous discussions with OMFA.

Our suggested alternative is that rather than a criticism of what is not there, you flip it and say what we would like to see "Our strong wish is to see the immediate conflict resolved, and Hamas removed, before we move to the question of recognition. We do not support recognition until there is a unified government across Palestine with the capacity to govern the full territory." Or something to that effect.

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Commented MEA is not clear what this means? The population of OPT is known and straightforward.

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Commented MEA advises against referring to territory. Firstly Israel also does not have a defined territory - its borders are also in dispute. So this is direct double standard we need to avoid. Also, New Zealand recognises significant numbers of states with disputed territory. Finally, and most importantly, defined territory is not within the Palestinians gift to resolve unilaterally - they are subject to Israeli veto. So this is a departure from our balanced policy.

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Commented MEA suggests delete for the same reasons articulated in the press release. Suggest limiting comments to "it's a complex issue on which reasonable people disagree".

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Commented MEA notes this is not a condition we place on recognition of any other state. Leaves the Minister open to accusations of double standards.

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Commented As noted in press release, we suggest a formulation along the lines of: That includes the establishment of unified governance across Palestine that does not include Hamas. It also means a viable leadership across Palestine that has the capacity to deliver peace and demonstrated security guarantees for Israel

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Commented MEA notes that this will leave NZ open to criticism as the PA has long renounced violence and has been active in keeping the WB cool throughout the Gaza crisis. Suggest a formulation that says "renunciation of violence by all Palestinian leaders beyond the PA". This formulation will target Hamas and PIJ.

RESTRICTED

New Zealanders were appalled by the barbarity of Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, and in response New Zealand designated Hamas in its entirety as a terrorist organisation. We continue to condemn Hamas' completely heinous refusal to release the hostages it is holding, its abject disregard for both Palestinian and Israeli life and its stated determination to destroy Israel. Hamas can have no future in the governance of Palestinians.

At the same time, New Zealanders are also shocked to our core by the harrowing images of starvation in Gaza, revolted by the now grossly disproportionate military response from the Israeli Government and disturbed by Israeli rhetoric and actions aimed at dismantling future prospects for a Palestinian state. Israel's military actions in Gaza over the past almost two years have caused far too much civilian death and suffering and shown far too little regard for its obligations under international law.

For decades, New Zealand has consistently opposed the establishment of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and has long held the view that settlements are illegal under international law. We oppose any and all actions designed to prevent a political solution to the conflict and to undermine the viability of a Palestinian state.

Is New Zealand turning a blind eye to the immense humanitarian suffering in Gaza?

No. The debate about recognition is a very abstract one, but the current suffering in Gaza is real and urgent. We have been clear that the human suffering in Gaza is totally unacceptable. That's why we've given \$37.25 million to date in humanitarian support and advocated for safe, rapid, and unimpeded humanitarian access as well as the protection of humanitarian workers and journalists. It's also why we've repeatedly emphasised that all parties must abide by their international legal obligations. New Zealand has also decided to extend an additional \$10 million in humanitarian assistance to Gaza at this time, s6(a)

Commented s9(2)(g)(i) s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

How else has New Zealand made clear its concerns about what is happening?

New Zealand has consistently condemned the 7 October attacks, urged Hamas to release hostages, called for a ceasefire in Gaza, and emphasised that all parties must abide by international law. This includes being very clear that we do not accept actions by Israel to try to erode a two-state solution.

We've repeatedly advocated for these core principles over the past two years through 80+ Ministerial statements, in speeches at institutions like the United Nations General Assembly, and in direct engagements with Israel and the Palestinian Authority. We've also put travel bans on extremist Israeli settlers and Ministers.

Is New Zealand out of step with international opinion, with three-quarters of the world having recognised or intending to recognise Palestine?

There is a broad range of strongly held views on this issue among the international community. New Zealand's position is based on our principles, values and national interest. Other countries will make their own assessments.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

There are more than 25 countries that have not yet decided to recognise a Palestinian state, including Singapore, Japan, South Korea, most Pacific Island countries, many European countries and the United States.

