

Spain's PSOE-Sumar government feigns sympathy with Gaza, calling for Palestinian statehood

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12 April 2024

Last Wednesday, Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said Madrid was ready to recognise the state of Palestine. The prospect is now openly being debated in Australia, Norway, Ireland, Portugal, Slovenia and Malta, whilst European Council President, Charles Michel, has floated "coordination at EU level" on the subject.

The move has nothing to do with sympathy towards Palestinian people, let alone an action that will stop the ongoing Israeli genocide in Gaza, which is backed by the US and EU powers. This political stunt is meant to placate mass global opposition to the Israeli genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, without in any way deviating from support for the Zionist regime.

On Wednesday, Sánchez presented a foreign policy report to the parliament, declaring, "Spain is prepared to recognize Palestine." Sánchez called to recognise a Palestinian state because "it is fair, it is demanded by the social majority and for the geopolitical interest of Europe," and because "the international community will not be able to help the Palestinian State if it does not recognize its existence."

In a clear indication that the move has no progressive content whatsoever, Sánchez announced this in the same speech he called for hiking military spending in Spain's weapons industry, the eighth-largest in the world in terms of exports.

Seizing on the war in Ukraine, Sánchez said increased military spending aims "to dissuade those who do not share the project of peace and democracy that is Europe," calling to "reinforce security and defence." The EU, he said, had agreed to dedicate an additional €5 billion to militarily support the Ukrainian regime, launch a new €1.5 billion military development programme and strengthen the European defence industry with more investment and more domestic production.

The Palestinian nationhood announcement comes after Sánchez's visit across the Middle East in the first week of April. During this tour, Sánchez already signaled his intention to recognise a Palestinian state before July.

In March, Spain, Ireland, Slovenia and Malta issued a joint statement that declared, "We are agreed that the only way to achieve lasting peace and stability in the region is through implementation of a two-state solution, with Israeli and Palestinian States living side-by-side, in peace and security."

Sánchez also claimed, "We must be attentive to the decisions that will be taken soon in Brussels and New York," referring to Malta's intention to promote the entry of Palestine into the United Nations at the Security Council this month. This proposal is stillborn, however. It would have to be approved by the permanent members of the Security Council, including Israel's chief backers, the US and Britain, which have veto power.

Sánchez's remarks are an enormous exercise in hypocrisy, deceit and political fraud. The record shows that since the formation of the current PSOE-Sumar government in November and before that, under the PSOE-Podemos government, Sánchez has been an accomplice of the Israeli genocide against the Palestinians.

After October 7, Spain continued to sell weapons to Israel even though the government repeatedly lied, claiming such sales had ceased. It also kept purchasing Israeli weapons labelled as "combat tested" because they have been used against the Palestinians.

The Ministry of Defence has continued awarding public contracts to the Israeli military-industrial complex, including €207 million to manufacture designators for the Eurofighter to Rafael Advanced Defense Aystems LTD, or €576 million awarded to Elbit Systems for the supply

of a high-mobility rocket launcher system.

Now, Madrid has also announced its intention to offer NATO a new port in the western Mediterranean, on the island of Menorca, in Maó. This base will reinforce NATO's military escalation and also specifically support the forces bombing Yemen and covering Israel's flank in the eastern Mediterranean.

Spain was already helping defend Israel, by sending ships to the USS Gerald Ford aircraft carrier battle group deployed by the United States in the eastern Mediterranean, whose mission is to attack forces in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq or Iran that could intervene militarily to help Gaza.

Sánchez's proposal on Palestinian statehood is an empty gesture with no practical implications. It means recognising the existence of a state whose land is de facto controlled by sea, land and air by the Israeli state, which continues to oppress millions of Palestinians—within Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.

For a thin layer of the Palestinian middle class it could create jobs in diplomatic bodies representing a state with no sovereignty. However, it would do nothing to improve Palestinians' social and economic conditions, let alone stop the ongoing genocide in Gaza that has cost the lives of over 33,000 Palestinians.

The proposal seeks to promote illusions in the bankrupt and fictitious two-state solution. In the unlikely event it ever materialised, it would amount to having the Israeli apartheid state exist side-by-side with ghettos in which the Palestinians would be concentrated. These ghettos would be ruled by the Palestinian Authority (PA) or some equivalent entity representing the Palestinian bourgeois puppets of US imperialism.

Besides Israel, it would be surrounded by Jordan and Egypt, who are determined to prevent a mass exodus of destitute Palestinians. In the end, it would be an open-air prison imposed by imperialism, the Zionist entity and with the complicity of the Arab regimes. The current PA has already offered itself to administer the Gaza Strip if and when Israel's genocidal war ends.

Sánchez's claim that such a move is in the "geopolitical interest of Europe" deserves comment. This means it would help the European powers' Middle Eastern allies, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which desperately need such a fig leaf to cover up their refusal to come to the aid of the Palestinians, despite mounting opposition across the region.

The chief architect behind this maneuver has been the PSOE's government coalition partner, Sumar, a split-off

of the pseudo-left Podemos party. Sumar originally tried to integrate this into the coalition agreement with the PSOE, but the PSOE refused. Now, the PSOE has revived Sumar's proposal amid escalating mass opposition.

Sumar's leader and deputy prime minister, Yolanda Díaz, welcomed the initiative, demanding it be done as soon as possible. "It is not enough for us to have it happen in the summer (recognition of the Palestinian state), we should do it immediately," she said.

Sumar is aware of mounting opposition among workers and youth on its left. The stench of hypocrisy stemming from the PSOE-Sumar government is so evident that Díaz had to defend herself, going on prime-time television to say: "The president of the government is leading the ceasefire in Palestine. I value this because it seems that the government of Spain is not doing anything." In reality, he is doing something: providing weapons to support Israel's genocidal offensive in Gaza.

This is well known by the Spanish population and, above all, by voters of the PSOE and Sumar. These two parties are so discredited that their photo-up organised in February, held under a "Freedom for Palestine" banner, gathered only 3,000 people.

This contrasts with the hundreds of thousands of protesters across Spain and globally who have mobilized in support of Palestine since Israel began its military operation against Gaza on October 7.

The interests of Arab workers and the interests of Jewish workers can be secured only through the dissolution of the existing state of Israel and its replacement by a multinational state, with full democratic and social rights for Jews and Arabs. This requires building an international socialist, anti-war movement in the working class, opposed to cynical middle class reactionaries like Podemos and Sumar.



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