



A MONOGRAPH

Recognition *at the Margins*

*States with Limited Recognition, Diplomatic Reversal
and the Practice of International Recognition, 1945–2026*

JULIEN ANDREW STARR

STARTUP STATES SOCIETY • GENEVA

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Abbreviations

- AC Law Reports, Appeal Cases
AF African Group (regional group of the United Nations)
AFP Agence France-Presse
AHG Assembly of Heads of State and Government (of the Organisation of African Unity)
AJIL *American Journal of International Law*
AP Asia-Pacific Group (regional group of the United Nations)
App no application number (European Court of Human Rights)
ASEAN Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASIL American Society of International Law
AU African Union
CARICOM Caribbean Community
CESO Centro de Estudos sobre o Sahara Occidental, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela
Cmnd Command Paper (United Kingdom)
CUP Cambridge University Press
Daily Comp Pres Docs Daily Compilation of Presidential Documents (United States)
ECtHR European Court of Human Rights
edn edition
EE Eastern European Group (regional group of the United Nations)
EFE Agencia EFE
EJIL *European Journal of International Law*
ES emergency special session (of the General Assembly)
EU European Union
FIFA Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FR Federal Register (United States)
FRUS *Foreign Relations of the United States*
G7 Group of Seven
GA General Assembly of the United Nations (in the symbols of its meetings coverage)

HL House of Lords
 HL Deb House of Lords Debates
 ICJ International Court of Justice
 ICJ Rep Reports of Judgments, Advisory Opinions and Orders of the International Court of Justice
 ILM *International Legal Materials*
 INTERPOL International Criminal Police Organization
 LAC Latin American and Caribbean Group (regional group of the United Nations)
 LNTS League of Nations Treaty Series
 NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization
 OAS Organization of American States
 OAU Organisation of African Unity
 OIA Official Information Act 1982 (New Zealand)
 OIC Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
 OJ Official Journal of the European Union
 OSCOLA Oxford University Standard for the Citation of Legal Authorities
 OUP Oxford University Press
 PCIJ Permanent Court of International Justice
 PRC People's Republic of China
 RASD República Árabe Saharaui Democrática (Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic)
 RIAA Reports of International Arbitral Awards
 ROC Republic of China (Taiwan)
 SADR Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
 SC Security Council of the United Nations (in the symbols of its meetings coverage)
 TECRO Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office
 UKTS United Kingdom Treaty Series
 UN United Nations
 UN Doc document of the United Nations
 UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
 UNGA Res resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations
 UNSC Res resolution of the Security Council of the United Nations
 UNTS United Nations Treaty Series
 USC United States Code
 USSR Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
 WEOG Western European and Others Group (regional group of the United Nations)
 ZEDE Zona de empleo y desarrollo económico (zone for employment and economic development, Honduras)

The status codes (A to E) and act codes (such as RS-EXP and WR-CLAIM) used in the dataset are defined in chapter 2 and in Appendix F.

A Note on Names, Terms and Numbers

NAMES OF STATES

Members of the United Nations are named as the Organization names them on its list of member states at the cut-off date, in a short form where the context allows: Türkiye, Czechia, Eswatini, North Macedonia, Côte d'Ivoire. Nauru adopted its traditional name in 2026, and the United Nations now lists it as Naoero; the book uses that name, with 'Nauru' in brackets at its first mention in each chapter, and leaves the older name unchanged in the titles of sources. Predecessor states are named as they were named when they acted: the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic.

NAMES OF ENTITIES

Each entity examined is named by its official name, with a short form used after first mention in each chapter: the State of Palestine (Palestine); the Republic of Kosovo (Kosovo); the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (the Sahrawi Republic); the Republic of China (Taiwan), shortened to the Republic of China or, where the context concerns its government, Taipei; the Republic of Abkhazia (Abkhazia); the Republic of South Ossetia—the State of Alania (South Ossetia); the Republic of Somaliland (Somaliland); and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Northern Cyprus). Names and descriptions used by opposing states, such as Georgia's 'Tskhinvali region' or Serbia's 'Kosovo and Metohija', appear only in quotation or when a position is attributed to the state that holds it. The capital city of a state is used for its government only where the meaning is plain.

TERMS

‘Recognition’ means the recognition of a state unless the text says otherwise; the recognition of governments is a distinct institution, treated in chapter 3. ‘Withdrawal’ means an act by which a recognising state revokes an earlier recognition; a freeze, suspension or qualification is described as such and is not counted as a withdrawal. The book does not use the word ‘derecognition’ except in quotation. Positions on the merits of any claim are attributed to the states and organisations that hold them.

NUMBERS AND DATES

All counts speak as of 10 October 2026 and count status A only, unless the text says otherwise. For Kosovo, three figures are given together at first mention in each chapter, for the reasons set out in chapter 2. Dates are given as day, month and year. In the text, numerals are set in old-style figures; in tables and charts they are set in lining figures, which align in columns.

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Preface

This book began as a question asked within the Startup States Society: how many existing states recognise the entities that stand outside the United Nations, and how far can the published figures be trusted? The answer proved harder to establish than the question suggested. Foreign ministries publish lists that serve their own positions; rival ministries publish lists that serve theirs; and the compilations cited most often copy both without reconciling them. The book, and the dataset published with it, are an attempt to reconcile them, state by state and act by act, from the documents of the states concerned.

The Society exists to inform those who study or contemplate the peaceful and lawful creation of new states. That purpose shapes the book in one respect: it explains why the closing chapters ask what the record teaches a new entrant. It does not shape the findings. The book takes no position on any of the disputes it examines, and it treats no entity's claim as equivalent to another's.

Two choices of method deserve mention here. The first is that the book rests on primary and authoritative sources wherever they can be found: the acts of recognising states, the documents of the United Nations, the judgments and opinions of international courts and tribunals, and peer-reviewed scholarship. Encyclopaedias were used to find leads and are not cited. The second is that every count in the text can be reconstructed from the dataset. Where the evidence is incomplete, the dataset says so, and the text reports the gap rather than filling it.

A disclosure belongs here. Chapter 14 examines the claims of the Free Republic of Liberland and the Free Republic of Verdis to land on the western bank of the Danube. I have met Vít Jedlička, President of the Free Republic of Liberland. An author's note in that chapter records my personal view, which is set apart from the analysis and is not a position of the Society.

All statements of current status speak as of 10 October 2026. An interactive Atlas of Recognition, published with the dataset at <https://startupstates.swiss/atlas/limited/>, sets each recognition and its dates on a map. The errors that remain are mine, and corrections are welcome; they will be recorded in later versions of the dataset.

*Julien Andrew Starr
Geneva, October 2026*

PART I

Framework

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The recognition of a state merely signifies that the state which recognizes it accepts the personality of the other with all the rights and duties determined by international law.

Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933), article 6

AT THE cut-off date of this study, 10 October 2026, the United Nations had 193 members. Around their edges stood a small number of entities that claimed to be states, that some members treated as states, and that the Organization itself did not admit. The State of Palestine was recognised by 154 members on the evidence assembled here.¹ The Republic of Kosovo was recognised by 96 on the same standard, although 119 had recognised it at one time or another. The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, which had once commanded the recognition of 73 members at the same moment, retained 36. The Republic of China (Taiwan), which had held the seat of China in the United Nations until October 1971, kept formal relations with eleven members and the Holy See. Abkhazia and South Ossetia were each recognised by four members, Northern Cyprus by one, and the Republic of Somaliland, after more than three decades without any, by one.

These numbers are the subject of this book. They are not stable, and they are not what they appear. Each conceals a history of decisions taken by governments for reasons of law, principle, alliance, money and fear; each has risen or fallen as those reasons changed; and each is reported in public with a confidence that the underlying record does not support. The rival counts for Kosovo published in Pristina and Belgrade differ by close to thirty states: Pristina counts 119 recognitions, and Belgrade claims that 28 of them have been withdrawn. The published counts for the Sahrawi Republic differ according to whether a freeze is treated as a withdrawal. A recognition announced at a press conference may never have been embodied in any instrument; a withdrawal announced by a rival foreign minister may never have been made by the state said to have made it. The first task of the book is therefore an act of reconstruction: to establish, state by state and entity by entity, what the recognising governments did, when they did it and in what terms.

THE QUESTION

The book asks a simple question and pursues it with some insistence. Which members of the United Nations recognise which of the entities that stand outside it, and how has that pattern changed since 1945? The question has three parts. The first is factual: who recognises whom at the cut-off date. The second is historical: who recognised, withdrew, froze, suspended or resumed, and when. The third is analytical: what the pattern reveals about the practice of recognition, the forces that shape it and the conditions under which it is granted, held and lost.

The question matters for three audiences. For students of international law it offers an empirical account of an institution whose doctrine is contested and whose practice is seldom measured. For students of international relations it offers a dataset in which alignment, rivalry and inducement leave visible traces. And for those who contemplate the creation of new states, the constituency the Startup States Society exists to inform, it offers a sober account of the hardest single step in that undertaking: obtaining the acknowledgement of existing states that a new one has joined them.

WHAT THE BOOK DOES NOT DO

The book makes no judgement on the merits of any claim. It does not argue that any entity ought to be recognised or ought not to be; it does not rank the justice of causes; and it does not treat the recognition of one entity as equivalent to the recognition of another. The Society that publishes it takes no position on any of the disputes examined. Where states have explained their decisions, the explanations are reported as theirs. Where a decision coincided with a visit, a loan or a vote, the coincidence is recorded and not converted into cause. Readers will draw their own conclusions, and the book is written so that they can.

The book also observes a set of conventions that follow from that stance. Each entity is named by its official name, with a neutral descriptor where one is needed; the positions of states are attributed to the states that hold them; and the word 'recognition' is reserved for acts that recognise, rather than for the many other forms of contact (diplomatic relations, consular posts, trade offices, the acceptance of passports) with which it is often confused. Those distinctions are set out in chapter 2.

THE ARGUMENT IN BRIEF

Five findings emerge from the evidence and organise the chapters that follow.

The first is that gains and losses follow different rhythms. Entities gain recognition in waves tied to moments, such as Kosovo's declaration of 2008, the Palestinian initiatives of 2011 and 2024, and the General Assembly session of September 2025. They lose it singly, through negotiated reversals: a switch from Taipei to Beijing sealed in a joint communiqué, a withdrawal announced beside the foreign minister of the state that sought it, a freeze agreed in a telephone call with Rabat.

The second is that portfolios are small because coalitions are separate. No member recognises more than five of the eight entities examined, and the reason is structural. Taipei's partners and the Sahrawi Republic's recognisers draw on different coalitions, and so do Kosovo's recognisers and Abkhazia's. Only one state recognises both the Republic of China and the Sahrawi Republic, and only one recognises both Kosovo and Abkhazia. Figure 1.1 sets the current portfolio of each of the thirty broadest recognisers against the largest number of the eight entities it has recognised at any time; Figure 1.2 adds the relations recorded in Register 2.

The gate to the United Nations is article 4(2) of the Charter, not a count of recognitions.

The third is that a determined opposing state can reverse recognition at scale. The Federal Republic of Germany's Hallstein Doctrine, Beijing's long contest with Taipei, Serbia's campaign over Kosovo and Morocco's over the Sahrawi Republic differ in method and in success, but each shows that recognition is held against an opponent, and that the opponent's persistence matters as much as the merits.

The fourth is that recognition is not membership. Palestine's recognitions did not carry its application for admission past a single negative vote in the Security Council in April 2024.² The gate to the United Nations is article 4(2) of the Charter, not a count of recognitions, and the permanent members hold its keys.³

Article 4 of the Charter sets out the conditions in two sentences:

1. Membership in the United Nations is open to all other peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgment of the Organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations.
2. The admission of any such state to membership in the United Nations will be effected by a decision of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.