Commented [NR9]: We are fact checking and will revert.

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Is New Zealand criticising its close partners, such as Australia, Canada and the UK, who have chosen to recognise?

No. This is a complex issue on which reasonable people can disagree. Some of our close partners, such as Australia and the United Kingdom, have chosen to recognise Palestine, and others, such as Singapore, Japan, and most Pacific Island countries, have not.

We do not question the good intentions of our close partners who have chosen to recognise Palestine. Indeed, we have a shared objective of trying to help bring about a two-state solution, so that Israelis and Palestinians can live side-by-side in peace and security, each with their own state.

Commented [NR10]: Suggest deletion, as per comments on press release.

Where we differ is on the issue of whether recognition right now, in these circumstances, will make a tangible, positive contribution to the realisation of a two-state solution.

Has New Zealand succumbed to pressure from the United States on this issue, foregoing our independent foreign policy?

No. While its views on this matter are well known, the United States has not pressured New Zealand to take a particular stance on the question of the recognition of the State of Palestine.

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(ii)

Is New Zealand undermining the Palestinian Authority by saying a fully legitimate and viable State of Palestine doesn't currently exist?

No. New Zealand has a good relationship with the Palestinian Authority. We talk to them regularly and they understand our position. Our concern is not with the Palestinian Authority, which faces very difficult circumstances. Our concern is with Hamas, which continues to hold hostages, threaten Israel and show complete disregard for Palestinian and Israeli life. New Zealand is doing our part to strengthen the Palestinian Authority's capability. We look forward to seeing the Palestinian Authority continue to make progress in its reform efforts.

Is New Zealand giving Hamas what it wants – by accepting a status quo in which it is the de facto government of Gaza?

Hamas is a terrorist organisation that can have no place in a future Palestinian State. Hamas' ongoing role in Gaza is one reason that New Zealand will not recognise a Palestinian state at this time. Choosing not to recognise the State of Palestine right now does not limit our ability to support the Palestinian Authority as it seeks to reform itself and build up the viability and legitimacy of governance structures that exclude Hamas.

RESTRICTED

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Wednesday, 3 September 2025 9:47 am
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Cc:

Subject:

Attachments: Informal Note - Further Israel-Palestine Policy Options (1).docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up

Flag Status: Flagged

Hi all

Further to the draft sent over yesterday, I am attaching a slightly updated version which has now been consulted with divisions. Key changes from what was sent yesterday are:

s9(2)(f)(iv), s9(2)(g)(i)

-

-

-

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

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Informal Note — Further Israel-Palestine Policy Options

- This note outlines actions that could be announced alongside Cabinet's decision on recognition (under all options).

Policy Options

s6(a)

s9(2)

Commented (g)(ii) do I need to explain the 'why' here or is it self-explanatory/can it wait for the sub?

Commented [SB2R1]: Yeah leave as-is

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

3. Contribute a further NZ\$10 million in humanitarian aid

- MFAT has NZ\$10 million earmarked for the humanitarian response to the Israel-Hamas conflict in the 2025-26 financial year, this being an amount we would normally phase over two or three funding announcements depending on events. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s9(2)

Commented (g) Has been cleared by PHM.

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RESTRICTED

Page 2 of 5

s9(2)(g)(i), s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv)

- We could provide additional funding to:
 - The World Food Programme (WFP), focused on providing emergency food assistance, including infant formula, flour, and nutritional supplements.
 - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), who are uniquely able to deliver humanitarian assistance in complex conflict zones, as well as monitor the implementation of international humanitarian law.
 - UNICEF, whose mandate is focused on providing life-saving assistance to vulnerable children and families.
- While these organisations are obstructed by Israel, they have the scale, credibility, and track record to quickly make best use of international aid. New Zealand has previously contributed to all three organisations' operations and has been satisfied with their performance.
- [Background: New Zealand has contributed NZ\$33.5 million in humanitarian support since 7 October 2023 to address urgent humanitarian needs in response to the Israel-Hamas conflict. We provided NZ\$11.5 million in the 2024-25 financial year.]

