Palestinian Request to Fly Flag at UN Passes General Assembly Vote by Landslide Majority

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Reuters

<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/WATCH-LIVE-General-Assembly-votes-on-Palestinian-resolution-to-fly-its-flag-at-the-UN-415866>

The Palestinian flag will fly at United Nations headquarters after the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly approved a [Palestinian resolution](http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/UN-expected-to-easily-pass-resolution-allowing-Palestinian-flag-to-fly-at-New-York-HQ-415239), infuriating Israel with a move that Palestinians described as a step toward UN membership.

There were 119 votes in favor out of 193 UN members. Eight members voted against the draft measure and 45 abstained from the vote.

The United States and Israel were among eight countries that voted against the Palestinian-drafted resolution, which says the flags of non-member observer states like Palestine "shall be raised at (UN) Headquarters (in New York) and United Nations Offices following the flags of the member states."

Most of the 28-nation European Union were among the 45 nations that abstained from voting. However, France and more than half a dozen others voted in favor of the Palestinian resolution after the EU split on the issue.

"It's a step to the recognition of Palestine as a full member state of the United Nations," Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah told reporters in Paris earlier on Thursday.

The only other non-member observer state is the Vatican, which reacted coolly when the Palestinians first circulated their draft resolution last month.

The Palestinians initially presented their initiative as a joint effort with the Holy See, but [the Vatican](http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Vatican-asks-to-be-removed-from-Palestinian-flag-initiative-at-United-Nations-413270) said it would not co-sponsor the resolution and requested that its name be removed from the text.

The Vatican said on Wednesday it had not decided whether to fly its flag next to the Palestinians', should the resolution pass.

The resolution says observer states' flags will be flown within 20 days. Palestinian diplomats say they expect their flag to be raised on September 30, the day PA President Mahmoud Abbas addresses world leaders at the annual gathering of the UN General Assembly.

Israel's UN Ambassador Ron Prosor criticized the assembly for adopting the resolution, saying "the assembly would vote to declare the Earth is flat if the Palestinians proposed it." US Ambassador Samantha Power said raising the Palestinian flag will not bring Israelis and Palestinians any closer together.

Alongside France, EU members Sweden, Italy, Spain, Ireland, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Belgium, Malta and Poland cast yes votes. France has been spearheading a push to revive the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, which collapsed in 2014.

French Ambassador Francois Delattre said the French yes vote was a vote in favor of the two-state solution, which he added "must remain a compass for us all."

In 2012, the General Assembly approved the de facto recognition of the sovereign Palestinian state. That followed a failed bid by the Palestinians to secure full UN membership.