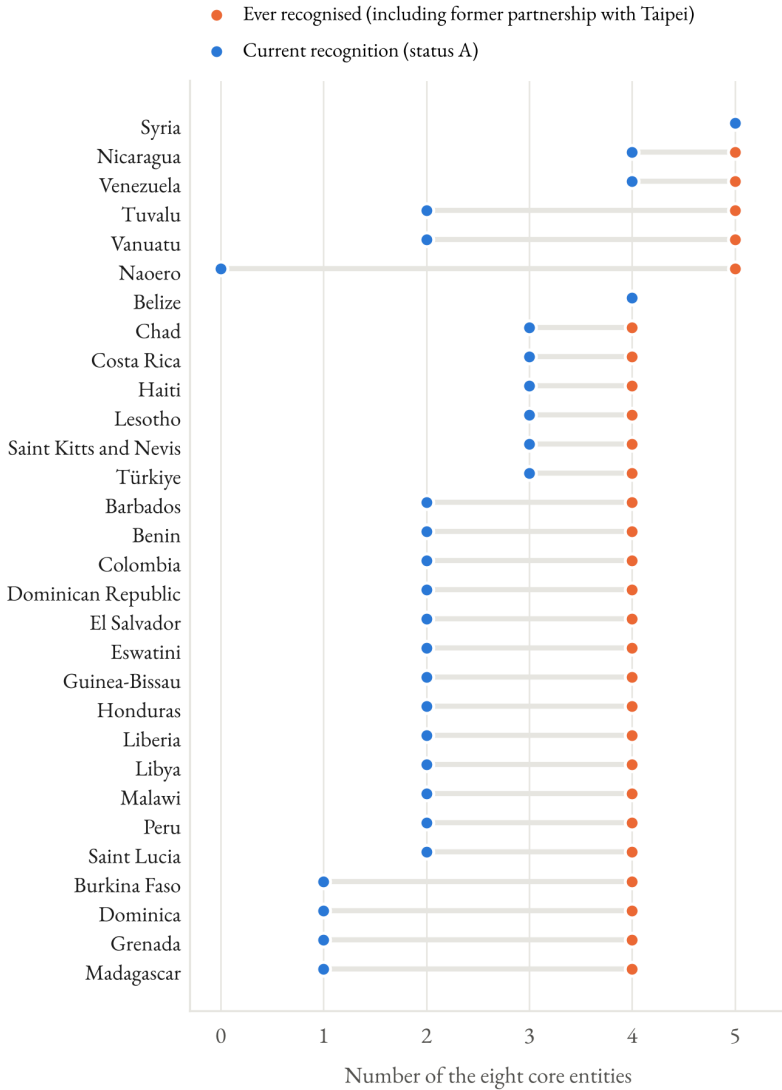


FIGURE 1.1. Current against historical recognition: the thirty broadest portfolios among UN member states. Blue marks the number of the eight core entities recognised at 10 October 2026 (status A); orange marks the number recognised at any time since 1945, counting former diplomatic relations with Taipei. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12.

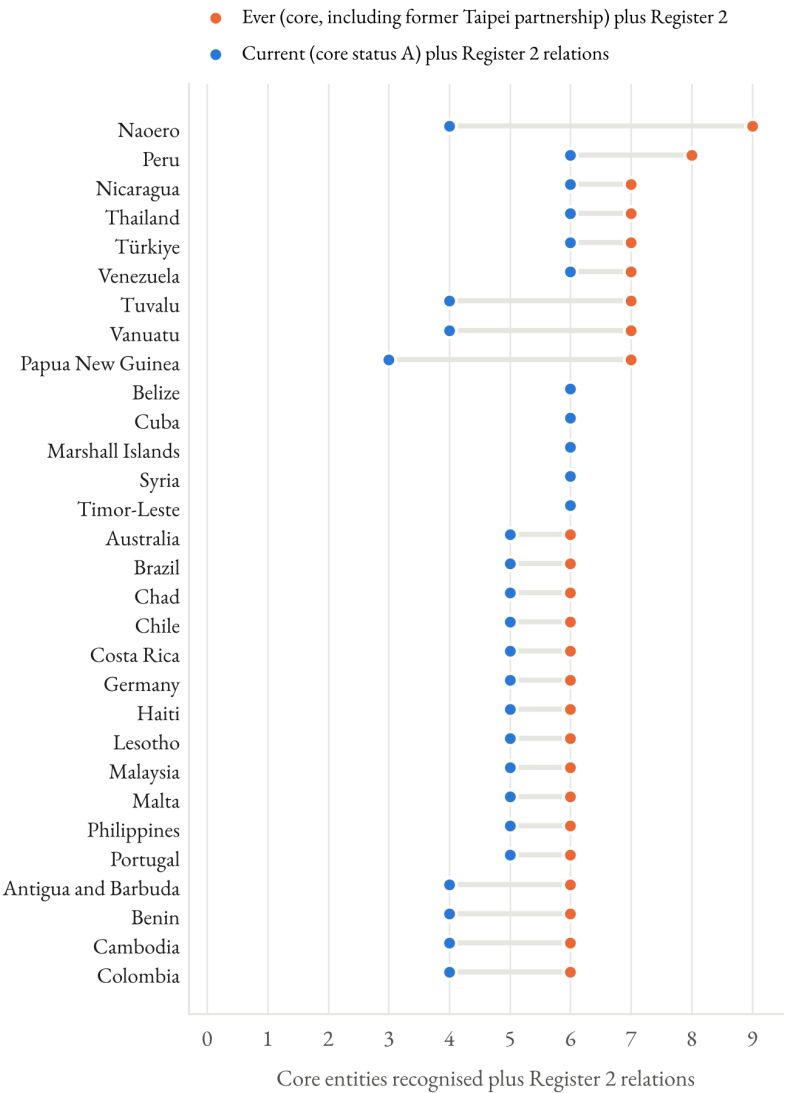


FIGURE 1.2. Current against historical portfolios with Register 2 relations added (the Holy See, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, the Cook Islands and Niue). Register 2 records diplomatic relations, not recognition of contested statehood, and is shown separately for that reason. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12.

The fifth concerns the new entrant. Where a parent state consents, recognition follows almost at once; where it objects, recognition stalls, fragments or reverses. The territorial alternatives that might seem to avoid a parent state, the unclaimed pocket, the unclaimed sector of Antarctica, the high seas and outer space, are closed by treaty and by the law of territory, as chapter 14 shows. For a new state in 2026, the realistic route lies through agreement with an existing one.

THE EVIDENCE

The book rests on a dataset built for it and published with it. Its core is a matrix of the 193 members of the United Nations against eight entities, each cell coded from documented events and graded by the quality of its evidence. Around the matrix sit an event register of more than five hundred dated acts, registers of comparative, historical and excluded cases, a source ledger and a codebook. Every count in the text can be reconstructed from individual records in the dataset, and every record names its sources. Chapter 2 describes the method; the appendices reproduce the principal tables.

THE PLAN OF THE BOOK

Part I sets out the framework. Chapter 2 explains the method, the sources and the dataset. Chapter 3 states the law of recognition: the competing theories, the criteria of statehood, the forms recognition takes, the duty not to recognise, the question whether recognition, once given, can be withdrawn, and what recognition and membership of the United Nations confer.

Part II examines the eight entities of the core register in descending order of recognition: Palestine, Kosovo, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, the Republic of China (Taiwan), Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Somaliland and Northern Cyprus. Each chapter reconstructs the record, explains the counts and identifies the moments of gain and loss.

Part III turns to the cases beyond the core. Chapter 11 considers entities that hold international standing without full membership of the United Nations, the Holy See, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, the Cook Islands and Niue, the means by which entities with little or no recognition operate, and Transnistria, which no member recognises. Chapter 12 recovers the recognitions that ended, from Biafra and the South African homelands to the recognitions that preceded annexation in 2014 and 2022. Chapter 13 examines non-territorial claims, including the Joseon Cybernation and its agreement with Antigua and Barbuda, and the network state, with the case of Próspera in Honduras. Chapter 14 asks whether any land, sea or sky remains unclaimed.

Part IV draws the threads together. Chapter 15 analyses how recognition is won and lost, and which states reverse; chapter 16 the influence of neighbours, regional organisations, General Assembly votes and great powers, together with referendums on inde-

pendence in the Pacific, the Arctic and Canada; chapter 17 the recognisers themselves, the states whose portfolios are broadest and most changeable; and chapter 18 concludes, with an analogy drawn from chess, a checklist for the founders of new polities and ten propositions.

A NOTE ON TIME

All statements of current status speak as of 10 October 2026. Recognition is a moving target, and several of the movements recorded here took place in the months before that date: Israel's recognition of Somaliland in December 2025, the withdrawal by Naoero (Nauru) of its recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in July 2026, and Colombia's freeze of relations with the Sahrawi Republic in August 2026.⁴ A sweep of events from that date to 19 October 2026 found none that changes a status recorded here. Later events will alter the counts. The method will not need to change to record them.

NOTES

- 1 Counts in this chapter are status A (verified current recognition) in the dataset published with this book; the method is set out in chapter 2. For Palestine, the principal compilation is the annex to Identical letters dated 2 April 2024 from the Permanent Representatives of Mauritania, Saudi Arabia and Uganda to the Secretary-General, UN Doc A/78/846–S/2024/283 <https://undocs.org/en/A/78/846> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 2 United Nations, Security Council, 9609th meeting (18 April 2024), Meetings Coverage SC/15670 <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15670.doc.htm> accessed 18 October 2026: twelve votes in favour, one against (United States), two abstentions (Switzerland, United Kingdom).
- 3 Charter of the United Nations (adopted 26 June 1945, entered into force 24 October 1945) art 4 <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 4 'Nauru confirms withdrawal of recognition of Abkhazia, Tskhinvali region', *Georgia Today* (31 July 2026) <https://georgiatoday.ge/nauru-confirms-withdrawal-of-recognition-of-abkhazia-tskhinvali-region/> accessed 10 October 2026; Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia, 'Colombia congela relaciones diplomáticas con la entidad denominada como "República Árabe Saharaui Democrática" (RASD)' (10 August 2026) <https://cancilleria.gov.co/sala-de-prensa/noticias/colombia-congela-relaciones-diplomaticas-con-la-entidad-denominada-como-republica-arabe-saharaui-democratica-rasd> accessed 10 October 2026. On Somaliland, see chapter 9.

CHAPTER 2

Method, Sources and the Dataset

Every count can be reconstructed from individual records.

Codebook, *Recognition at the Margins* dataset (2026)

COUNTING RECOGNITIONS looks easy and is not. A list of states that recognise an entity can be compiled in an afternoon from the entity's own foreign ministry, from the foreign ministry of the state that opposes it, or from one of the encyclopaedias that copy both. The three lists will disagree, and none will say why. This chapter explains how the dataset that underlies the book was built to resolve those disagreements, what it counts and what it declines to count, and where its evidence is strong and where it is not.

UNITS OF ANALYSIS

The dataset has two dimensions. The first is the recognising state. Only the 193 members of the United Nations at the cut-off date are counted in the main matrix, named as the Organization names them and ordered alphabetically.¹ Acts of predecessor states, such as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the German Democratic Republic, are recorded in the event register with a note on succession, but do not populate the matrix. Recognitions by entities that are not members, such as the Holy See's relations with the Republic of China or the mutual recognitions of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria, are likewise recorded and not counted.

The second dimension is the recognised entity. The core register contains eight entities that claim to be states, that at least one member recognises at the cut-off date, and whose claim is opposed by an existing state or government: Abkhazia, Kosovo, Northern Cyprus, Palestine, the Republic of China (Taiwan), the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Somaliland and South Ossetia. Three further registers sit beside the core. Register 2 records international persons that hold standing outside full membership of the United Nations, whose relations with states are of a different legal character: the Holy

See (with Vatican City State), the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, the Cook Islands and Niue. Register 3 records recognitions that ended, entities that recognition did not sustain, and non-territorial claims. Register 4 records candidates investigated and excluded, with the reason for exclusion.