4.s6(a)

- s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv)

The OQ and UNMAS both provide institutional capability-building for the Palestinian Authority. This offers a low-risk, high-impact way to support their operations and preserve the viability of the two-state solution.

- s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv)
If a ceasefire is reached in Gaza and a trust fund is set up to support reconstruction (e.g. through the World Bank), MFAT could s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv), s9(2)(g)(i)
- [Background: New Zealand has contributed NZ\$3.75 million in stabilisation support for Gaza and the West Bank since 7 October 2023. This includes:
 - NZ\$1.5 million a year over two years (NZ\$3 million total) to UNMAS to support mine safety coordination, ordnance removal, and community education –

POLP-21-241

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s9(2)(g)(ii)

Commented isn't it 37.5?

Commented 37.25 is the combined total of humanitarian and development. I think it's 3.25 development and 34 humanitarian - but will get PHM/GDS to confirm

Commented s9(2)(g)(ii) No, \$37.25 is the combined total for humanitarian and stabilisation. I think it's \$33.5 humanitarian and \$3.75 development

Commented s9(2)(g)(ii) Has been cleared by GDS.

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Commented detail GDS to add line explaining this in more

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Page 3 of 5

including by enhancing the Palestinian Authority's ability to manage min action activities in the West Bank through the Palestinian Mine Action Centre and the Palestinian Authority Explosive Ordnance Device Police.

- NZ\$750,000 to the OQ, which works to increase economic and institutional capability towards Palestinian statehood.]

s9(2)(g)(i), s6(a), s9(2)(h)

s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a)

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Page 4 of 5

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Middle East and Africa Division
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
3 September 2025

POLP-21-241

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Page 5 of 5

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POLP-21-241

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s9(2)(g)(ii)

From:

To:

Cc:

Subject:

FW: FORMAL MESSAGE: BELGIUM TO RECOGNISE PALESTINE AT UNGA [SEC=RESTRICTED]

Date:

Thursday, 4 September 2025 7:42:41 am

[RESTRICTED]

A bit more granularity from Brussels below FYI.

Sent with BlackBerry Work
(www.blackberry.com)

X-MFAT-MOBILE

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Internal MFAT email

Date: Thursday, 04 Sep 2025 at 3:37 AM

To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Cc:

Subject: RE: FORMAL MESSAGE: BELGIUM TO RECOGNISE PALESTINE AT UNGA
[SEC=RESTRICTED]

Kia ora s9(2)

s9(2) has fleshed out some of the points you questioned / highlighted below:

s6(a)

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s6(a)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Internal MFAT email

Sent: s9(2)(g)(ii)

To:

Cc:

Subject: RE: FORMAL MESSAGE: BELGIUM TO RECOGNISE PALESTINE AT UNGA
[SEC=RESTRICTED]

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Thanks

Yes we can provide some more on those questions/points. s9(2) had a great conversation with her contact at the Belgian MFA yesterday and will ask her some follow up questions. We can also send down a bit more on the debate here s6(a)

We'll aim to have something for you your Thursday morning.

Cheers

s9(2)(g)(ii)

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Internal MFAT email

Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 11:21 AM

To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Subject: FW: FORMAL MESSAGE: BELGIUM TO RECOGNISE PALESTINE AT UNGA
[SEC=RESTRICTED]

[RESTRICTED] s9(2)
(g)

Great message(ii) See the below. Some quick questions for you ...

