

Dear elected Representatives,

This letter is written by a group of individual civilians with different political affiliations. We are writing ahead of the upcoming vote for drafted *Proposal 237 S, Innst. 26 S (2023-2024)* for 1) The recognition of Palestine as a sovereign state, 2) Ratification of the UN Apartheid Convention, and 3) A national prohibition on goods and services from companies and entities on occupied land produced in violation of international law.

As a society we must distance ourselves from the disproportionate use of violence and collective punishment of an entire civilian population, and we **must** embrace these international bodies, like the UN, created to protect human rights and human dignity. Since Oslo-1, Norway has taken the role of negotiator and freedom advocate on the global stage, and many of us stand proudly by these efforts. That role then requires a significant diplomatic commitment.

The road map laid out by the Oslo Accords is disregarded and violated again and again, and since 2021 both Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have designated Israel occupation as apartheid.¹² When Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre himself was Minister of Foreign Affairs, the stated intention was to uphold dialogue between the two parties. What we're seeing today is that these intentions failed. Norway must now change its strategy.

If Norway is invested in a new diplomatic solution to the Israel-Palestine relationship, both parties must come to the table as equals. We cannot continue on the same track as before. Norway must ratify the UN Apartheid Convention and recognise Palestine as a state.

The UN does not have the ability to enforce its policies, and is therefore only a functioning institution **if** its member nations sustain those principles, and any breach of international agreements has consequences. Even though the Israel-Palestine relationship is exceptionally difficult, we cannot permit ourselves to have an indecisive or selective relation to International Law or the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Norway should increase their support of the ICC so it can undertake necessary investigations, and lead the charge on sanctioning Israel. Spanish Minister of Social Rights, Ione Belarra, and Belgian Deputy Prime Minister, Petra De Sutter, have both stated that EU countries should back this immediately.

Norway has had long-term investment in this issue, notably as an active member of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, where then Minister of Foreign Affairs Anniken Huitfeldt as recently as this past September, advocated for the strengthening of Palestinian institutions.³ All the knowledge and experience the Norwegian government has developed over decades of diplomacy must now be channeled into action, so that any realistic negotiations between Palestinian self-governing

¹ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>

² <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/>

³ <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/utenriksminister-huitfeldt-ledet-mote-i-giverlandsgruppen-for-palestina-ahlc/id2994930/>

authorities and Israel can commence. For this to happen we must ratify the UN Apartheid Convention and recognise Palestine as a state, so the international community can call both parties to the negotiating table.

In this climate it is crucial to emphasise that Palestinian self-governing authorities are not Hamas. The loss of civilian life we are currently witnessing should not be used as reasoning to delay further negotiations, nor to punish Palestinian self-governing authorities by further weakening their opportunities to negotiate. Rather, it is the reason to act on principle, aligned with the Oslo Accord's original objective to secure peace, stability and dignity for both the Palestinian and Israeli people of the Middle East.

With respect and goodwill,

Citizens of Norway