



## Summary

- This week, the Swiss parliament (National Council) rejected a proposal to recognize the state of Palestine at the present time.
- It was rejected by 116 votes to 66, mainly thanks to the votes of the conservative parliamentary majority.
- Back in 2025, the cantonal representatives (Council of States) clearly rejected the same proposal by 27 votes to 17.
- The Swiss government (Federal Council), which is responsible for state recognition, also rejects this at the present time.
- The rejection is materially correct. This is because the West Bank and Gaza do not fulfill the requirements of a state. Politically, recognizing the state of Palestine today would be a reward for Hamas for the massacre of October 7, 2023.
- For the same reasons, various other Central European countries and the USA also reject the recognition of Palestine at the present time.

From Sacha Wigdorovits

In 1988, in the days of the Eastern Bloc dominated by the [anti-Zionist Soviet Union](#), Poland, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria recognized Palestine as a state. In the course of the recent Gaza war, numerous other states joined them in protesting against Israel's conduct of the war, which they criticized as unacceptable. Among the major European countries, these include Spain, France and Great Britain. Today, a total of 157 of the 193 UN states recognize Palestine.

However, other important European, Asian and American countries are not yet prepared to recognize Palestine as a state. These include Germany, Italy, Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Greece, the USA and Japan.



## Palestine: Swiss parliament makes the right political and moral decision

Last year, the Council of States and now the National Council had to deal with the recognition of the State of Palestine by Switzerland due to a standing initiative by the Canton of Geneva. Geneva had called for this recognition. Just as with the national government, which is against the current recognition of Palestine, the western Swiss canton also found little support in parliament: both chambers rejected the request with clear majorities. The result in the Council of States was 27 to 17, in the National Council 116 to 66.

Dysfunctional entity - wrong signal to Hamas

In the National Council, Erich Vontobel (EDU Zurich) gave the main reasons for this:

- There are considerable doubts under international law. This is because the recognition of a state requires a state territory, a state people and a functioning state authority. These requirements are not met in the case of Palestine.
- State recognition of Palestine in the current situation would send out a problematic signal. The Gaza Strip remains under the control of Hamas, which opposes the peace process, openly wants to destroy Israel and is classified as a terrorist organization by Switzerland.

Both arguments are correct. Neither the West Bank, which is controlled by the PLO through the Palestinian Authority PA, nor the Gaza Strip, which is still controlled by Hamas, even come close to fulfilling the requirements of a state. Both territories are ruled by authorities that have no democratic legitimacy and are corrupt (especially the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank).

In the Gaza Strip (Hamas), there is also no willingness to recognize the right of its neighbor Israel to exist, but instead attempts to destroy it by any means necessary. Such fantasies of annihilation also still exist in the West Bank, even if they are less openly expressed there.

Similar to the governments of France and the UK last year, the left-green supporters



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of the status initiative in parliament criticize Israel's conduct of the war in the Gaza Strip. By recognizing Palestine, they therefore want to exert pressure on the Jewish state and punish it, as it were.

This approach is unjust and amoral in the extreme. The war in Gaza was not caused by Israel, but by the terrorist organization Hamas, which attacked Israel on 7 October 2023 and carried out a massacre that claimed the lives of over 1,200 people, from small children to the elderly.

Moreover, it was Hamas that misused the population of Gaza as a shield during the war. It did not merely accept the deaths of many of its own civilians. It deliberately caused them in order to misuse them for its own propaganda purposes. Both are well documented by statements from Hamas leaders. Rewarding this inhuman behavior with the recognition of a state of its own would be outrageous and highly cynical.

In addition, Israel is not impressed by such political proclamations, especially not when they come from Europe. On the contrary: the more Israel is pushed back against the wall and isolated by the Europeans, the more it hides itself away, closes ranks and resists attempts to exert pressure.

This only strengthens the current Israeli right-wing government and makes it even more difficult to resolve the Palestinian question. Even a center-right government, which has a good chance of coming to power in the elections in October, would not be impressed by the (one-sided) pressure from Europe.

The only country that can put political pressure on Israel is the USA – and it rejects recognition of Palestine unless it is linked to a peace agreement that secures Israel's right to exist. The Swiss Foreign Minister, Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis, made exactly the same argument in the current parliamentary debate. On behalf of the Swiss government, he therefore once again rejected the current unilateral recognition of Palestine as a state.

Referendum likely in 2027 – rejection also likely

With the rejection by the National Council, the question of whether Switzerland should recognize Palestine as a state is unlikely to be off the table. A left-wing/green popular initiative is still pending, which calls for this recognition to be enshrined in the Federal Constitution. If it reaches the required number of 100,000 signatures, it



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is likely to be put to the vote in 2027.

According to a survey published by the NZZ am Sonntag in November 2025, this initiative would have a good chance of being accepted, at least at a popular level. For example, 57% of respondents said yes to state recognition of Palestine, 33% said no and 10% were undecided. The referendum scored particularly well among women and in French-speaking Switzerland, as well as, of course, among the left-wing and green parties.

However, only constitutional initiatives are permitted in Switzerland, and these require a majority of the cantons as well as a majority of the cantons in order to be adopted. In view of the fact that the majority of Swiss cantons are bourgeois, the popular initiative to recognize Palestine is therefore likely to fail. The two negative decisions by the Council of States and the National Council are the best indicator of this.

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