Sent with BlackBerry Work

(www.blackberry.com)

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 9:39 AM

To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT to MFAT
seconded in MFA Office
and MFAT seconded to
DPMC

Cc: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Subject: RE: FORMAL MESSAGE: BELGIUM TO RECOGNISE PALESTINE AT UNGA
[SEC=RESTRICTED]

[RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

The below is super interesting:

The administrative formalisation of recognition – by a royal decree – will only take place when the last Israeli hostage has been released and Hamas “no longer has any role in managing Palestine. s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

RESTRICTED

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 9:23 AM

To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT secondee
to DPMC to MFAT

Subject: FW: FORMAL MESSAGE: BELGIUM TO RECOGNISE PALESTINE AT UNGA
[SEC=RESTRICTED]

Really good to see BRU straight out of the blocks on an issue that is of the highest interest in Wellington. Kudos to s9(2)(g)(ii)

s9(2)(g)

s9(2)(a)

From: BRUSSELS <BRU@mfat.govt.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 5:51 AM

To: BRUSSELS <BRU@mfat.govt.nz>; MEA <DM-MEA@mfat.govt.nz>; SINGAPORE <SIN@mfat.govt.nz>; TOKYO <TKY@mfat.govt.nz>; SEOUL <SEL@mfat.govt.nz>; HAGUE <HAG@mfat.govt.nz>; STOCKHOLM <SKM@mfat.govt.nz>; ROME <ROM@mfat.govt.nz>; WARSAW <WSW@mfat.govt.nz>; BERLIN <BER@mfat.govt.nz>; VIENNA <VNA@mfat.govt.nz>; WASHINGTON <WSH@mfat.govt.nz>; ANKARA <ANK@mfat.govt.nz>; CAIRO <CAI@mfat.govt.nz>;

ABU DHABI <ABD@mfat.govt.nz>; RIYADH <RIY@mfat.govt.nz>; OTTAWA <OTT@mfat.govt.nz>; CANBERRA <CBA@mfat.govt.nz>

Cc: NAD <DM-NAD@mfat.govt.nz>; SSEA <DM-SSEA@mfat.govt.nz>; UNHC <DM-UNHC@mfat.govt.nz>; PHM <PHM_teams@mfat.govt.nz>; EUR <DM-EUR@mfat.govt.nz>; AMER <DM-AMER@mfat.govt.nz>; AUS <DM-AUS@mfat.govt.nz>; LGL <DM-LGL@mfat.govt.nz>; ISED <DM-ISED@mfat.govt.nz>; OCE <OCE@mfat.govt.nz>; NEW YORK <NYK@mfat.govt.nz>; GENEVA <GVA@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.P/S MFA (Seemail) <PS.MFA@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.DPMC (FPA) (Seemail) <DPMCFPA@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: FORMAL MESSAGE: BELGIUM TO RECOGNISE PALESTINE AT UNGA
[SEC=RESTRICTED]

[SEEMAIL] [RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

SUMMARY - RĀPOPOTO

Belgium has confirmed its intention to recognise an independent Palestine state at the United Nations General Assembly later this month. In an announcement to X (followed by a press release), Minister of Foreign Affairs Maxime Prévot, outlined the justifications as well as the requirements for recognition to be finalised – Israel hostages to be released and Hamas to be removed from Palestinian administration. Sanctions are also being developed covering a range of areas, including import and travel bans, and consular and flight restrictions. The announcement comes following a long period of back and forth between the parties which form Belgium's federal government.

ACTION - HOHENGANGA

For information – Hei titiro mau.

REPORT - PŪRONGO

1. Following our earlier reporting (below), on 2 September Belgium's Minister for Foreign Affairs (and Deputy Prime Minister) Maxime Prévot [announced on X](#) that Belgium will recognise Palestinian Statehood at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly session later this month. The initial announcement was followed by a [press release](#) (Dutch/French) late this afternoon.
2. The announcement came after weeks of debate within the Federal and Flemish Governments s6(a)

Recognition of a Palestinian State

3. In his announcement, Minister Prévot stated that Belgium will join the signatory countries of the New York Declaration, and will recognise Palestine during the joint initiative of France and Saudi Arabia. He also clarified, however, that the administrative formalisation of recognition – by a royal decree – will only take place when the last Israeli hostage has been released and Hamas "no longer has any role in managing Palestine".

