



By: Tomorrow's Affairs Staff

The New York Declaration and the new dynamics of the Middle East



The UN General Assembly has **adopted** a resolution supporting "tangible, timebound and irreversible steps" towards a two-state solution, with a clear message that Hamas cannot be part of a future Palestinian authority.

The text – known as the New York Declaration – was endorsed by an overwhelming **majority**: 142 in favour, 10 against, and 12 abstentions.

The resolution was **prepared** by France and Saudi Arabia, and its text was drafted at the East River meetings in July, where the first attempt was made to agree on a political framework as the conflict continues.

Washington and Israel **voted** against it, further exacerbating the atmosphere ahead of the meeting of leaders in New York.

This vote in itself does not change the situation on the ground. But it does change the political arena: the centre of gravity has shifted from the Security Council, where resolutions are blocked by vetoes, to the General Assembly, which creates a broader, albeit nonbinding, consensus.

The crucial value of the declaration is that it brought together three previously contradictory demands – an internationally recognised roadmap to Palestinian statehood, an unequivocal condemnation of Hamas and its exclusion from the future government – in an attempt to bridge the gap between Western insistence on security guarantees and Arab demands for a clear goal of statehood.

The text is not merely general but outlines a sequence: a ceasefire, the takeover of administration by the Palestinian Authority, the disarmament of Hamas with international support and supervision, and the opening of the political process towards a sovereign Palestinian state.

Why is this different from previous resolutions?

For decades, the UN has reaffirmed its support for a two-state solution in principle. The difference now lies in the operationalisation.

The declaration introduces time markers and envisages a role for the UN in stabilisation, including monitoring the transfer of power and protecting civilians.

In addition, the text **condemns** Hamas' October 2023 attack and calls for the surrender of weapons and the end of its rule in Gaza.

Many European countries see this framework as a tool to connect the security narrative and the political goal, not to make them mutually exclusive

It is a rare case to date that the UN has so clearly formulated a demand that coincides with the Israeli and Western insistence on security.

This invalidates the argument that the UN is ignoring Hamas' responsibility while leaving a framework for Arab states to sign the same document without facing accusations of double standards.

In practice, the declaration aims to break the impasse: incorporating security demands such as disarming Hamas, safeguarding Israel, and monitoring the transition into the UN text transforms statehood from an abstract concept into a tangible process.

This also explains why many European countries, which are normally cautious in their words regarding Israel, have now voted "yes". They see this framework as a tool to connect the security narrative and the political goal, not to make them mutually exclusive.

Israel, the USA and the "negative coalition"

Israel and the US voted against the resolution,

arguing that it was counterproductive as it allegedly rewarded Hamas and took the focus away from immediate negotiations.

Israeli officials called the vote "shameful", and Washington said the format diluted serious diplomacy. But the larger the majority in the General Assembly, the more difficult it is to isolate countries that recognise Palestine or join a future UN stabilisation mechanism.

Some Western countries – including Britain, France, Canada, Australia and Belgium – could formally recognise the Palestinian state

A negative vote does not block the formation of a coalition of states acting outside the Security Council, which is at the heart of this shift in dynamics.

On the sidelines of the world leaders' week at the UN, an event is being announced at which some Western countries – including Britain, France, Canada, Australia and Belgium – could formally **recognise** the Palestinian state.

If this happens, the General Assembly will cease to be just a forum for declarations and become a political bridge to concrete legal and bilateral action.

Feasibility and obstacles

The most significant practical issue is the sequence of responsibilities. The declaration calls for the Palestinian Authority to **take over** institutions and security and for Hamas to disarm and withdraw. This implies the need for an international mission to ensure a smooth transition without creating a power vacuum.

Such a model is only conceivable if a UN mandate for protection and monitoring, a regional framework with Arab police capacities and a financial plan for reconstruction are combined. Without one of these links, the whole process is without support.

Another obstacle comes from Israeli politics itself. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu **repeats** that there will be "no Palestinian state". The hard core of the coalition is already calling for the acceleration of settlement expansion and even the annexation of parts of the West Bank.

In diplomatic talks, the idea of a "UN transitional shield" was mentioned – a temporary international stabilisation mission

The more it moves in this direction, the less room there is for the implementation of the declaration and the higher the costs for states that want to invest resources and political capital in the UN process.

And perhaps most importantly, the problem is Gaza after the war. The declaration establishes the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and expels Hamas but does not solve the question of who will carry out the disarmament and how the return of paramilitary structures can be permanently prevented.

In diplomatic talks, the idea of a "UN transitional shield" was **mentioned** – a temporary international stabilisation mission with a clearly defined deadline and a disengagement plan to prevent Gaza from becoming a new occupation zone with no end. Without such a framework, Gaza will remain a sticking point even if there is a broader political agreement.

Regional and European perspective

For the Arab states, especially the Gulf states, the declaration is a political formula that makes it easier for them to maintain relations with the West and at the same time show their public that Palestinian statehood is not an empty story.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are given a framework in which they can invest

money and police forces, albeit under the auspices of the UN and with security clauses.

This is an important lesson after the failed talks on the normalisation of relations with Israel: from now on, any agreement must include measurable progress towards Palestinian statehood.



France is co-author of the text, and several European governments have already announced the recognition of Palestine – Emmanuel Macron with Keir Starmer

Europe sees this document as an opportunity to reclaim its role. France is co-author of the text, and several European governments have already announced the recognition of Palestine.

If this is done in a coordinated way during the leaders' week in New York, Europe will not be acting against the US but in line with the UN framework, which combines security guarantees and a political objective.

This would allow Washington to accept practical steps without changing its voting behaviour in the UN – from protecting civilians to funding the Palestinian Authority – especially if part of the work is done by European and Arab states.

Time after 22 September

The following days will be a test of political seriousness. If a group of states formalises the recognition of Palestine, the declaration will take on the weight of a legal and political framework: bilateral recognition, joint action

plans, targeted funding for the Palestinian Authority, training programmes for the police and preparations for the UN mandate in Gaza.

If the recognitions fail to materialise, the document will remain a strong signal but lack the leverage to turn it into a real process.

Once the text is endorsed by the states that control the money, training and border access, the reality changes

At the same time, Israel will reinforce the message that it is a declaration without effect. But once the text is endorsed by the states that control the money, training and border access, the reality changes.

Anything that leads to annexation or settlement expansion becomes more costly—politically in European capitals, legally in national courts, and economically in relation to states that now have a public foothold in the UN resolution.

Alternative path is emerging

The New York Declaration does not achieve peace, but it does provide a method. Its value lies in the fact that it ties the political goal of Palestinian statehood to verifiable security policy and institutional steps.

That is why it insists on both condemning Hamas and on a political horizon for the Palestinians. That is why it is relying on Arab and European capacities and not on unlimited American involvement.

This may not solve the conflict, but it will change the way the world deals with it

What happened in New York signifies a shift in the situation: rather than endless vetoes in the Security Council, a politically legitimate and financially viable alternative path is emerging.

If a series of recognitions follow in the coming days, if the UN presents a mission framework and the Arab-European bloc ties the funds to the transitional phases, there will be a work plan with clear measuring points for the first time.

This may not solve the conflict, but it will change the way the world deals with it – from declarations to an operational plan.