WHAT COUNTS AS RECOGNITION

Recognition is an act by which a state acknowledges that another entity is a state, with the rights and duties that statehood entails.² It is not the same as the establishment of diplomatic relations, which takes place by mutual consent and may be suspended or severed without any change of recognition.³ It is not the same as consular relations, trade offices or the acceptance of travel documents. And recognition of a state is distinct from recognition of a government, which acknowledges that a particular authority speaks for a state already recognised.

The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations states the principle that separates the two institutions in a single sentence:

The establishment of diplomatic relations between States, and of permanent diplomatic missions, takes place by mutual consent.⁴

The dataset applies these distinctions through a set of act codes. An express recognition (coded RS-EXP) is a statement, note, communiqué or instrument that recognises the entity as a state in terms. A recognition implied by conduct (RS-IMP) is inferred from acts that admit no other interpretation, such as the conclusion of an agreement establishing diplomatic relations with ‘the State of Palestine’, or the reception of an ambassador’s letters of credence; the basis for the inference is stated in each case. Diplomatic relations (DR), consular relations (CR), treaty dealings (TR), freezes and suspensions (FZ), qualifications (QL), withdrawals (WR), severances of relations (SV), resumptions (RE) and switches of recognition between the Republic of China and the People’s Republic of China (SW) each have their own code. A claimed withdrawal asserted by a third state without a located act of the state concerned is coded separately (WR-CLAIM).

Table 2.1 counts the acts of members of the United Nations recorded in the event register for each entity of the core register, by form.

TABLE 2.I. Acts of members of the United Nations recorded in the event register, by entity and form of act, to 10 October 2026. Express: RS-EXP; implied: RS-IMP; relations: DR; withdrawn: WR; frozen: freezes, suspensions, severances and qualifications (FZ, SV, QL) and contested sequences; resumed: resumptions and reaffirmations (RE); switched: switches to Beijing (SW); claimed: withdrawals claimed by a third state (WR-CLAIM). For the Sahrawi Republic the register records the current act of each recogniser, and earlier freezes and resumptions are drawn from the record of the Centro de Estudos sobre o Sahara Occidental. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12, sheet Event_Register.

Entity	Express	Implied	Relations	Withdrawn	Frozen	Resumed	Switched	Claimed	All
State of Palestine	154	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	160
Kosovo	95	0	0	1	2	6	0	22	126
Sahrawi Republic	35	1	0	34	14	4	0	2	90
Republic of China	0	0	11	0	0	0	78	0	89
Abkhazia	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	7
South Ossetia	4	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	6
Somaliland	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Northern Cyprus	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

The forms differ by entity. The recognitions of the State of Palestine are, with few exceptions, express statements, most of them compiled in the annex circulated by the Arab Group in 2024. Kosovo's were given by notes, letters and statements, and its record is marked by claimed withdrawals that no act of the state concerned supports. The Sahrawi Republic's record is the record of reversal: it contains more withdrawals, freezes and suspensions than current recognitions. The relations of the Republic of China are recorded as diplomatic relations and their ends as switches, sealed in each recent case by a joint communiqué with Beijing. Russia recognised Abkhazia and South Ossetia by presidential decrees of 26 August 2008, Israel's recognition of Somaliland was announced by its Prime Minister and reported as a joint declaration, and Türkiye recognised Northern Cyprus on the day of its proclamation.

STATUS CODES

Each cell of the matrix carries one of five status codes. Status A means that an act of recognition is documented and that no later withdrawal, freeze or qualification is documented at the cut-off date; it is the only status counted as current recognition. Status B means that a documented search found no act of recognition. Status C means that recognition was given and later withdrawn by an act of the recognising state. Status D means that recognition was frozen, suspended or qualified, or that diplomatic relations were suspended in terms whose effect on recognition requires assessment. Status E means that the evidence conflicts or is insufficient, most often because a rival state claims a withdrawal that the recognising state has not been found to have made.

The distinction between C and D matters. Many states that have changed course on the Sahrawi Republic have announced a freeze or a suspension rather than a withdrawal, and Colombia's statement of August 2026 froze relations while leaving its earlier recognition unmentioned.⁵ To count such states as having withdrawn would overstate the reversal; to count them as recognising would ignore it. The dataset records them as D, reports them separately and never adds them to the current total.

A rival state's claim of withdrawal, without an act of the state concerned, can never establish more than a conflict of evidence.

TWO RULES OF EVIDENCE

Two rules govern the use of evidence from interested parties. The first concerns claims of withdrawal. Serbia has announced that some twenty-eight states withdrew their recognition of Kosovo; for most of them, no act of the state concerned has been located, and for several the state has denied the claim or reaffirmed its recognition.⁶ A rival state's claim of withdrawal, without an act of the state concerned, can never establish more than a conflict of evidence; such cells are coded E. The second rule runs in the opposite direction. Where the opposing state officially acknowledges that a third state has recognised the entity, as Serbia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs did when it condemned the decisions of Sudan in April 2025 and the Bahamas in December 2025, the acknowledgement is an admission against interest and strong corroboration that the act occurred.⁷ The rules apply to both sides of each dispute. An announcement by the entity itself that a state has recognised it is treated in the same way as a rival's claim of withdrawal: where the state named has denied the claim, as Jamaica did in 2020, no recognition is counted and the cell is coded B; where it has neither confirmed nor denied, as with Oman, the cell is coded E.

CONFIDENCE AND SOURCES

Every event carries a confidence grade. High confidence requires a located act of the recognising state: an official gazette, a foreign ministry statement, a joint communiqué, a treaty or a letter circulated as a document of the United Nations. Medium confidence rests on convergent evidence where the act itself has not been located: an official compilation, the entity's own record corroborated by an independent source, or peer-reviewed scholarship citing the act. Low confidence rests on a single secondary source or on the claim of an interested party, and cannot support status A.

The sources themselves are graded in four tiers: acts of the recognising state (tier 1); documents of international organisations and official records of counterparts (tier 2); scholarship and established press (tier 3); and aggregators, including encyclopaedias (tier 4). Encyclopaedias were used to locate leads and are not cited as authority for any proposition in the text. Two official compilations proved especially valuable. The first is the annex to a letter circulated by the chairs of the Arab Group, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Group and the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement in April 2024, which lists 139 members of the United Nations and the Holy See with the dates on which each recognised the State of Palestine.⁸ The second is the table maintained by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China of the dates on which it established diplomatic relations with each state, which fixes the effective date of most switches from Taipei.⁹

CONVENTIONS FOR THE READER

Three conventions recur. The first concerns Kosovo, for which three figures circulate. The book adopts the verified count of current recognitions, 96, as its headline. On first mention in each chapter all three figures are given together: 96 verified recognitions, 119 states that have recognised at some point, and 98 net of the withdrawals Serbia has announced. Figure 2.1 carries both series throughout.

The second concerns the Republic of China. Most of its partners recognised it, historically, as the government of China rather than as a separate state. The matrix codes current formal diplomatic relations with Taipei as status A, records the legal character of each act in the event register, and reports the Republic of China both within and apart from comparative totals. Its timeline is reconstructed at the end of each year from the register of switches.

The third concerns dates. Where a state announced a decision on one day and gave it effect on another, both dates are recorded; the publication dates of sources are recorded only in the source ledger. The year-end convention used in the timelines counts a recognition in a given year if it began in or before that year and had not ended in or before it.

DOCUMENTS OF NON-STATE ACTORS

The boundaries of the subject are clearest at its edge. The World Service Authority, a private organisation based in Washington DC, has issued ‘World Passports’ for decades in the tradition of Garry Davis, who renounced his United States citizenship in 1948; its officers have claimed that many states have accepted the document on occasion. In January 2016 South African officials refused such a passport presented at Cape Town airport and arrested its holder, the musician Yasiin Bey.¹⁰ The acceptance of a travel document, whether by design or by oversight, is not recognition of the body that issued it, and the World Service Authority claims neither territory nor statehood. It falls outside the registers.

LIMITS

The dataset records what states did, not why they did it. Attributed explanations are reported as the statements of those who made them. Several gaps remain at the cut-off date and are recorded in the dataset rather than concealed: the official list of recognitions maintained by Kosovo’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs could not be consulted directly, so routine Kosovo rows rest on two independent compilations that agree with each other; the dates of nineteen switches from Taipei rest on the original rather than the final establishment of relations with Beijing; and three Kosovo claims rest on aggregators alone and are coded as unrecognised or unresolved. Some primary texts were sought and not

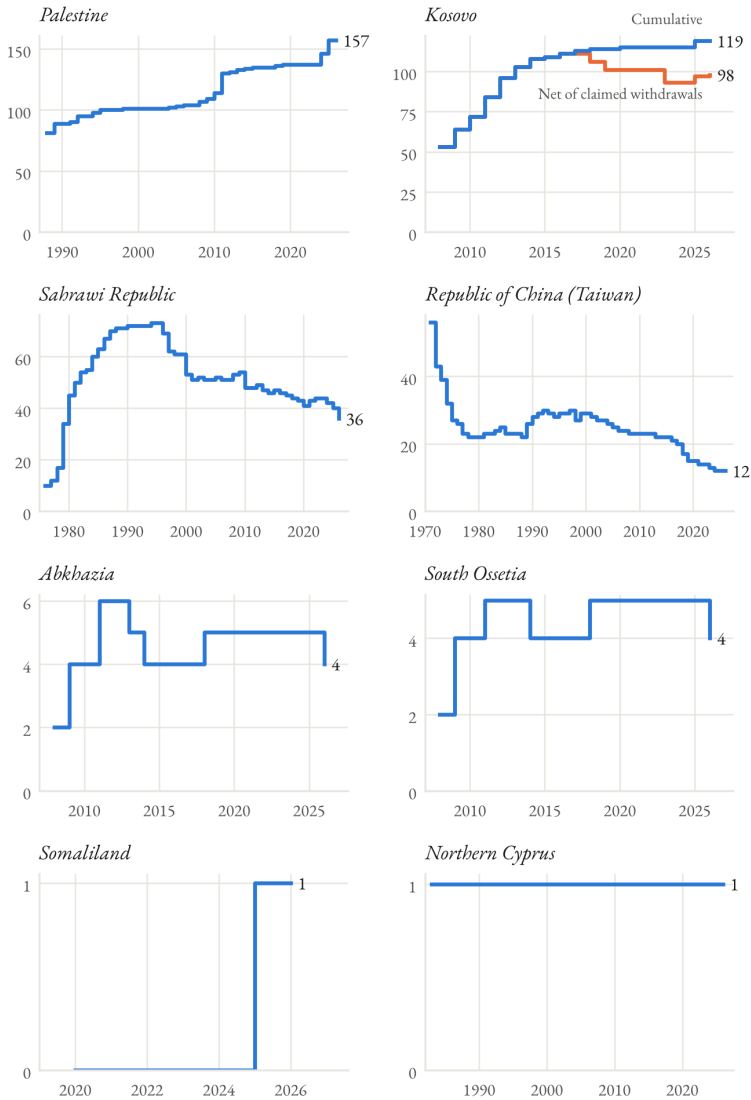


FIGURE 2.1. Recognition by UN member states over time, eight core entities, counted at the end of each year. Each panel has its own scale. Palestine: cumulative recognitions by UN members, including the three contested cases (Czechia, Hungary, Papua New Guinea) that are coded E and excluded from the verified count of 154. Kosovo: cumulative recognitions (blue) and the series net of withdrawals Serbia has announced (orange); the verified count of 96 lies below both. Sahrawi Republic: active recognitions, excluding frozen, suspended and withdrawn. Republic of China: partners among UN members and the Holy See, reconstructed from the register of switches. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12.

found: the instruments by which Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire, Zambia, Haiti and Tanzania recognised Biafra; the texts behind the Sahrawi suspensions of Panama, Bolivia, Mali and Honduras; the decree numbers assigned to the Russian recognitions of the Khereson and Zaporizhzhia regions; the lists of members voting for and abstaining on the endorsement of the New York Declaration; and the list of thirty-five states that Somaliland's government says recognised it in 1960. For Belize and Palau the sources differ by one day on the start of relations with Taipei. In each case the dataset records the best available source and its limitation. These limits affect individual rows, not the headline counts.

