



23 July 2025

Minister of Foreign Affairs

For action by

25 July 2025

Israel/Palestine: Two-State Solution Conference

BRIEFING Decision Submission

PURPOSE To seek your approval of New Zealand's approach to the Two-State Solution Conference.

Recommended referrals

Prime Minister	For information by	25 July 2025
Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs	For information by	25 July 2025
Minister of Defence	For information by	25 July 2025

Contact details

NAME	ROLE	DIVISION	WORK PHONE
s9(2)(g)(ii)	Divisional Manager	Middle East and Africa Division	s9(2)(a)
	Unit Manager	Middle East and Africa Division	

Minister's Office to complete

☐ Approved	☐ Noted	☐ Referred
☐ Needs amendment	☐ Declined	☐ Withdrawn
☐ Overtaken by events	☐ See Minister's notes	

Comments

Israel/Palestine: Two-State Solution Conference

Key points

- The French/Saudi Two-State Solution Conference has been rescheduled. There will be a Ministerial-level conference in New York from 28-30 July and possibly a high-level segment during High-Level Week in September 2025.
 - The core drivers behind the approach being led by France and Saudi Arabia are: supporting a ceasefire; reviving momentum towards a two-state solution; soliciting security guarantees for Israel; and building a legitimate Palestinian leadership with whom a downstream Israeli Government could ultimately engage.
 - Current indications are that states do not intend to formally announce that they recognise Palestine as a state in New York from 28-30 July. Rather, the conference leads intend to discuss specific conditions helpful to advancing a viable Palestinian state. We expect some (including France) may link these elements to potential 'conditional recognition' of statehood.
 - The key focus will be on an interrelated package of reforms and commitments designed to build the key elements of a Palestinian state. s6(a)
-
- France and Saudi Arabia's efforts have already generated political momentum, including a commitment by Palestinian President Abbas to hold elections before the end of 2025.
 - The conference is expected to include significant discussions on the role of recognition in this context. s6(a)
 - New Zealand's current approach is that recognition is a question of 'when, not if'. This has been predicated on the assumption that recognition would only be logical after a mutual political deal had been reached between Israel and the Palestinians. s6(a)
-
- In this context, officials recommend that New Zealand respond s6(a)
in signalling that recognition could be a *contribution* towards rebuilding momentum towards a two-state solution. It would mean signalling that there could be an alternative pathway towards recognition, that might see us recognising Palestine absent a negotiated peace. But we would make no commitment to the timing of such a decision, or the conditions we would need to see in place first. In doing so, our intention is to make it clear that we wish to keep the possibility of a two-state solution alive, despite the dire situation on the ground and the absence of a political process.
 - Officials recommend that New Zealand avoid detailing specific criteria that would need to be in place. In practice New Zealand would only consider recognition in the event that we judge it would genuinely make a credible contribution to a meaningful resolution to the current conflict. We expect key conditions would need to include representative political leadership,

Israel/Palestine: Two-State Solution Conference

regional support, and a genuine intent to respect Israeli security (issues that New Zealand is supportive of advancing in any event).

- Officials recommend New Zealand also continue to support measures ultimately necessary for any viable two state solution including:
 - Building credible Palestinian political representation, including a binding commitment for elections.
 - Support for the economic viability of any future Palestinian state.
 - Commitments that would help secure Israel's needs – particularly security guarantees and normalisation.
 - Upholding international law, including ensuring safe, rapid, and unimpeded humanitarian access throughout Gaza.
- Related issues such as the humanitarian situation will also be discussed at the conference. Officials will engage in line with existing policy settings.
- A draft national statement, outlining New Zealand's position and priorities, is attached.