4. The decision comes "in light of the humanitarian tragedy unfolding in Palestine, particularly in Gaza, and in response to the violence perpetrated by Israel in violation of international law" said Prévot. He noted that, "taking into account [Belgium's] international obligations, including the duty to prevent any risk of genocide," Belgium took the decision "in order to increase pressure on the Israeli government and the Hamas terrorists".
5. The press release states that recognition of Palestine would include "the implementation of diplomatic relations... including the opening of a Belgian embassy and the conclusion of international agreements".

Proposed sanctions

6. Within the announcement Prévot stated that "12 firm sanctions" would be taken at the national level. The press release outlines these as:
 - Sanctions will be proposed against Israeli settlers who use violence, as well as against Hamas leaders. These sanctions will include financial restrictions, the freezing of assets, and entry bans. In the meantime, violent settlers and Hamas terrorists on the European list are now persona non grata on Belgian territory.
 - The Israeli ministers Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich and the political and military leaders of Hamas are also persona non grata on Belgian territory. They are therefore no longer allowed to enter Belgium, which has implications for entry into the Schengen zone. **[Comment: s6(a)]**
 - A national import ban on goods produced, mined or processed by Israeli settlers in the territories occupied by Israel.
 - Belgian arms exports to Israel will be tightened, and Belgium will call for an European Union (EU) level arms embargo on Israel and a partial suspension of the association agreement with Israel (including Israel's participation in EU programmes such as Horizon Europe).
 - For Belgians living in "settlements that are illegal under international law", Belgium will restrict access to consular services (maintaining only its legal obligation to provide emergency assistance).
 - So long as the conflict continues, Israeli military aircraft will no longer be able to fly over Belgian airspace.
7. According to media, Belgium has a Flanders Investment and Trade agency (FIT – NZTE equivalent) office in Tel Aviv which will remain open, however its activities will be restricted. It will not be allowed to work in the field of defence, will no longer promote trade and will not cooperate with companies operating in the occupied territories. The intention is that FIT will, in time, also play a role in the reconstruction of the Palestinian territories.

Additional Humanitarian Aid

8. Belgium will also increase its humanitarian aid to Palestine: an additional €12.5 million from the Federal Government for humanitarian aid to Gaza (on top of the €7 million already pledged), and €350,000 from the Flemish Government to the UN World Food Programme to meet the most pressing needs in Gaza. Belgium will also actively help to evacuate children with complex conditions that cannot be treated in the region.

Insights from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

9. s6(a)

ENDS - MUTU

RESTRICTED

From: BRUSSELS <BRU@mfat.govt.nz>

Sent: Monday, August 18, 2025 4:58 PM

To: MEA <DM-MEA@mfat.govt.nz>; SINGAPORE <SIN@mfat.govt.nz>; TOKYO <TKY@mfat.govt.nz>; SEOUL <SEL@mfat.govt.nz>; HAGUE <HAG@mfat.govt.nz>; STOCKHOLM <SKM@mfat.govt.nz>; BRUSSELS <BRU@mfat.govt.nz>; ROME <ROM@mfat.govt.nz>; WARSAW <WSW@mfat.govt.nz>; BERLIN <BER@mfat.govt.nz>; VIENNA <VNA@mfat.govt.nz>; WASHINGTON <WSH@mfat.govt.nz>; ANKARA <ANK@mfat.govt.nz>; CAIRO <CAI@mfat.govt.nz>; ABU DHABI <ABD@mfat.govt.nz>; RIYADH <RIY@mfat.govt.nz>; OTTAWA <OTT@mfat.govt.nz>; CANBERRA <CBA@mfat.govt.nz>

Cc: NAD <DM-NAD@mfat.govt.nz>; SSEA <DM-SSEA@mfat.govt.nz>; UNHC <DM-UNHC@mfat.govt.nz>; PHM <PHM_teams@mfat.govt.nz>; EUR <DM->