NOTES

- 1 United Nations, 'Member States' <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/member-states> accessed 10 October 2026; Identical letters dated 2 April 2024 from the Permanent Representatives of Mauritania, Saudi Arabia and Uganda to the United Nations, UN Doc A/78/846-S/2024/283, annex <https://undocs.org/en/A/78/846> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 2 Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (signed 26 December 1933) 165 LNTS 19 (Montevideo Convention), art 6 <https://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-40.html> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 3 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (adopted 18 April 1961, entered into force 24 April 1964) 500 UNTS 95, art 2 https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9_1_1961.pdf accessed 18 October 2026.
- 4 *ibid.*
- 5 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia, 'Colombia congela relaciones diplomáticas con la entidad denominada como "República Árabe Saharaui Democrática" (RASD)' (10 August 2026) <https://cancilleria.gov.co/sala-de-prensa/noticias/colombia-congela-relaciones-diplomaticas-con-la-entidad-denominada-como-republica-arabe-saharaui-democratica-rasd> accessed 10 October 2026.
- 6 Government of Serbia, statements on the Kingdom of Lesotho (October 2018), Comoros (November 2018), Grenada (November 2018), Nauru (November 2019), the Central African Republic (2019) and Sierra Leone (March 2020); 'Kosovo debunks Serbian claims about derecognitions', *Prishtina Insight* (13 January 2023) <https://prishtinainsight.com/kosovo-debunks-serbian-claims-about-derecognitions/> accessed 10 October 2026.
- 7 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, statement on Sudan (13 April 2025); Government of the Republic of Serbia, 'Call on Bahamas authorities to return to respecting principles of international law' (19 December 2025) <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/265813/call-on-bahamas-authorities-to-return-to-respecting-principles-of-international-law.php> accessed 10 October 2026.
- 8 UN Doc A/78/846-S/2024/283 (n 1), annex 'Recognition of the State of Palestine (1988–2023)'.
- 9 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 'Table of dates of establishment of diplomatic relations' (updated 13 December 2021) https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ziliao_674904/2193_674977/200812/t20081221_9284708.shtml accessed 12 October 2026.
- 10 'Mos Def was arrested in South Africa for using a World Passport. Yes, that's a real thing', *Foreign Policy* (15 January 2016) <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/01/15/mos-def-was-arrested-in-south-africa-for-using-a-world-passport-yes-thats-a-real-thing/> accessed 12 October 2026.

CHAPTER 3

The Law of Recognition

The political existence of the state is independent of recognition by the other states.

Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933), article 3

RECOGNITION IS among the oldest institutions of international law and among the least settled. Every state performs it, no treaty of general application regulates it, and the authorities disagree about what it does. This chapter sets out the law that frames the practice examined in the rest of the book: the two theories that compete to explain recognition, the criteria of statehood against which claims are measured, the forms recognition takes, the distinct institution of recognition of governments, the duty not to recognise, and the unresolved question whether recognition, once given, can be withdrawn. It then considers the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on Kosovo, the most recent occasion on which the Court approached the subject, and the narrowness with which it chose to answer, and it then asks what recognition and membership of the United Nations confer, and at what cost.

TWO THEORIES

The constitutive theory holds that an entity becomes a state, in its relations with other states, by being recognised by them. On this view recognition creates the legal personality it acknowledges, and an unrecognised entity, whatever its effectiveness, has no rights opposable to states that withhold recognition. Its most influential modern statement, by Hersch Lauterpacht in 1947, sought to discipline the theory by arguing that states which find the criteria of statehood fulfilled are under a duty to recognise.¹ The difficulty is evident: if recognition is constitutive, an entity may be a state for some states and not for others, and its legal existence depends on decisions that are, in practice, political.

The declaratory theory holds that statehood is a question of fact, determined by criteria that exist independently of recognition, and that recognition merely acknowledges a status already acquired. The Montevideo Convention of 1933 adopted this view in terms:

The political existence of the state is independent of recognition by the other states. Even before recognition the state has the right to defend its integrity and independence, to provide for its conservation and prosperity, and consequently to organize itself as it sees fit.²

Six decades later the Arbitration Commission of the Conference on Yugoslavia, chaired by Robert Badinter, restated the position in its first opinion: ‘the existence or disappearance of the state is a question of fact’, and ‘the effects of recognition by other states are purely declaratory’.³

Most writers now treat the declaratory theory as the better statement of principle and acknowledge that practice does not fit it neatly.⁴ Where an entity’s statehood is clear, recognition adds little. Where it is doubtful, because the entity’s effectiveness is incomplete, its origin is contested or its parent state objects, recognition becomes the principal evidence of status, and the decisions of other states do much of the work that the theory assigns to facts. The entities examined in this book live in precisely that zone. For them, recognition is not a formality: it is the ground on which the argument about their status is conducted.

Where statehood is doubtful, recognition becomes the principal evidence of status.

A third account, advanced outside the doctrine of international law, has gained currency since 2022. Balaji Srinivasan defines a network state as ‘a highly aligned online community with a capacity for collective action that crowdfunds territory around the world and eventually gains diplomatic recognition from pre-existing states’.⁵ This book refers to the sequence that definition implies, from online community to territory to recognition, as the network state theory of statehood. It is not a theory of recognition in the sense of the two set out above; it is a proposed path by which an entity might come to satisfy the factual criteria and then seek the recognition that, on either theory, would confirm its status. No entity had completed the path at the cut-off date. Chapter 13 examines it with the other non-territorial and partly territorial claims.

THE CRITERIA OF STATEHOOD

The criteria most often cited are those of article 1 of the Montevideo Convention:

The state as a person of international law should possess the following qualifications: a) a permanent population; b) a defined territory; c) government; and d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states.⁶

Each criterion has been glossed. A defined territory does not require settled boundaries; a government must be effective, though the threshold has varied with circumstance; capacity to enter into relations is now generally read as independence, in the sense that the entity is not subject to the authority of another state.⁷ Practice since 1945 has added considerations that do not appear in the Convention. The first is self-determination, which has supported the statehood of colonial territories whose governments were far from effective. The second is legality of origin. The Security Council has called on states not to recognise entities whose creation it regarded as unlawful: the regime in Southern Rhodesia in 1965, which it asked states 'not to recognize';⁸ the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983;⁹ and, through the General Assembly, the South African homelands from 1976.¹⁰ In each case the entity possessed population, territory and some form of government, and in each case the collective refusal of recognition prevailed. Those cases show that the criteria are necessary, not sufficient, and that the reactions of other states can deny a status that the facts might otherwise suggest.

THE FORMS OF RECOGNITION

Recognition may be express or implied. An express recognition is a statement, note, communiqué or instrument by which one state declares that it recognises another. Implied recognition is inferred from conduct that admits no other reading. The conclusion of a bilateral treaty establishing diplomatic relations with an entity described as a state, or the reception of its ambassador's letters of credence, is usually treated as recognition; the exchange of trade offices, the conduct of technical contacts and participation in the same multilateral conference are not.¹¹ The distinction matters in practice. Saint Lucia and Saint Kitts and Nevis, for example, never issued statements recognising the State of Palestine in terms; each concluded an agreement establishing diplomatic relations with it, and the dataset treats each as recognition implied by conduct.

The older distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* recognition, much used by the United Kingdom in the first half of the twentieth century, signalled the difference between a considered acceptance of an entity's status and a provisional acknowledgement of its control. It has fallen out of use but survives in the vocabulary of politics.

Admission to the United Nations is sometimes described as collective recognition. The Charter does not say so. Admission is effected by a decision of the General Assembly

upon the recommendation of the Security Council,¹² and a member that votes against an applicant is not obliged by its admission to recognise it. Israel was admitted in 1949 while many members declined to recognise it, and some still do. Membership is strong evidence of statehood, and the absence of membership is weak evidence of anything at all; but the two institutions are distinct.

Recognition must also be distinguished from diplomatic relations. The establishment of relations ‘takes place by mutual consent’,¹³ and relations may be suspended or severed for reasons that have nothing to do with recognition. Several of the changes recorded in this book are suspensions of relations that leave recognition formally intact, and the dataset records them as such.

RECOGNITION OF GOVERNMENTS

A distinct institution concerns the recognition of governments: the acknowledgement that a particular authority speaks for a state already recognised. It arises when power changes hands unconstitutionally, or when rival authorities claim to represent the same state. The Tobar Doctrine of 1907 proposed to withhold recognition from governments that came to power by force until they had obtained constitutional legitimacy; the Estrada Doctrine, announced by Mexico in 1930, rejected the practice of pronouncing on the legitimacy of foreign governments altogether.¹⁴ In 1980 the United Kingdom announced that it would no longer formally recognise governments, and would instead judge the nature of its dealings with new regimes by their effective control.¹⁵ Many states have followed similar practice, and the institution survives most visibly in two settings: the acceptance of credentials in the United Nations, and the rare cases in which states take sides between rival authorities.

The distinction bears directly on the Republic of China. General Assembly Resolution 2758 of 25 October 1971 decided ‘to restore all its rights to the People’s Republic of China and to recognize the representatives of its Government as the only legitimate representatives of China to the United Nations’.¹⁶ It resolved a question of representation, not of statehood: which government represented China. Most of Taipei’s partners recognised the Republic of China, historically, as the government of China; their switches to Beijing were, in legal form, transfers of recognition between governments. Chapter 7 returns to the consequences.

THE DUTY NOT TO RECOGNISE

The freedom of states to recognise is limited by a duty not to recognise situations created by serious breaches of fundamental norms. The duty has roots in the Stimson Doctrine of 1932, by which the United States refused to recognise situations brought about by means contrary to the Pact of Paris.¹⁷ It was affirmed by the International Court of Justice in the *Namibia* opinion of 1971 and the *Wall* opinion of 2004,¹⁸ and codified by the International Law Commission in 2001:

No State shall recognize as lawful a situation created by a serious breach within the meaning of article 40, nor render aid or assistance in maintaining that situation.¹⁹

The duty explains the reaction of most states to the annexations of 2014 and 2022, in which a recognition of independence by the annexing state preceded incorporation by between one day and seven months; the General Assembly called on all states not to recognise either.²⁰ It also explains why the Security Council's calls for non-recognition in Southern Rhodesia and Northern Cyprus have held for decades.

CALLS NOT TO RECOGNISE, AND THEIR RECORD

Calls by international organs not to recognise an entity have a long record, and the record shows both their force and their limits. The Assembly of the League of Nations adopted the report on Manchuria on 24 February 1933 and with it a policy of non-recognition of Manchukuo; Japan had recognised the entity in September 1932, El Salvador did so in 1934, and Italy, Germany and other states aligned with Japan followed in 1937 and 1938.²¹ The call held among most states and failed among a political camp.

The calls of the United Nations era have held more firmly. In resolution 216 of 12 November 1965 the Security Council decided 'to call upon all States not to recognize this illegal racist minority régime in Southern Rhodesia', and no state recognised it.²² The South African homelands were recognised by South Africa alone, after the General Assembly and the Security Council had called for non-recognition.²³ Northern Cyprus has been recognised by Türkiye alone since resolution 541. When Iraq annexed Kuwait in 1990 the Council, in resolution 662, called upon 'all States, international organizations and specialized agencies not to recognize that annexation', and none did.²⁴ The recognitions of Crimea in 2014, and of the Donetsk and Luhansk republics and the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions in 2022, came from Russia and, in the last cases, from Syria and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, against calls of the General Assembly. In each case the recognising states were the state that created or annexed the entity and its closest partners; no other state broke the consensus.

