

In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.
All praise and thanks belong to God, the Lord of the Worlds.
May peace and prayers be upon Prophet Muhammad and all of God's prophets.



Council on American-Islamic Relations
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October 1, 2025

To the Offices of U.S. Representatives: Jake Auchincloss, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Greg Landsman, Timothy M. Kennedy, Dan Goldman, Grace Meng, Marilyn Strickland, Emilia Sykes, Josh Gottheimer, Frank Pallone Jr., Jared Moskowitz, Lois Frankel, Kim Schrier, Thomas R. Suozzi, Jimmy Panetta, Brad Schneider, Angie Craig, Kevin Mullin, Juan Vargas, Ritchie Torres, Chris Pappas, Eric Swalwell, Ted W. Lieu, George Latimer, Haley Stevens, Darren Soto, Greg Stanton, Nikki Budzinski, Shri Thanedar, and Wesley Bell.

RE: Recognition of Palestine Is a Moral Imperative, Not a “Performative” Act

Dear U.S. Representatives:

On behalf of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the nation’s largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, I write to express our profound disappointment and serious concern over your [September 25 letter](#) to Secretary of State Marco Rubio regarding recognition of a Palestinian state.

Your letter dismisses recent recognitions of Palestinian statehood as “*unilateral and performative.*” We respectfully disagree and urge you to reconsider. Recognition of Palestine is neither unilateral nor symbolic. It is an acknowledgment of undeniable reality: the Palestinian people exist, their institutions exist, their aspirations exist, and the State of Palestine is recognized today by 157 of 193 U.N. member states. To deny this is akin to declaring that the sun or the moon do not exist simply because one chooses not to look.

History shows that U.S. refusals to recognize undeniable realities do not last. The United States was among the last nations to recognize the legitimacy of the South African anti-apartheid movement and to support the global boycott campaign. Recognition of Palestine stands in that same moral lineage, and delay only undermines U.S. credibility on human rights and international law.

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For decades, Israel's government has escalated efforts to foreclose Palestinian sovereignty through annexation threats, settlement expansion, and categorical denials that "*there will be no Palestinian state.*" Recognition is not "*performative*" when one side has spent generations working to prevent it:

- Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [declared](#) in a 2015 interview, "*I am proud to have prevented the establishment of a Palestinian state,*" and more [recently stated](#), "It will not happen. A Palestinian state will not be established west of the Jordan."
- At a September 2025 event in the illegal settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, Netanyahu [also declared](#), "*We are going to fulfill our promise that there will be no Palestinian state. This place belongs to us,*" according to the *Times of Israel*.
- Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich recently said, [while announcing approval for the expansion of the illegal E1 settlement](#) East of Jerusalem, "*This reality finally buries the idea of a Palestinian state, because there is nothing to recognize and no one to recognize.*"
- Former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett [declared](#) to *The New Yorker* in 2013, "*I will do everything in my power to make sure they [Palestinians] never get a state.*"
- Minister Gideon Sa'ar [stated](#), "*Between the Jordan River and the sea there won't be another independent state.*"

Taken together with many other statements by Israeli political leaders, these remarks make clear that the Israeli government's official opposition to Palestinian statehood is not a matter of timing but of outright denial. **Recognition is therefore not a unilateral step, but a necessary corrective to an orchestrated Israeli government campaign to erase Palestinian sovereignty.**

Equally troubling, your letter reflects a broader pattern of anti-Palestinian racism that denies Palestinians recognition and self-determination. Refusing to acknowledge Palestinian statehood while Israel wages a military campaign that has killed tens of thousands of men, women, and children effectively rewards Israel for actions that Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Association of Genocide Scholars, and the United Nations have already identified as genocide. To withhold recognition of Palestinian statehood under these circumstances provides cover for Israel's ongoing war crimes, acts of genocide, systems of apartheid, and illegal military occupation and annexation - while sending the message that Palestinian lives are expendable.

CAIR believes that U.S. recognition of Palestine is essential for any durable peace. It would place the United States in line with international consensus, strengthen prospects for accountability, and affirm the basic dignity of Palestinians as a people. Far from being performative, recognition is a prerequisite to justice, diplomacy, and a two-state solution worthy of the name.

We urge you to reconsider your position. Anything less signals that America will continue to stand on the wrong side of history, isolated from its allies and blind to realities on the ground.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert S. McCaw". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "R".

Robert S. McCaw
Government Affairs Department Director
Council on American-Islamic Relations