s9(2)(g)(ii)

for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Israel/Palestine: Two-State Solution Conference Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- | | | |
|---|--|-----------------|
| 1 | Agree that New Zealand should engage in the Two-State Solution Conference in support of an outcome that advances and protects the two-state solution. | Yes / No |
| 2 | Agree New Zealand should s6(a) signalling that recognition of Palestinian statehood could be a contribution to keeping the two-state solution alive. | Yes / No |
| 3 | s6(a) | Yes / No |
| 4 | Agree New Zealand should continue to support measures essential for a viable Palestinian state, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building credible Palestinian political representation. • Supporting the economic viability of any future Palestinian state. • Helping to secure Israel's needs – particularly security guarantees and normalisation. • Upholding international law, including ensuring safe, rapid, and unimpeded humanitarian access throughout Gaza. | Yes / No |
| 5 | Note officials may engage on other issues, including humanitarian issues, at the Two-State Solution Conference in line with existing policy settings. | Yes / No |
| 6 | Approve the proposed national statement attached in Annex I. | Yes / No |
| 7 | Refer a copy of this submission to the Prime Minister, the Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of Defence. | Yes / No |

Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Date: / /

Israel/Palestine: Two-State Solution Conference Report

1. The French/Saudi Two-State Solution Conference was originally scheduled for 17-20 June. It was envisioned as a high-level conference with President Macron co-chairing and most like-minded Foreign Ministers in attendance. However, the conference was postponed due to conflict escalation between Israel and Iran.
2. The conference has now been rescheduled and rescoped. There will be a Ministerial-level conference in New York from 28-30 July and possibly a high-level segment during High-Level Week in September 2025.
3. It remains unclear how the conference will unfold. At this stage, indications are that the July events will focus on how to preserve the space for a two-state solution. The Conference will also explore several related issues, including the humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
4. France and others intend to use the conference to discuss specific conditions helpful to advancing a viable Palestinian state. Some may go as far as to discuss “conditional recognition”. The plan for doing so would be to build a package of reforms and commitments that are considered necessary for a Palestinian state to be a viable and credible actor in political negotiations with Israel to (one day) finalise agreed parameters of a two-state solution. s6(a)
 - s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -
5. s6(a)

frustration at the lack of a viable path to a long-term solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict; and by concerns that Israel’s actions, including expanding settlements and undermining the Palestinian Authority, may remove the possibility of a future Palestinian state altogether. The hope is that the current crisis has generated a moment of potential political will to do something different. The conference is also a response to the scale of the humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Protecting the two-state solution

6. While the precise sequencing is unclear, France’s aim is to protect the two-state solution by advancing an interrelated package of reforms and commitments that would build the key

Israel/Palestine: Two-State Solution Conference

elements of a Palestinian state. In addition to addressing these challenges, the long-term hope is that the guarantees involved could eventually draw a subsequent Israeli government back to the table, for a political process that could lead to a long term two-state solution. This includes addressing the political challenges facing Palestinian leadership (especially the Palestinian Authority and ensuring no place for Hamas in the governance of Gaza), building economic security, and locking in support from the region. The package is also focused on building elements that would help secure Israel's needs – particularly security guarantees and normalisation of relations with Arab states.

7. s6(a)

The package is also intended to advance Palestinian capacity s6(a)
The hope is that this might change Israel's calculus at some point in the future.

8. France and Saudi Arabia's efforts have already generated political momentum. On 19 July, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas announced that elections for the Palestinian National Council will be held by the end of 2025. This follows a public commitment to hold elections within a year in an open letter from Abbas to President Macron and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in June. That letter also called for the demilitarisation of Hamas and the deployment of international forces as part of a stabilisation and protection mission.

9. Accordingly, we understand discussions at the Conference are likely to focus on:

- Guarantees to ensure democratically robust Palestinian political leadership, including binding commitments by the **Palestinian Authority to hold elections**, renew political leadership, and continue reform.
- Concrete steps to **build the economic viability of a Palestinian state**, including by direct commitments from the region (and others) to underwrite Palestine economically. This may involve financial investment in the Palestinian Authority.
- Regional commitments to engagement with and **integration of Israel**, with (explicit or implied) commitments to downstream normalisation between s6(a)
- **Security guarantees for Israel**, including a reassertion of the Palestinian Authority's principles of non-violence, and confirmation that Hamas has no future role in the governance of any Palestinian territory.
- Discussion on potential recognition by those Member States who have not done so, either now, or s9(2)(g)(i) under future conditions in line with the elements above.