EUR@mfat.govt.nz; AMER <DM-AMER@mfat.govt.nz>; AUS <DM-AUS@mfat.govt.nz>; LGL <DM-LGL@mfat.govt.nz>; ISED <DM-ISED@mfat.govt.nz>; OCE <OCF@mfat.govt.nz>; NEW YORK <NYK@mfat.govt.nz>; GENEVA <GVA@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.P/S MFA (Seemail) <PS.MFA@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.DPMC (FPA) (Seemail) <DPMCFPA@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: FORMAL MESSAGE: BELGIUM TO MAKE A DECISION ON POTENTIAL RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN STATEHOOD IN EARLY SEPTEMBER
[SEC=RESTRICTED]

[RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

SUMMARY – RĀPOPOTO

Amid growing pressure and moves by several European countries to recognize Palestine, Belgium has indicated it will decide on the possible recognition of Palestinian statehood in early September. Belgium's long-standing position is that it supports a two-state solution and has been open to recognising Palestinian statehood, under certain conditions.

ACTION – HOHENGANGA

For information.

MEA: in response to tasking on Belgium's approach to Palestine recognition.

REPORT – PŪRONGO

Belgium's current official position on Palestinian recognition

1 Belgium does not currently recognise Palestine as a sovereign state.
s6(a)

A divided coalition government

2 The five parties in the Belgian Federal Coalition Government s9(2)
The issue is regularly and actively (g)(i)
debated within Belgium's federal Government and Parliament. s6(a), s9(2)(g)
(i)

3 The party of the Prime Minister, the right-leaning N-VA, firmly views
s9(2)(g)(i), which it s9(2)(g)
destabilising force in the Middle East. Consequently, the party has been outspoken
in supporting Israel's right to defend itself against acts of terrorism. s9(2)(g)
(i)

Planned decision timeline

4 s6(a)

, the Foreign Affairs Committee of
the federal Parliament decided to interrupt the parliamentary summer recess on 14
August to discuss the situation in Gaza. This urgent session, however, s6(a)

5 Belgium's Foreign Minister, Maxime Prévot, had earlier this month
indicated that the Government aimed to define an official stance on recognition by
early September 2025, ahead of the UN General Assembly and a possible summit
on Palestine on its sidelines. Following the parliamentary session, however, he
s9(2)(g)(i), stressing the urgency of recognizing Palestine "before there is
nothing left to recognize." s6(b)(i)

Prévot affirmed his intention to rally coalition partners in support of
recognition.

6 s6(a)

, including the exclusion of Hamas from any kind of
government, clear territorial boundaries as well as security guarantees for Israel.

Belgium's official position on the conflict

7 s6(a)

Belgium advocates
for a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace
and security, based on the 1967 borders with mutually agreed land swaps. Belgium
believes Israel has the right to defend itself against the Palestinian group Hamas,
which it considers a terrorist organisation, as long as it stays within the boundaries
of international and humanitarian law.

8 Belgium has also expressed serious concern over the humanitarian
situation in Gaza, emphasising the need to protect civilians and uphold
international humanitarian law. The Government has repeatedly called for
proportionality and restraint in military operations. Belgium financially supports

humanitarian aid initiatives by the UN in Gaza and has recently airdropped more than thirty tonnes of aid supplies.

COMMENT - TĀKUPU

s6(a)

ENDS – MUTU

RESTRICTED

From: MEA <DM-MEA@mfat.govt.nz>

Sent: Monday, August 11, 2025 9:20 AM

To: s6(a)

Cc: NAD <DM-NAD@mfat.govt.nz>; SSEA <DM-SSEA@mfat.govt.nz>; MEA <DM-MEA@mfat.govt.nz>

MFA@mfat.govt.nz; UNHC <DM-UNHC@mfat.govt.nz>; PHM
<PHM_teams@mfat.govt.nz>; EUR <DM-EUR@mfat.govt.nz>; AMER <DM-AMER@mfat.govt.nz>; AUS <DM-AUS@mfat.govt.nz>; LGL <DM-LGL@mfat.govt.nz>; ISD <DM-ISD@mfat.govt.nz>; OCE <OCE@mfat.govt.nz>;
NEW YORK <NYK@mfat.govt.nz>; GENEVA <GVA@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.P/S MFA
(Seemail) <PS.MFA@mfat.govt.nz>; FM.DPMC (FPA) (Seemail)
<DPMCFPA@mfat.govt.nz>

