



By: Tomorrow's Affairs Staff

# Who benefits from Palestine joining the BRICS?



Palestine will officially apply for BRICS membership after the summit of this developing economies organisation next October in the Russian city of Kazan, according to Palestine's ambassador to Moscow.

This resolves a small confusion about the Palestinian application for membership since the host foreign ministry announced last year, on the eve of the summit in South Africa, that Palestine is one of the 23 countries that have already formally requested admission to BRICS.

The members of this organisation, and especially its founding fathers, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, should not interfere with the Palestinian request, particularly because BRICS initiated a membership **expansion** last year, after 14 years of existence.

As of January 1, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates are also full members, and Argentina dropped out of the enlargement process following the decision of the new administration of President Javier Milei.

As a result, the Palestinian application benefits from the BRICS strategy to open doors for new members. And secondly, Palestine is knocking on the door of an organisation whose most important members have traditionally had a patronising relationship with it.

However, BRICS has not made it clear whether or when they will accept Palestine's request for membership.

## A political, not an economic issue

For an organisation that advocates a change of model in international political and economic relations and greater participation of developing economies, especially the Global South, the admission of Palestine is primarily a political issue, to a much lesser extent an economic one.

Palestine is seeking BRICS membership at a time of great crisis, so its request cannot be removed from the context of the conflict in the Middle East, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and the real risks of the conflict spreading to the entire region.

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Hence, the speed with which the main BRICS members decide on the Palestinian request will be an indicator of the extent to which they want to take a more active role in the Middle East crisis.

China, as the undisputed leader of the bloc, has so far been quite restrained and, apart from the declarative, has not shown a greater effort to get involved in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

However, China has recently shown that it does not want to be pushed out of the process by bringing together all the Palestinian factions in Beijing and mediating their agreement on the formation of a joint government.

## The decision-making pace

The possible admission of Palestine to BRICS and that in the short term after the October summit in Russia, would show that the organisation has the ambition to become more deeply involved in solving the crisis and especially to exercise influence in post-conflict issues, such as the reconstruction of Gaza and the creation of new Palestinian institutions.

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Last year's summit in Johannesburg brought a declaration that calls for direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine, which would lead to a two-state solution and the establishment of a sovereign, independent, and sustainable State of Palestine.

However, at the first subsequent meeting of the bloc leaders, held in virtual form last November, there was no joint statement regarding Hamas's terrorist attacks on Israel and the Israeli military response in Gaza that followed.

"We've called upon all parties to exercise maximum restraint," **said** the then BRICS chairman, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, and explained that diplomats did not have enough time to prepare a joint declaration.

## Individual interests before shared ones

Although they have very similar positions towards Palestine, BRICS members might be reluctant to accept Palestine into the bloc, as this will oblige them to maintain those common positions even in the post-conflict period. However, some of them, such as India and China, will adjust their actions in the region in relation to their important interests towards Israel, so Palestine's membership could be a burden for them.



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Palestine, on the other hand, has many more reasons to join the BRICS as soon as possible. For the PA leadership, this would be an important confirmation of legitimacy in the international framework.

Possible rapid admission to BRICS would partially make up for Palestine's **denial** of full UN membership last April due to a US veto in the Security Council.

Also, by being a member of the bloc, Palestine could expect, and even demand, collective protection of its interests in the process of creating a post-conflict architecture in the Middle East. However, it is unlikely that all influential bloc members would accept such an obligation.

Therefore, the decision on the Palestinian application for membership is likely to await the resolution of the Middle Eastern crisis, or at least set it on a path towards a solution, during which the BRICS members will prioritise realising their individual interests in the region.