Politics

Israel's Knesset Shuns Two-State Solution in Latest US Clash

- Three-quarters of UN members back Palestinian statehood
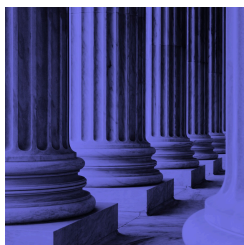- Israel has been at war with Hamas in Gaza for past nine months

People search the rubble of destroyed buildings following Israeli bombardment in Nuseirat in the Gaza Strip. *Photographer: Eyad Baba/AFP/Getty Images*

By [Galit Altstein](#)

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Israel's parliament passed a resolution expressing formal opposition to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, warning that it could serve as a base for terrorist groups.

"The Knesset is adamantly opposed to the establishment of a Palestinian state west of the Jordan river," the legislature said in the resolution, which was adopted at a sitting in Jerusalem early Thursday with backing from 68 of its 120 members.

About three quarters of United Nations members have expressed their support for, or recognition of, Palestinian statehood – with Spain, Norway and Ireland joining the latter category in May. While the prospect of it being able to peacefully co-exist with Israel looks increasingly remote in light of the war raging in the Gaza Strip, some of Israel's allies say a two-state solution – which has been discussed for decades – is what's needed to advance peace in the Middle East.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is due to visit Washington next week where the Biden administration is expected to urge acceptance of a Palestinian state as the way to bring Arab states into the rebuilding of Gaza and normalization of relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

John Kirby, spokesman for the US National Security Council, told reporters Thursday that a two-state solution "is not something that President Biden is going to give up on" even though it will require "strong courage and leadership in the region to bring about that outcome."

At the United Nations, US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield told reporters that it's "the only, only future that we see for this region in which Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side in peace." UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was "very disappointed" by the Knesset's decision, which he sees as "clearly inconsistent with UN resolutions, international law and prior agreements," according to spokesman Stephane Dujarric.

The war in Gaza erupted after the Iranian-backed militant group Hamas attacked southern Israel on Oct. 7 last year, killing 1,200 people and taking about 250 hostages. Netanyahu says the war is necessary to destroy Hamas, which is designated a terrorist organization by the US and the European Union.

Truce talks have dragged on for several weeks, and there is no indication if, or when, they may be concluded.

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The Knesset's resolution is a hardening of its position earlier this year, which rejected that the notion that a Palestinian state could be declared unilaterally.

In 2009, Netanyahu said he'd accept a demilitarized Palestinian state as long as it recognized Israel. Negotiations fell apart and, in recent years, Netanyahu and the Israeli public have stepped away from supporting two states, a sentiment that has strengthened since Oct. 7.
– With assistance from Augusta Saraiva and Michelle Jamrisko

(Updates with White House, UN comments in paragraphs below map.)