Subject: FORMAL MESSAGE: TASKING FOR POSTS: SEEK HOST GOVERNMENT
APPROACHES TO PALESTINIAN STATEHOOD [SEC=RESTRICTED]

[RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

RĀPOPOTO – SUMMARY

We seek views of partners, s6(a)
regarding approaches, processes and timelines for considering
recognition of Palestinian statehood.

HOHENG – ACTION

s6(a) – please seek host government views and provide
an update on New Zealand's approach using the talking points in
para 9. Responses by **Monday 18 August** would be much
appreciated (we understand this may not be possible for all posts
given the summer holiday period).

All others, see separate tasking in paras 5, 6 and 7.

PŪRONGO – REPORT

New Zealand is a long-standing supporter of a two-state solution
and has been clear and consistent that recognition of Palestinian
statehood is a question of when, not if. s6(a)

We attach recent FM reporting from NYK which
provides additional context on issues relating to recognition.

2 Minister Peters took an oral item to Cabinet today (11
August) to introduce the question of recognition of a state of
Palestine, ahead of a formal consideration of the issue by Cabinet
in September. Minister Peters will travel to New York in late
September for the United Nations Leaders' Week, where he will
present the Government's approach to this issue. A press release
from the Minister's Office is attached.

3 Understanding the views and approaches of likeminded
partners is a key input into this decision-making process. We are
already in active discussions with a number of partners s6(a)
and with

Wellington based colleagues from key regional partners, s6(a) . The views of this latter group, who have yet to take a decision, are of particular interest and we would value an additional capital based discussion. We ask that s6(a) reach out proactively to contacts for capital based views on where their process is at. The Minister will likely look to undertake direct engagement with Ministerial counterparts as part of New Zealand's decision-making process. We will be in touch with posts directly about this by email.

4 **Other addressees:** We are also interested in the approach of other countries of accreditation who have not yet recognised s6(a)

In this case we are not asking for direct bilateral outreach but would be interested in anything you pick up informally.

5 s6(a) with thanks for your ongoing reporting, we remain interested in reactions to the most recent recognition announcements.

6 **Canberra and Ottawa** – we remain interested in responses to your host government's announcements, including from Israel and the US.

7 s6(a) : we also remain interested in reporting from the region on how regional responses, and the commitments by the Palestinian Authority, are progressing.

8 In talking to partners who have not yet recognised, key questions include:

- What recognition options host governments are considering, including any conditionality that they may be considering applying (e.g. progress on elections, security guarantees for Israel) if they go ahead with recognition
- Any preliminary conclusions reached, or information about any emerging preference
- Current timelines for reaching a decision
- Views on the key issues involved (bilateral equities with different partners, assessments of the likelihood of success of different options, key risks identified in developing a new position, or staying with the status quo)

9 Please also feel free to draw on the talking points below which summarise our current approach. We would stress that Ministers have not yet taken a decision and there is a range of potential outcomes to deliberations.

- New Zealand is a long-standing supporter of the two state solution.
- We have been clear and consistent that Palestinian statehood is not a question of if, but when.
- New Zealand agrees with the international community that, after decades of failure to find a solution, compounded by what we are now seeing in Gaza, we have to find a different way forward. We recognise that the facts on the ground have changed fundamentally.
- The key question for us is how best to respond to these changed

circumstances.