Several entities in this book were never the subject of such a call, and the absence matters. No organ of the United Nations has called on states not to recognise Kosovo: resolution 1244 of 1999 reaffirmed the commitment of members to the territorial integrity of

the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in its preamble, and the General Assembly in 2008 asked the International Court of Justice for its opinion, but neither text addresses recognition. Biafra was not the subject of a resolution of the United Nations; the Organisation of African Unity, meeting at Algiers in September 1968 after four of its members had recognised Biafra, called upon its members to refrain from action 'detrimental to the peace, unity and territorial integrity of Nigeria', which stopped short of a call not to recognise.²⁵ Abkhazia and South Ossetia were recognised by a permanent member, which has prevented any call by the Security Council. Where a call exists and the permanent members support it, recognitions have been confined to the state behind the entity; where none exists, states have been free in practice as well as in law, and the counts of Part II show the result.

PREMATURE RECOGNITION

The converse limit concerns recognition granted too early. Recognition of an entity still engaged in armed conflict with its parent state, before the outcome is clear, has long been regarded as capable of amounting to unlawful intervention in the parent state's affairs.²⁶ The doctrine was tested by Biafra, recognised by five states in 1968 and 1969 while the Nigerian civil war continued, and its statehood was doubted for that reason among others.²⁷ It was also tested by cases in which recognition preceded effective independence and was vindicated by events, such as Guinea-Bissau in 1973 and Bangladesh in 1971. Prematurity is, in practice, judged after the fact.

CAN RECOGNITION BE WITHDRAWN?

No question in this book matters more to the counts, and none is less settled. The Montevideo Convention declares that recognition 'is unconditional and irrevocable'.²⁸ On that view a state that has recognised another may sever diplomatic relations with it, but cannot unmake its recognition; the research centre at the University of Santiago de Compostela that maintains the fullest record of recognitions of the Sahrawi Republic applies exactly that reasoning and treats later cancellations as without legal effect.²⁹

Three considerations weigh against so strict a view. The Convention binds only the American states that ratified it, and article 6 has not been shown to reflect general custom. Recognition of a state may lapse when the entity ceases to exist or to meet the criteria, as the recognitions of Biafra and the homelands lapsed. And states withdraw recognition in practice, in terms, and expect the withdrawal to have effect: Haiti's foreign ministry withdrew its recognition of the Sahrawi Republic by communiqué in 2013, and Togo's foreign minister described his state's withdrawal of its recognition of Kosovo as final in 2023.³⁰ The practice has received its first comparative study in Gëzim Visoka's *The Derivation of States*, which examines the withdrawal of recognition from Taiwan, Western Sahara, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Kosovo.³¹

The book does not resolve the doctrinal question. It records what states did and how they described it, distinguishes withdrawals from freezes and severances, and reports the alternative counts that each view produces. Readers who hold that recognition is irrevocable will find the cumulative series; readers who hold that it is not will find the series net of withdrawals. Both are in the dataset.

THE KOSOVO ADVISORY OPINION

In 2008 the General Assembly asked the International Court of Justice whether Kosovo's declaration of independence was in accordance with international law. The Court answered the question it was asked and took care to answer no other:

In particular, it does not ask whether or not Kosovo has achieved statehood. Nor does it ask about the validity or legal effects of the recognition of Kosovo by those States which have recognized it as an independent State.³²

The Court concluded that general international law contains no prohibition of declarations of independence, and that the declaration did not violate the law applicable to it.³³ It declined to decide whether international law confers a right of separation on peoples subjected to grave oppression, finding it unnecessary to do so.³⁴ The opinion therefore settled less than either side claimed. It removed one argument against recognising Kosovo, the argument that its declaration was itself unlawful, and left every state free to recognise or to refuse. The 119 states that have recognised Kosovo at some point, and the 74 that never have, act within that freedom.

WHAT RECOGNITION CONFERS

Recognition matters because much of international life is organised around the state, and recognition is the means by which each state signals whom it will treat as one. Its effects fall into four groups.

The first is legal capacity in relations with the recognising state. A recognised state can conclude treaties with it, exchange missions whose members enjoy the privileges and immunities of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, claim immunity from the jurisdiction of its courts and invoke the protections that international law gives to states. Non-recognition can have the opposite effect in the courts of the non-recognising state. In *Carl Zeiss Stiftung v Rayner & Keeler Ltd (No 2)* the House of Lords, faced with the acts of authorities of the German Democratic Republic, which the United Kingdom did not recognise, gave effect to them only by treating them as acts of the Soviet Union, which the United Kingdom regarded as the authority entitled to govern that part of Germany.³⁵

The second is access to institutions. Membership of the United Nations is open only to states, and so, under varying formulas, is membership of most specialised agencies and international financial institutions; the more states that recognise an applicant, the easier the majorities its applications require. The third is practical. The acceptance of passports, agreements on air services, extradition, investment and taxation, and the protection of nationals abroad all proceed with fewer obstacles between states that recognise each other. The fourth is political. Recognition signals that the recognising state accepts the outcome of a dispute, or at least will not oppose it, and each recognition raises the cost to the opposing state of maintaining that the entity is not a state.

Recognition also carries costs, for both parties. The recognising state may pay a price in its relations with the opposing state, and the record of the chapters that follow shows that the price has often been exacted. For the entity, recognition by one coalition can close doors to another, and statehood brings the obligations of a state as well as its rights, including responsibility for internationally wrongful acts. For some entities the absence of a formal claim preserves an ambiguity that the parties prefer to confrontation. The Anti-Secession Law adopted by the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China in 2005 provides that if 'possibilities for a peaceful reunification should be completely exhausted', or Taiwan's secession should occur, 'the state shall employ non-peaceful means and other necessary measures to protect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity'.³⁶ The authorities in Taipei have not proclaimed a new state, and most of the states that deal with them do so without recognising them.

WHAT MEMBERSHIP CONFERS

Membership of the United Nations adds a further layer. A member votes in the General Assembly, may be elected to the Security Council and the other organs, and takes part in the work of the specialised agencies and programmes on terms reserved to members. It becomes a party to the Statute of the International Court of Justice by the fact of membership:

All Members of the United Nations are *ipso facto* parties to the Statute of the International Court of Justice.³⁷

Admission is also treated as the strongest available evidence that an entity is a state. Because the Charter admits only states, and admission requires a recommendation of the Security Council on which no permanent member has cast a negative vote and a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly, it has been described as a form of collective recognition, although it does not oblige any member to recognise the new member in its bilateral relations.³⁸ Israel's admission in 1949 did not lead every member to recognise it, and several members of the League of Arab States have not done so.

Membership carries obligations. Members bear the expenses of the Organization as apportioned by the General Assembly; they agree, by article 25, 'to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council'; and they are bound by the measures the Council takes under Chapter VII. Some states have weighed those obligations and remained outside for a time. Swiss voters rejected membership by 75.7 per cent in a referendum of 16 March 1986, in a debate in which neutrality was the central issue, and approved it by 54.6 per cent on 3 March 2002; Switzerland was admitted on 10 September 2002.³⁹ The Holy See has remained a non-member observer state, and the Cook Islands and Niue have not applied. In the other direction, the Assembly of the League of Nations rejected Liechtenstein's application in 1920, on the view that a state of its size, which had entrusted some of its functions to other states, could not discharge all the obligations of the Covenant; Liechtenstein was admitted to the United Nations in 1990.⁴⁰

THE LAW AND THE PRACTICE

Three conclusions carry forward into the chapters that follow. First, recognition is a discretionary act within limits: states may recognise or decline, but must not recognise situations created by serious breaches, and should not recognise prematurely. Second, recognition is distinct from diplomatic relations, from membership of the United Nations and from recognition of governments, and the counts in this book depend on keeping those distinctions. Third, the law does not settle whether recognition can be withdrawn, and the practice of withdrawal is extensive. The rest of the book examines that practice, entity by entity.

NOTES

- 1 Hersch Lauterpacht, *Recognition in International Law* (CUP 1947).
- 2 Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (signed 26 December 1933) 165 LNTS 19 (Montevideo Convention), arts 1, 3 and 6 <https://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-40.html> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 3 Arbitration Commission of the Conference on Yugoslavia, Opinion No 1 (29 November 1991), para 1(a), reproduced in Alain Pellet, 'The Opinions of the Badinter Arbitration Committee: A Second Breath for the Self-Determination of Peoples' (1992) 3 EJIL 178.
- 4 James Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law* (2nd edn, OUP 2006).
- 5 Balaji Srinivasan, *The Network State: How to Start a New Country* (2022); 'The Network State in One Sentence' <https://thenetworkstate.com/the-network-state-in-one-sentence> accessed 13 October 2026.
- 6 Montevideo Convention (n 2) art 3.
- 7 Crawford (n 4).
- 8 UNSC Res 217 (20 November 1965) UN Doc S/RES/217, para 6 [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/217\(1965\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/217(1965)) accessed 18 October 2026.
- 9 UNSC Res 541 (18 November 1983) UN Doc S/RES/541 [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/541\(1983\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/541(1983)) accessed 18 October 2026.
- 10 UNGA Res 31/6 A (26 October 1976) <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/31/6> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 11 Crawford (n 4).
- 12 Charter of the United Nations (adopted 26 June 1945, entered into force 24 October 1945) art 4(2) <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 13 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (adopted 18 April 1961, entered into force 24 April 1964) 500 UNTS 95, art 2 https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9_1_1961.pdf accessed 18 October 2026.
- 14 Statement of Genaro Estrada, Secretary of Foreign Relations of Mexico (27 September 1930); on both doctrines, see Stefan Talmon, *Recognition of Governments in International Law: With Particular Reference to Governments in Exile* (OUP 1998).
- 15 HL Deb 28 April 1980, vol 408, cols 1121–22; Talmon (n 14).
- 16 UNGA Res 2758 (XXVI) (25 October 1971) [https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/2758\(XXVI\)](https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/2758(XXVI)) accessed 18 October 2026.
- 17 Note of the United States Secretary of State, Henry L Stimson, to the Governments of China and Japan (7 January 1932).
- 18 *Legal Consequences for States of the Continued Presence of South Africa in Namibia (South West Africa) notwithstanding Security Council Resolution 276 (1970)* (Advisory Opinion) [1971] ICJ Rep 16 <https://www.icj-cij.org/case/53> accessed 18 October 2026; *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory* (Advisory Opinion) [2004] ICJ Rep 136, para 159 <https://www.icj-cij.org/case/131> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 19 International Law Commission, Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, *Yearbook of the International Law Commission* 2001, vol II, part 2, art 41(2) https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/draft_articles/9_6_2001.pdf accessed 18 October 2026.
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- 21 *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1934*, vol III, *The Far East*, doc 156 (telegram from the Consul at Geneva, 25 May 1934, reporting El Salvador's recognition of Manchukuo and its absence from the vote of

- 24 February 1933) <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1934v03/d156> accessed 18 October 2026; Crawford (n 4).
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- 23 UNGA Res 31/6 A (n 10); UNSC Res 402 (22 December 1976) para 1 [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/402\(1976\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/402(1976)) accessed 18 October 2026.
- 24 UNSC Res 662 (9 August 1990) para 2, adopted unanimously [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/662\(1990\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/662(1990)) accessed 18 October 2026.
- 25 Organisation of African Unity, Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Resolution AHG/Res 54 (V) (Algiers, 13–16 September 1968) para 7.
- 26 Lauterpacht (n 1); Crawford (n 4).
- 27 David A Ijalaye, ‘Was “Biafra” at Any Time a State in International Law?’ (1971) 65 AJIL 551 <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0002930000147311> accessed 10 October 2026.
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- 29 Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Centro de Estudos sobre o Sahara Occidental, ‘RASD: Frente Polisario’ (recognitions table) <https://assets.usc.gal/en/investigar-na-usc/investigar/institutos-centros-investigacion/cpi/ceso/rasd-frente-polisario> accessed 18 October 2026.
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- 31 Gëzim Visoka, *The Derecognition of States* (University of Michigan Press 2024) <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.11703277> accessed 19 October 2026.
- 32 *Accordance with International Law of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Respect of Kosovo* (Advisory Opinion) [2010] ICJ Rep 403, para 51 <https://www.icj-cij.org/case/141> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 33 *ibid* paras 79–84.
- 34 *ibid* paras 82–83.
- 35 *Carl Zeiss Stiftung v Rayner & Keeler Ltd (No 2)* [1967] 1 AC 853 (HL).
- 36 Anti-Secession Law, adopted at the Third Session of the Tenth National People’s Congress (14 March 2005) art 8.
- 37 Charter of the United Nations art 93(1) <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 38 John Dugard, *Recognition and the United Nations* (Grotius 1987); Charter of the United Nations arts 4(2), 18(2) and 27(3) <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 39 Swiss Federal Chancellery, results of the popular votes of 16 March 1986 and 3 March 2002; UNGA Res 57/1 (10 September 2002) <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/57/1> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 40 Crawford (n 4).

