[Whose Flag Will Be Raised at the UN? Fatah or Hamas?](https://www.commentarymagazine.com/2015/08/28/palestinian-flag/)

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Always looking for ways to symbolize their quest for sovereignty, [the Palestinians are asking that they be allowed to raise their flag](http://www.jpost.com/landedpages/printarticle.aspx?id=413499) at the United Nations next month when the General Assembly convenes. The gesture is meaningless, but it requires bending the rules since that is a privilege restricted under the world body’s rules to member states. Since the Palestinian Authority is there as a “non-member observer state,” the PA’s allies are requesting that all such observers be granted the honor of having their banner fly in Turtle Bay. But there are two problems with the plan. One is that the only other such observer — the Vatican — [opted out of the farce.](http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2015/08/26/holy-see-declines-to-co-sponsor-palestinian-flag-initiative-at-un/) The other is that it bears asking which of the two rival Palestinian governments will the UN be honoring: the corrupt Fatah regime that runs the West Bank or the Hamas terrorists that rule Gaza? Can anyone at the UN answer the question? Or better yet, will any of the nations that will surely force this through even care?

Given the recent decision of [the Vatican to recognize Palestinian independence](https://www.commentarymagazine.com/2015/05/13/vatican-recognition-of-palestine-wont-bring-peace-closer/), it might have been natural for the church to chime in on the flag issue. But that doesn’t appear to be the case. The Vatican said that while it didn’t oppose the raising of the Palestinian flag, it did not wish to endorse the stunt or take part in it. The tiny Vatican City State has a flag with the pope’s coat of arms, but the Church sees no value in the symbolism of having it fly alongside that of other countries. But the Palestinians take comfort form such gestures and view any opportunity to pose as a sovereign state as one to be seized.

But like the entire effort to allow the Palestinians to be treated as a sovereign power without first requiring them to make peace with Israel, there’s a huge problem with the effort.

Let’s leave aside the fact that the Palestinian Authority merely exercises autonomy on the West Bank rather than acting as a state in control of territory — the basic requirement of any state aspiring for such recognition. Instead, let’s again pose the question of which Palestinian state the various supporters of proposals that seek to grant them that status think they are recognizing?

Though the Palestinians act as if both the West Bank and Gaza are one entity, separate governing bodies have run the two regions since the bloody coup in which Hamas seized control of Gaza.

In the West Bank, the corrupt Fatah Party-run kleptocracy continues its misrule of Palestinians while Israel maintains security in an attempt to stop terrorism and also keep PA leader Mahmoud Abbas safe against threats from Hamas and other Islamist groups.

In Gaza, Hamas operates a government that is an independent Palestinian state in all but name. It exercises absolute and tyrannical power over the more than one million residents of the Strip, forcing their Islamists beliefs on the population as well as using them as human shields for their terror operations. While Israel and Egypt have maintained a loose blockade of the area since the Hamas coup, food, medicine and even construction material sent to rebuild the homes destroyed in last summer’s war flow into the strip from Israel every day. Hamas could use these resources to better the lives of its people or even to rebuild a single home lost as a result of their terrorist adventurism in which they rained down thousands of missiles on Israeli cities. But instead, with the help of Iran, it builds more terror tunnels to facilitate kidnapping and murder raids into Israel as well as fortifications designed to protect the missile launchers and their terrorist personnel.

There is an argument that can be made to support some form of Palestinian Arab self-determination over a part of the territory that both Israelis and Palestinians claim as their homelands. But that recognition is impossible until either or both Fatah and Hamas are prepared to recognize the legitimacy of a Jewish state next to them, no matter where its borders might be drawn. But neither of the two, not even the supposed moderates of Fatah can do that.

The reason why they can’t is that Palestinian nationalism is inextricably tied to a war against Zionism that compels them to fight for Israel’s extinction. That is why even Fatah foments hatred and praises terrorists and terror attacks on Israelis and Jews. Hamas makes no secret of the fact that its purpose is to end the “occupation.” But by that they don’t refer to the West Bank or even Jerusalem but all of Israel.

That’s why the effort to recognize “Palestine” as a sovereign power is so dangerous even when it expresses itself in meaningless gestures like a flag raising. In doing so, the UN and even Western nations who now extend such recognition to the PA are tacitly rewarding the Palestinians for sticking to an endless war against the Jews instead of opting for peace.

No wonder the Vatican wanted no part of this charade. Neither should any nation that supports the concept of peace in the Middle East.