- We are closely following the discussion about whether to bring forward recognition of a Palestinian state, accompanied by a series of commitments by the Palestinian Authority and the wider region.
- New Zealand is ready to be part of this discussion. The New Zealand Cabinet has begun a decision-making process and Minister Peters will outline New Zealand's position at the UN General Assembly in September.
- The issues involved are highly complex. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

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[ENDS]

RESTRICTED

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X-MFAT-MOBILE

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
To:
Cc:
Subject: Re: Updated note on policy options that sit alongside a decision on recognition [SEC=RESTRICTED]
Date: Thursday, 4 September 2025 12:56:45 pm

Thanks s9(2) for this informal note and all the work that went into it.

Happy to discuss this in person tomorrow, s9(2)(g)(i)

s9(2)(g)(i)

Best

s9(2)
/s/

s9(2)(g)(ii)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

Office of Rt Hon Winston Peters
New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs
Phone/WhatsApp: s9(2)(a)

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 9:46:34 PM
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT to MFAT
secondee in MFA Office

Subject: Updated note on policy options that sit alongside a decision on recognition
[SEC=RESTRICTED]

[SEEMAIL] [RESTRICTED]

RESTRICTED

Hi all

Further to the draft sent over yesterday, I am attaching a slightly updated version which has now been consulted with divisions. Key changes from what was sent yesterday are:

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

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From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
To:
Cc:

Subject: RE: Recognition: If leaked TPs - for comment [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Friday, 5 September 2025 3:57:07 pm

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Oh no, sorry, misread the last line of your message that OMFA will distribute. Sounds great.

UNCLASSIFIED

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Friday, September 5, 2025 3:55 PM
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT to MFAT
secondee in MFA Office

Subject: RE: Recognition: If leaked TPs - for comment [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks s9(2) Will hold on these and we can come back to distribution after FPS.
() (ii)

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT
secondee to MFA
Office to MFAT

Subject: RE: Recognition: If leaked TPs - for comment [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks for these s9(2) Have lightly edited below.

I don't see a need to get ahead of the FPS discussion. Once it has happened, I'll discuss

contingency talking points with MFA, and OMFA will distribute what he approves (if anything) to Ministers' offices, and send you a copy.

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT to MFAT
seconded in MFA Office

Sent: Friday, 5 September 2025 3:38 PM

To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Subject: Recognition: If leaked TPs - for comment [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi all

Below are the draft TPs MEA drafted earlier, in event of a leak. Please confirm your comfort (a) with the formulation and (b) that we can distribute to key agencies to share with their Ministers (unless you prefer to do that at your end s9(2)(g)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

s9(2)(g)(i)

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UNCLASSIFIED

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From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Thursday, 25 September 2025 9:39 am
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc:
Subject: RE: UNGA80: Draft national statement
Attachments: UNGA national statement 2025 consolidated comments for OMFA.docx
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi s9(2)
() (ii)

Thanks for the opportunity to look at this. Attached is a tracked changes copy of consolidated comments from us, with comments in the margins. We have worked hard to keep to the brief of responding on factual errors only, including some thoughts on areas that could possibly be misinterpreted as currently drafted. s6(a)

Overall, we also wanted to highlight that, tonally (as well as factually) the statement will be very challenging to s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Happy to chat if you have any questions.

Good luck!

s9(2)
() (ii)

From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Wednesday, 24 September 2025 1:31 pm
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)

From MFAT secondee to
MFA Office to MFAT

Subject: UNGA80: Draft national statement
Importance: High

Hi s9(2)(g)(ii)

Please find attached MFA's draft UNGA National Statement for delivery on Saturday NZT.

MFA has signed it off, pending the finalisation of the Government's preliminary decision on recognition of Palestine s6(a) I am therefore not seeking editorial input, but rather sharing it so that: a) you can point out any factual errors, if there are any; and b) this can inform the diplomatic tasking/messaging you're working on (alongside the draft PR/Q&A documents you have in hard copy).

Please do not pass this on to additional addressees.

I would intend to share with you finalised versions of this statement, the PR and Q&A documents on Friday NZT,s6(a)

Best,

s9(2)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

s9(2)(g)(ii)

| Office of Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs | Minister for Racing | Minister for Rail

DDI: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Email: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

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