PART II

The Core Register

CHAPTER 4

The State of Palestine

*Acknowledges the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine
National Council on 15 November 1988.*

General Assembly resolution 43/177 (15 December 1988), paragraph 1

AT THE cut-off date of this study, 154 members of the United Nations recognised the State of Palestine on the evidence assembled here. The Holy See, which has recognised Palestine and concluded a treaty with it, stands beside them outside the count. Three further members, Czechia, Hungary and Papua New Guinea, appear in the published lists, but the statements or conduct of their present governments conflict with the listing; the dataset codes them as conflicting evidence and excludes them from the total. Thirty-six members have taken no act of recognition. No other entity examined in this book comes close to these numbers. Four members in five recognise the State of Palestine, and the entity holds a status in the United Nations, that of non-member observer state, which it shares only with the Holy See. Yet it is not a member, and the history of its recognition is in large part the history of the distance between those two facts.

This chapter reconstructs that history in three waves. The first followed the proclamation of 1988 and drew on the Arab and Islamic states, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Soviet Union and its allies, and most of Africa and Asia. The second, between 2008 and 2015, brought in almost the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean. The third, in 2024 and 2025, reached Western Europe, the Commonwealth realms and two permanent members of the Security Council. Between the waves, the entity's standing in the United Nations was raised in stages by the General Assembly. The chapter closes with the states that have not recognised and with the three contested listings.

TABLE 4.1. Recognition of the State of Palestine by members of the United Nations, by period of the act (current recognisers only). Paraguay is counted from its recognition in 2011 rather than its establishment of relations in 2005. Shares do not sum to 100 because of rounding. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12.

Period	Members recognising	Share of the 154
1988–1989	88	57%
1990–2009	18	12%
2010–2015	27	18%
2016–2023	3	2%
2024	9	6%
2025	9	6%
Total, status A	154	100%
Contested listings (status E)	3	
No act of recognition (status B)	36	

THE PROCLAMATION OF 1988

The Palestine National Council met in Algiers at its nineteenth session and, on 15 November 1988, adopted a declaration that proclaimed ‘the establishment of the State of Palestine in the land of Palestine with its capital at Jerusalem’.¹ The declaration was circulated to the United Nations three days later as a document of both the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Recognition came at once. Thirteen states that remain members today recognised the new state on the day of the proclamation: Algeria, Bahrain, Indonesia, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Somalia, Tunisia, Türkiye and Yemen.² By the end of 1989, 88 of the present members had done so. The composition of that first wave is plain from the list. It comprised the members of the League of Arab States and of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation was then named; the states of the Non-Aligned Movement in Africa and Asia; China, India and Indonesia; and the Soviet Union and its allies in Eastern Europe. In Western Europe only Malta recognised; Cyprus and Türkiye did so at the continent’s south-eastern edge.

Three features of the first wave recur throughout the book. The first is that recognition was given to an entity that exercised no governmental authority over the territory it claimed; the Palestine Liberation Organization was then based in Tunis. The declaratory and constitutive theories set out in chapter 3 treat that fact in different ways, and the recognising states did not, for the most part, explain which view they held. The second is that several of the recognising states no longer exist. The Soviet Union recognised on 19 November 1988, Czechoslovakia on 18 November and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 16 November; the compilation circulated at the United Nations in 2024 attributes these acts to the Russian Federation, to Czechia and Slovakia, and to Serbia.³ The dataset records each act under the predecessor state and notes the succession;

for Czechia, as shown below, the attribution is disputed. The third is that the compilation contains errors of date. It gives 4 February 1988 for Iran, a date that precedes the proclamation, and 3 December 2011 for Brazil, whose recognition was published on 3 December 2010.⁴ The dataset follows the compilation where it has no better evidence and records the discrepancy where it does.

THE DESIGNATION 'PALESTINE' AND THE UNITED NATIONS

The General Assembly had invited the Palestine Liberation Organization to take part in its work as an observer in 1974.⁵ Four weeks after the proclamation, it responded in resolution 43/177, adopted by 104 votes to 2, with 36 abstentions:

1. Acknowledges the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council on 15 November 1988;
2. Affirms the need to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their sovereignty over their territory occupied since 1967;
3. Decides that, effective as of 15 December 1988, the designation 'Palestine' should be used in place of the designation 'Palestine Liberation Organization' in the United Nations system, without prejudice to the observer status and functions of the Palestine Liberation Organization within the United Nations system, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and practice.⁶

The verb was chosen with care. The General Assembly does not recognise states, and the resolution did not purport to do so; it acknowledged a proclamation and changed a name. The change nonetheless mattered, because it placed the word 'Palestine' on the nameplate in the Assembly hall and in the records of the Organization.

The next steps came after the second wave of recognitions had begun. On 23 September 2011 the President of the Palestinian Authority submitted an application for membership of the United Nations. The Security Council's Committee on the Admission of New Members reported in November 2011 that it was unable to reach a unanimous recommendation, and the application was not put to a vote.⁷ In October 2011 the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization admitted Palestine as a member. On 29 November 2012 the General Assembly, by 138 votes to 9 with 41 abstentions, adopted resolution 67/19, by which it

2. Decides to accord to Palestine non-member observer State status in the United Nations, without prejudice to the acquired rights, privileges and role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the United Nations as the representative of the Palestinian people, in accordance with the relevant resolutions and practice.⁸

The application of 2011 was renewed in 2024. On 18 April 2024 the Security Council voted on a draft resolution recommending admission; it received twelve votes in favour,

two abstentions and one vote against, cast by the United States, a permanent member, and was not adopted.⁹ Three weeks later, on 10 May 2024, the General Assembly met in emergency special session and adopted resolution ES-10/23 by 143 votes to 9, with 25 abstentions:

1. Determines that the State of Palestine is qualified for membership in the United Nations in accordance with Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations and should therefore be admitted to membership in the United Nations;
2. Accordingly recommends that the Security Council reconsider the matter favourably, in the light of this determination and of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 28 May 1948, and in strict conformity with Article 4 of the Charter.¹⁰

The resolution also conferred additional rights of participation, given effect from the seventy-ninth session of the Assembly in September 2024. The record of the vote repays attention. The nine votes against were cast by Argentina, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Israel, Micronesia, Naoero (Nauru), Palau, Papua New Guinea and the United States.¹¹ Argentina has recognised the State of Palestine since 2010, and Czechia, Hungary and Papua New Guinea are the three states whose listings are contested. A vote in the General Assembly is not an act of recognition or of withdrawal, and the dataset does not treat it as either. It does show that recognition and support for admission are distinct decisions, and that a state may make one without the other.

*Four of the five permanent members of the Security Council
recognise the State of Palestine; the fifth holds the vote that keeps
it outside.*

THE SECOND WAVE, 2008 TO 2015

In the two decades after 1989, recognition advanced at a slower pace and by succession. Eighteen of the present members recognised between 1990 and 2009. Most were new states: seven successors of the Soviet Union, Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992, Montenegro in 2006 and Timor-Leste in 2004. South Africa recognised in February 1995, after the end of apartheid, and Eswatini, Malawi, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Lebanon, Venezuela and the Dominican Republic between 1991 and 2009. Paraguay established diplomatic relations in 2005 and recognised in 2011.

The second wave began in Latin America in December 2010. Brazil acted first, by a letter from President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to President Mahmoud Abbas, published on 3 December 2010, which recognised 'a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders'.¹² Argentina

followed on 6 December, Bolivia on 17 December and Ecuador on 27 December; Chile, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Paraguay in January 2011; and Uruguay in March. Most of these acts referred, in one form or another, to the lines of 4 June 1967. A second group recognised in the weeks before and after the application for membership in September 2011: El Salvador, Honduras, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Belize, Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda and Grenada in the Americas, and Lesotho, Liberia and South Sudan in Africa. South Sudan recognised on 14 July 2011, five days after its own independence. Syria recognised four days later. Iceland recognised in December 2011, Thailand in January 2012, Guatemala in April 2013 and Haiti in September 2013.

On 30 October 2014 Sweden became the first state to recognise the State of Palestine while a member of the European Union. Six other members of the Union, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Malta, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, had recognised in 1988, before they joined; the listings of Czechia and Hungary, which also date from 1988, are examined below. Saint Lucia's agreement establishing diplomatic relations with the State of Palestine, signed in September 2015, closed the second wave. Twenty-seven of the present members recognised between 2010 and 2015, Paraguay among them.

A PAUSE AND A THIRD WAVE, 2016 TO 2025

Three recognitions followed in the next eight years: Colombia in August 2018, in the last days of President Juan Manuel Santos's administration; Saint Kitts and Nevis, by an agreement establishing diplomatic relations, in July 2019; and Mexico in June 2023. The pace changed after October 2023 and the war in Gaza.

The third wave began in the Caribbean. Barbados recognised on 19 April 2024, the day after the vote in the Security Council, and Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas followed within three weeks. On 28 May 2024 Ireland, Norway and Spain recognised on the same day, by coordinated decisions announced in advance. Slovenia followed on 4 June, after a vote in its National Assembly, and Armenia on 21 June. Nine members recognised in 2024.

Nine more recognised in September 2025, around a high-level international conference on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the implementation of the two-state solution, co-chaired by France and Saudi Arabia. On 12 September 2025 the General Assembly endorsed the conference's outcome, the New York Declaration, by 142 votes to 10, with 12 abstentions.¹³ On 21 September Australia, Canada, Portugal and the United Kingdom recognised; the British Prime Minister declared that the United Kingdom 'formally recognises the State of Palestine'.¹⁴ Andorra, France, Luxembourg and Monaco recognised on 22 September and San Marino on 23 September. Malta, which the 2024 compilation lists as having recognised on 16 November 1988, took part in the same moment: on 23 September 2025 its Prime Minister stated that he had 'confirmed our nation's recognition of Palestinian statehood'.¹⁵ The dataset counts Malta from 1988 and records the act of 2025 as a confirmation.

Belgium announced that it would recognise in the same month, but on conditions. The Belgian government stated that recognition would take legal effect only by royal decree, once the last Israeli hostage had been released and organisations such as Hamas had been removed from the Palestinian administration.¹⁶ In January 2026 members of the governing coalition called on the foreign minister to begin drafting the decree.¹⁷ No decree had been located at the cut-off date, and the dataset codes Belgium as not recognising, with the announcement recorded in the event register.

