

'State of Palestine' takes seat in UN General Assembly despite lack of full membership

Israeli envoy decries May decision granting Palestinian delegation new rights, including to submit proposals and amendments, as 'a reward for terrorism'

By **AFP** and **TOI STAFF**

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Riyad Mansour, Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations, arrives at the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly, September 10, 2024, at the United Nations. (AP Photo/Yuki Iwamura)

UNITED NATIONS — Palestinians took a seat among member states at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, a new right accorded to the Palestinian Authority's delegation despite it not being a full member of the body.

In May, an overwhelming majority of the General Assembly asserted that Palestinians deserved full membership, a move that has been blocked by the United States, which along with Israel says recognition of Palestinian statehood must come through a peace agreement.

The General Assembly **granted** the delegation certain new rights in a resolution, which still excludes it from being able to vote or be a member of the Security Council.

Starting with the 79th General Assembly session, which began Tuesday, the Palestinians can submit proposals and amendments, and sit among member states.

The Palestinian Authority's envoy to the United Nations, Riyad Mansour, took his place on Tuesday afternoon at a table marked "State of Palestine" between Sri Lanka and Sudan.

"This is not merely a procedural matter. This is a historic moment for us," said Egyptian Ambassador Osama Mahmoud Abdelkhalek Mahmoud.



Delegates of member states line up to greet Riyad Mansour, top right, the Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations, as he arrives for the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly, September 10, 2024 at the United Nations. (AP Photo/Yuki Iwamura)

Just as during the resolution's adoption, Israel denounced the move.

"Any decision and or action that improves the status of the Palestinians, either in the UN General Assembly or bilaterally, is currently a reward... for terrorism in general and the Hamas terrorists in particular," said Jonathan Miller, deputy Israel ambassador to the United Nations.

In April, amid the war in Gaza started by Hamas's October 7 terror onslaught in southern Israel, the Palestinians — who have had "non-member observer state" status since 2012 — relaunched a full membership bid.

Full membership would not only need a vote by the General Assembly but would also require a Security Council recommendation.

The United States, Israel's staunch ally, vetoed a Security Council recommendation on the matter on April 18.