New Zealand's approach

Recognition

10. Officials recommend that New Zealand's focus for the Conference should be to support an outcome document that supports efforts to break the stalemate on recognition and to advance good ideas for supporting Palestinian capacity.

Israel/Palestine: Two-State Solution Conference

11. The situation in Gaza and the West Bank, and Israel's apparent rejection of a two-state solution, is shaping how states approaching the question of recognition. s6(a), s6(b)(i)
12. New Zealand's long-standing approach to recognition is to avoid making explicit statements of recognition or non-recognition of states, but to say that this can be inferred from our conduct and actions. s6(a)
13. Our present position is that recognition is a matter of "when, not if" and that, absent a negotiated political agreement with Israel, a unilateral assertion of Palestinian statehood would not alleviate the current plight of the Palestinian people. We have gone on to note that we would need to be confident that any change in our current settings would contribute credibly to a serious diplomatic push to achieve a two-state solution. We have also stated that we do not believe we are currently at that point.
14. Officials recommend that New Zealand move s6(a) including responding to Israel's blocking of a negotiated pathway by acknowledging that, in the new circumstances, recognition could, at some point in the future, be a contribution towards a two-state solution. This would build on our current approach that recognition is a question of 'when, not if' by acknowledging an alternate pathway but without making any commitment to timing or conditions. In doing so, the intention is to keep the possibility of a two-state solution alive.
15. Officials do not recommend that we detail specific criteria that would need to be in place. In practice, however, New Zealand would only consider recognition in the event that recognition would make a credible contribution to meaningful resolution, and key conditions were in place. Such conditions would need to include representative political leadership, regional support, and genuine intent to respect Israeli security (issues that New Zealand is supportive of advancing in any event).
16. Officials also recommend New Zealand support any measures that would promote progress towards:
 - Building credible Palestinian political representation, including a binding commitment for elections.
 - Support for the economic viability of any future Palestinian state.
 - Commitments that would help secure Israel's needs – particularly security guarantees and normalisation.
 - Upholding international law, including ensuring safe, rapid, and unimpeded humanitarian access throughout Gaza.
17. We recommend framing these as elements New Zealand considers important for preserving the two-state solution rather than pre-conditions for recognition. We also suggest making a clear caveat that New Zealand would *only* consider recognition if key elements were in place,

Israel/Palestine: Two-State Solution Conference

and we were confident recognition would contribute credibly to a genuine and sustainable political outcome.

Humanitarian issues

18. Given the likelihood that these issues will be raised, officials also recommend that we engage on humanitarian issues at the Conference. This could include:

- Reinforcing that parties to the conflict must uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law, including protecting civilians, humanitarian workers, and medical workers, and ensuring rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access throughout Gaza.
- Reiterating New Zealand's support for neutral, impartial, and independent humanitarian action.
- Reaffirming New Zealand's ongoing contributions to international humanitarian efforts, and our commitment to support long term reconstruction alongside regional and international partners.
- Highlighting New Zealand's June 2025 commitment of NZ\$7.75 million to support humanitarian and stabilisation efforts.

Attendance at the Conference

19. New Zealand will be represented at the July event at officials' level as well as by New Zealand's Permanent Representative to the UN. So far it is confirmed that Foreign Ministers from France, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, and Türkiye will be attending, with others yet to announce. s6(b)(i)

Germany will be represented at Minister of State level and the United Arab Emirates by a junior Minister. s6(b)(i)

Resourcing

20. The recommendations made in this submission will be met from within existing baselines and do not require a reprioritisation of work. There are no people implications.

Israel/Palestine: Two-State Solution Conference

Annex I: Draft national statement

s9(2)(g)(i)

Proactively released by the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

RESTRICTED

Page 10 of 10

Israel/Palestine: Two-State Solution Conference

s9(2)(g)(i)

Proactively released by the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

RESTRICTED