The third wave changed the composition of the recognisers more than their number. With France and the United Kingdom, four of the five permanent members of the Security Council recognised the State of Palestine; China and the Soviet Union had done so in November 1988. The fifth permanent member, the United States, is the state whose vote prevented the Council from recommending admission in April 2024. Of the Group of Seven, Canada, France and the United Kingdom recognise, and Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States do not.

THIRTY-SIX STATES

The members that have taken no act of recognition form a distinct pattern when they are arranged by regional group. Two are African: Cameroon and Eritrea. One is in Latin America and the Caribbean: Panama. Six are in Eastern Europe: Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova and North Macedonia. Fourteen are in the Asia-Pacific Group: Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Myanmar, and ten Pacific island states, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Naoero, Palau, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu. The remaining thirteen sit with the Western European and Others Group: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Switzerland, with the United States, which takes part in the group for electoral purposes.

Measured the other way, the State of Palestine is recognised by 52 of the 54 African members, by 32 of the 33 members in Latin America and the Caribbean, by 39 of the 54 states the dataset assigns to the Asia-Pacific Group, by 15 of the 23 Eastern European members, and by 16 of the 29 states that sit with the Western group, counting Türkiye and the United States. The Pacific is the one region in which non-recognition is the rule. Three of the Pacific non-recognisers, the Marshall Islands, Palau and Tuvalu, maintain diplomatic relations with Taipei; the other eight of Taipei's eleven partners among the members of the United Nations recognise the State of Palestine. The relation between the two lists is examined in chapter 16.

THREE CONTESTED LISTINGS

The 2024 compilation lists Czechia, Hungary and Papua New Guinea as recognising states, and many published counts follow it. The statements or conduct of all three governments point the other way, and in each case the dataset finds a conflict of evidence rather than a withdrawal.

The Czechoslovak government acted by resolution No 307 of 18 November 1988. The Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs has since characterised that act as the recognition of the proclamation of a Palestinian state, 'a political act' shaped by the politics of the time, and has stated that 'so far, the Czech Republic has not recognised a Palestinian state'.¹⁸ The question is one of succession and of the character of the original act; no act of withdrawal has been made, because on the Czech view there is nothing to withdraw. Hungary is listed as recognising from 23 November 1988, when the Hungarian People's Republic acted. Its present government voted against resolution ES-10/23 and has not joined the recognitions of 2024 and 2025, but no act withdrawing the recognition of 1988 has been located.¹⁹ Papua New Guinea is listed from 13 January 1995. No instrument of that date has been found in its own records, and its conduct since points the other way: it voted against resolution ES-10/23, and in September 2023 it opened an embassy in Jerusalem.²⁰ Under the rules set out in chapter 2, a listing contradicted by

the listed state's present government, without an act withdrawing an earlier recognition, supports only status E. With the three included, the count is 157; without them, 154.

RECOGNITION WITHOUT MEMBERSHIP

The State of Palestine holds more recognitions than any other entity outside the United Nations and a status in the Organization that sets it apart from every other case in this book. It holds observer status as a state, membership of specialised agencies and of other international organisations, and treaty relations with the Holy See, which concluded a comprehensive agreement with it in June 2015.²¹ The General Assembly has determined that it qualifies for membership. It is not a member, because admission requires the recommendation of the Security Council, and the Council's recommendation is subject to the veto of each permanent member.

The case therefore isolates a proposition that chapter 3 stated in general terms. Recognition by other states is evidence of statehood; for an entity whose status is in doubt it may be the principal evidence. It does not confer membership of the United Nations, which is a decision of the Organization taken under article 4 of the Charter. Nor does it settle the territorial questions that the recognising states have, for the most part, referred to future negotiation. The International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion of 19 July 2024, addressed a different obligation: that all states are 'under an obligation not to recognize as legal the situation arising from the unlawful presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory'.²² That is a duty of non-recognition of a situation, of the kind examined in chapter 3, and not a duty to recognise a state. The recognitions counted in this chapter remain, as recognition always is, decisions of the states that made them.

NOTES

- 1 Letter dated 18 November 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, UN Doc A/43/827-S/20278, annex III (Declaration of Independence, 15 November 1988) <https://undocs.org/en/A/43/827> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 2 Identical letters dated 2 April 2024 from the Permanent Representatives of Mauritania, Saudi Arabia and Uganda to the United Nations, UN Doc A/78/846-S/2024/283, annex 'Recognition of the State of Palestine (1988–2023)' <https://undocs.org/en/A/78/846> accessed 18 October 2026. Counts of current recognisers follow the dataset, which applies the rules set out in chapter 2.
- 3 *ibid.*
- 4 'Brazil recognises Palestine', *Al Jazeera* (5 December 2010), reporting the letter of President Lula da Silva published by the Brazilian Ministry of External Relations on 3 December 2010. The annex (n 2) gives 3 December 2011.
- 5 UNGA Res 3237 (XXIX) (22 November 1974) [https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/3237\(XXIX\)](https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/3237(XXIX)) accessed 18 October 2026.

- 6 UNGA Res 43/177 (15 December 1988) paras 1–3 <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/43/177> accessed 18 October 2026; recorded vote 104–2–36 (against: Israel, United States).
- 7 Application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, UN Doc A/66/371–S/2011/592 (23 September 2011) <https://undocs.org/en/A/66/371> accessed 18 October 2026; Report of the Committee on the Admission of New Members concerning the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, UN Doc S/2011/705 (11 November 2011) <https://undocs.org/en/S/2011/705> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 8 UNGA Res 67/19 (29 November 2012) para 2 <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/67/19> accessed 18 October 2026; recorded vote 138–9–41.
- 9 United Nations, Security Council, 9609th meeting (18 April 2024), Meetings Coverage SC/15670 <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15670.doc.htm> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 10 UNGA Res ES-10/23 (10 May 2024) paras 1–2 and annex <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/ES-10/23> accessed 18 October 2026. The advisory opinion of 28 May 1948 to which paragraph 2 refers is *Admission of a State to the United Nations (Charter, Art 4)* (Advisory Opinion) [1948] ICJ Rep 57, not the opinion of 2024 discussed below.
- 11 United Nations, General Assembly, tenth emergency special session, 49th meeting (10 May 2024), Meetings Coverage GA/12599 <https://press.un.org/en/2024/ga12599.doc.htm> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 12 *Al Jazeera* (n 4).
- 13 UNGA, draft resolution A/80/L.1/Rev.1, ‘Endorsement of the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution’, adopted 12 September 2025 (142–10–12); the Declaration is contained in UN Doc A/CONF.243/2025/1 <https://undocs.org/en/A/CONF.243/2025/1> accessed 18 October 2026; for the vote, UN Press Release GA/12707 (12 September 2025) <https://press.un.org/en/2025/ga12707.doc.htm> accessed 19 October 2026.
- 14 Prime Minister’s Office (United Kingdom), ‘PM statement on the recognition of Palestine: 21 September 2025’ (21 September 2025) <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-on-the-recognition-of-palestine-21-september-2025> accessed 12 October 2026.
- 15 Office of the Prime Minister (Malta), ‘Prime Minister Robert Abela officially confirms Malta’s recognition of Palestinian Statehood’, press release PR251629 (23 September 2025) <https://primeminister.gov.mt/latest-news/pr251629/> accessed 12 October 2026.
- 16 ‘Belgium to recognise Palestine in due course’, *VRT News* (2 September 2025) <https://www.vrt.be/vrtnews/en/2025/09/02/belgium-to-recognise-palestine-in-due-course/> accessed 12 October 2026.
- 17 ‘Calls for Belgium to start recognition of Palestine process’, *The Brussels Times* (15 January 2026) <https://www.brusselstimes.com/1919855/forward-calls-on-prevot-to-trigger-recognition-of-palestine-tbttb> accessed 12 October 2026.
- 18 Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí České republiky, ‘Postoj ČR (dříve ČSFR a ČSSR) k uznání Palestiny’, response to a request for information of 27 February 2020 https://mzv.gov.cz/jnp/cz/zahranicni_vztahy/vyrocní_zpravy_a_dokumenty/poskytnute_informace/postoj_cr_drive_csfr_a_cssr_k_uznani.html accessed 12 October 2026: ‘Uznání vyhlášení palestinského státu byl politický akt poplatný tehdejší politice a uspořádání mezinárodních vztahů’ and ‘K uznání palestinského státu ze strany ČR tak prozatím nedošlo’ (author’s translations).
- 19 UN Doc A/78/846–S/2024/283 (n 2) annex; GA/12599 (n 11). Dataset, event Eo738.
- 20 UN Doc A/78/846–S/2024/283 (n 2) annex; GA/12599 (n 11); ‘PNG’s Marape makes foreign policy gaffes over Israel, West Papua’, *Asia Pacific Report* (14 September 2023) <https://asiapacificreport.nz/2023/09/14/pngs-marape-makes-foreign-policy-gaffes-over-israel-west-papua/> accessed 12 October 2026, reporting the opening of the embassy on 5 September 2023. Dataset, event Eo739.

- 21 Comprehensive Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Palestine (signed 26 June 2015, entered into force 2 January 2016).
- 22 *Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem* (Advisory Opinion) [2024] ICJ, dispositif <https://www.icj-cij.org/case/186> accessed 18 October 2026; International Court of Justice, press release (19 July 2024).

CHAPTER 5

The Republic of Kosovo

*We, the democratically-elected leaders of our people, hereby declare
Kosovo to be an independent and sovereign state.*

Kosovo Declaration of Independence (17 February 2008), paragraph 1

THE REPUBLIC of Kosovo holds 96 verified recognitions (119 states have recognised at some point; 98 net of the withdrawals Serbia has announced). It holds the second-largest number of recognitions in this book, and the one whose count is most disputed. The three figures in that sentence are not rival estimates of the same quantity. They measure different things: the first counts recognitions supported by the evidence at the cut-off date; the second counts every member that has recognised at any time, as Pristina does; the third deducts the withdrawals that Belgrade has announced, whether or not the state concerned has confirmed them. The gap between them is the record of a campaign, conducted by Serbia between 2017 and 2020 and resumed in 2023, to persuade recognising states to reverse their decisions, and of Kosovo's efforts to hold and extend its recognitions in reply. This chapter reconstructs both.

BEFORE 2008

Kosovo's first claim to statehood predates the declaration of 2008 by more than sixteen years. In 1991 Kosovo Albanian members of the provincial Assembly, which Serbia had suspended the year before, proclaimed a Republic of Kosova, and on 21 October 1991 Albania recognised it.¹ No other state followed, and the republic of 1991 is recorded in Register 3 among the recognitions that ended. Its single recogniser recognised the Republic of Kosovo on 18 February 2008, the day after the second declaration.

After the conflict of 1998 and 1999, Security Council resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999 placed Kosovo under an international civil administration, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, while reaffirming in its preamble the commitment of member states to the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.² The

resolution provided for a political process to determine Kosovo's future status. That process culminated in the comprehensive proposal of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Martti Ahtisaari, submitted to the Security Council in March 2007, which recommended independence supervised for an initial period by the international community.³ The Council did not endorse it. Russia, a permanent member, opposed any settlement that Serbia did not accept.

THE DECLARATION AND THE FIRST WAVE

The Assembly of Kosovo declared independence on 17 February 2008. Costa Rica recognised the same day. On 18 February seven of the present members recognised: Afghanistan, Albania, France, Senegal, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the United States. Australia, Germany and most members of the European Union followed within weeks; Canada and Japan on 18 March; Croatia and Hungary on 19 March and Bulgaria on 20 March, the first neighbours of Serbia to recognise; Colombia in August; Montenegro and North Macedonia, two more of Serbia's neighbours, on 9 October. By the end of 2008, 53 members had recognised.

The first wave drew on a narrow base. It comprised the United States, Canada, Australia and Japan; twenty-two of the twenty-seven members of the European Union; Türkiye and Albania; and a small number of states in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation did not act as a body, but several of its members recognised within the first eighteen months: Afghanistan, Senegal, Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates in 2008, and Saudi Arabia and Jordan in 2009. Five members of the European Union declined to recognise: Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain. All five maintained that position at the cut-off date. As a result, the European Union took no position on Kosovo's status, and its institutions refer to Kosovo with a footnote stating that the designation is 'without prejudice to positions on status'.

THE ADVISORY OPINION AND THE SECOND WAVE

Serbia responded to the declaration by taking the question to the General Assembly. On 8 October 2008 the Assembly adopted resolution 63/3, which requested an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on whether the unilateral declaration of independence was in accordance with international law.⁴ The Court delivered its opinion on 22 July 2010. By ten votes to four it concluded that the declaration had not violated international law. As chapter 3 explains, the Court answered the question in its narrowest form: it did not decide whether Kosovo was a state, or whether other states were entitled or obliged to recognise it.⁵

The opinion was followed by the largest sustained growth in Kosovo's recognitions. The cumulative count rose from 72 at the end of 2010 to 84 at the end of 2011, 96 at the end of 2012, 103 at the end of 2013 and 108 at the end of 2014. The recognitions of these years came from Africa, the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Muslim-majority states of Asia: Qatar in January 2011, Pakistan in December 2012, Egypt in June 2013 and Thailand in September 2013 among them. In April 2013 Serbia and Kosovo concluded, under the auspices of the European Union, the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalisation of Relations, which addressed the municipalities with a Serb majority in northern Kosovo and did not address status.⁶ The pace then slowed. Singapore recognised in December 2016, Bangladesh in February 2017 and Barbados in February 2018. The cumulative count reached 111 at the end of 2016, the highest point the net series has reached.

THE CAMPAIGN FOR WITHDRAWAL

From 2017 Serbia's government pursued a campaign to persuade recognising states to reverse their decisions. Its announcements followed a pattern: a meeting between the Serbian foreign minister and a counterpart, a statement from Belgrade that the counterpart's state had withdrawn or suspended its recognition, and in some cases a document said to embody the decision. Suriname was the first, in October 2017. Guinea-Bissau's withdrawal of November 2017 was annulled by Guinea-Bissau in February 2018. In 2018 Serbia announced withdrawals by Burundi, Papua New Guinea, Lesotho, Comoros, Dominica, Grenada, Madagascar and the Solomon Islands; in 2019 by Palau, the Central African Republic and Naoero (Nauru); and in March 2020 by Sierra Leone.⁷ After a pause discussed below, Serbia announced in January 2023 that further states, among them Burkina Faso, Guinea, Gabon, Libya, Antigua and Barbuda, the Maldives and Somalia, had withdrawn or no longer recognised. By September 2023 its ministers spoke of twenty-eight withdrawals.⁸

The dataset tests each announcement against the conduct of the state said to have made it. The results fall into four groups. In one case, Togo, the withdrawal is established by the state's own act: at a joint press conference with the Serbian foreign minister

in January 2023, Togo’s foreign minister described the withdrawal as final and said that ‘we in Togo recognize only one Serbia’.⁹ In two cases the recognising state suspended rather than withdrew. Palau, which had recognised in March 2009, suspended its earlier decision by a diplomatic note to Serbia in January 2019; in October 2023 its President received the credentials of Kosovo’s non-resident ambassador, and the dataset treats that act as a resumption.¹⁰ Grenada’s recognition was reported suspended in October 2018; its foreign minister was later reported to stand by it, and the dataset codes it as suspended. In five cases the state concerned denied the claim or reaffirmed its recognition: Liberia, whose ministry refuted a note annulling its recognition within days in June 2018; Guinea-Bissau; Lesotho, whose Prime Minister declared the reported withdrawal invalid in October 2018; the Maldives, which denied Serbia’s claim in May 2023; and Somalia, whose President confirmed its continued recognition in a letter of February 2026.¹¹ Twenty-two members are coded as conflicting evidence. Most rest on Serbia’s announcement with no act of the state concerned located; a few, such as Oman and Trinidad and Tobago, rest on evidence that points both ways about whether recognition was ever given. Under the rules of chapter 2, none of the twenty-two is included in the verified count.

TABLE 5.1. The Republic of Kosovo: status of the 193 members of the United Nations. Palau, which suspended its recognition in 2019 and resumed relations in 2023, is counted under A. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12.

Status at 10 October 2026	Code	Members
Recognition documented and in force	A	96
Conflicting or insufficient evidence	E	22
Suspended (Grenada)	D	1
Withdrawn (Togo)	C	1
No act of recognition	B	73
Total		193

Of the withdrawals Serbia has announced, one has been confirmed in public, in terms that admit no doubt, by the state said to have made it.

The rule cuts in both directions. Kosovo’s own announcements of recognition have also failed the test of the recognising state’s conduct. In February 2020 Kosovo announced that Jamaica had recognised it; Jamaica’s foreign minister denied the claim the same day.¹² A note verbale attributed to Mali and publicised by a Kosovan politician in August 2012 was described by Mali’s presidency as a fabrication, and a note attributed to Myanmar in January 2014 was disowned by Kosovan officials.¹³ Oman’s recognition,

announced by Kosovo in February 2011, has never been confirmed by Oman, and Serbia maintains that it was never given. The dataset counts none of these as recognitions.

MORATORIUM AND NORMALISATION

The campaign paused in September 2020. At the White House on 4 September, the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo signed separate commitments, identical in most respects. Kosovo undertook a one-year moratorium on seeking membership of international organisations; Serbia undertook a one-year pause in its campaign for withdrawals; and Kosovo and Israel agreed to recognise each other.¹⁴ Israel's recognition followed, and the two states established diplomatic relations on 1 February 2021.

The European Union's dialogue produced a further text in 2023. The Agreement on the path to normalisation between Kosovo and Serbia, accepted by both parties in Brussels on 27 February 2023, with an implementation annex agreed at Ohrid on 18 March, was not signed. Its fourth article provides:

The Parties proceed on the assumption that neither of the two can represent the other in the international sphere or act on its behalf. Serbia will not object to Kosovo's membership in any international organisation.¹⁵

The article stops short of recognition. Its first article commits the parties to develop 'normal, good-neighbourly relations with each other on the basis of equal rights' and to recognise each other's documents and national symbols, 'including passports, diplomas, licence plates, and customs stamps'.¹⁶ Serbia's announcements of withdrawals in January 2023, a month before the agreement, and its statements on withdrawals since, show the distance between the text and the practice of the parties.

NEW RECOGNITIONS, 2025

After more than four years without a new recognition, four members recognised Kosovo in 2025. Kenya did so in March; Kosovo's President announced receipt of the instrument, and Serbia announced a diplomatic response.¹⁷ Sudan's foreign minister conveyed his government's decision in April; Serbia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs acknowledged the decision the next day and questioned whether the government of Sudan had the capacity to take decisions of such importance.¹⁸ On 29 October the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Syrian Arab Republic announced 'its official recognition of the Republic of Kosovo as an independent and sovereign state', after a meeting in Riyadh for which it thanked Saudi Arabia.¹⁹ In December the Serbian government condemned 'the decision of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas to recognise' Kosovo.²⁰

Three of the four recognitions rest in part on the statements of the state that opposes them. That is the second rule of evidence set out in chapter 2: an official acknowledgment by Serbia that a third state has recognised Kosovo is an admission against interest and strong corroboration that the act occurred. The Syrian recognition is the only one of the four for which the recognising state's own published text has been located.

THE SHAPE OF RECOGNITION

The distribution of the 96 verified recognitions is uneven. Twenty-seven of the twenty-nine states that sit with the Western European and Others Group recognise Kosovo, counting Türkiye and the United States; the exceptions are Greece and Spain. Twenty-seven of the 54 states the dataset assigns to the Asia-Pacific Group recognise, twelve of the 23 Eastern European members, thirteen of the 33 members in Latin America and the Caribbean, and seventeen of the 54 African members. The Eastern European non-recognisers are Serbia itself, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Romania, Slovakia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Three of the five permanent members of the Security Council recognise Kosovo, and two, China and Russia, do not. Among the largest states of the global South, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and South Africa do not recognise Kosovo, while Egypt, Saudi Arabia and, since 2025, Kenya do. Japan, which does not recognise the State of Palestine, recognised Kosovo in March 2008. Kosovo is a member of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group, which it joined in June 2009 by the weighted votes of their members. Where admission requires a two-thirds majority of states, its applications have failed: the General Conference of UNESCO declined to admit it in November 2015, and the General Assembly of INTERPOL in November 2018. Admission to the United Nations would require a recommendation of the Security Council, on which China and Russia hold vetoes.

The case shows, better than any other, the work that recognition requires after it is granted. Kosovo's recognitions were won in two waves, each tied to a moment: the

declaration of 2008 and the advisory opinion of 2010. They were contested one by one, in bilateral meetings, by a state that treats the territory as its own. And the disputed figures that result have themselves become instruments of that contest, which is why the book reports all three.

NOTES

- 1 Dataset, Register 3, 'Republic of Kosova (1991)'.
- 2 UNSC Res 1244 (10 June 1999) UN Doc S/RES/1244, preamble and paras 10–11 [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1244\(1999\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1244(1999)) accessed 18 October 2026.
- 3 Letter dated 26 March 2007 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, UN Doc S/2007/168, transmitting the Report of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Kosovo's future status, and S/2007/168/Add.1 (Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement) <https://undocs.org/en/S/2007/168> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 4 UNGA Res 63/3 (8 October 2008) <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/63/3> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 5 *Accordance with International Law of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Respect of Kosovo* (Advisory Opinion) [2010] ICJ Rep 403, paras 51, 56, 122 <https://www.icj-cij.org/case/141> accessed 18 October 2026; 'Kosovo's declaration of independence did not violate international law – UN court', *UN News* (22 July 2010).
- 6 First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalisation of Relations (Brussels, 19 April 2013).
- 7 Government of Serbia, statements on Lesotho (October 2018), Comoros (November 2018), Grenada (November 2018), Nauru (November 2019), the Central African Republic (2019) and Sierra Leone (March 2020); Radio Slobodna Evropa, weekly roundup (17 November 2019) <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/nase-price-sedmicе/30273517.html> accessed 10 October 2026.
- 8 '28 zemalja otprižnalo tzv. Kosovo', *B92* (24 September 2025), reporting Minister Nemanja Starović <https://www.b92.net/info/kosovo/166454/28-zemalja-otprižnalo-tzv-kosovo/vest> accessed 10 October 2026; 'Kosovo debunks Serbian claims about derecognitions', *Prishtina Insight* (13 January 2023) <https://prishtinainsight.com/kosovo-debunks-serbian-claims-about-derecognitions/> accessed 10 October 2026.
- 9 'Togo: Definitive withdrawal of the recognition of Kosovo', *Kosovo Online* (16 January 2023) <https://www.kosovo-online.com/en/news/politics/togo-definitive-withdrawal-recognition-kosovo-16-1-2023> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 10 Government of the Republic of Serbia, 'Republic of Palau suspends recognition of Kosovo' (21 January 2019) <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/136226/republic-of-palau-suspends-recognition-of-kosovo.php> accessed 10 October 2026; 'Palau recalls support of Kosovo's independence', *Island Times* (Koror, 22 January 2019) <https://islandtimes.org/palau-recalls-support-of-kosovos-independence/> accessed 10 October 2026; 'Pas pesë vjetësh rikthehen marrëdhëniet diplomatike me Republikën e Palaut', *Koha* (20 October 2023).
- 11 Dataset, events E0199 (Maldives), E0200 (Somalia), E0207 (Liberia), E0208 (Guinea-Bissau) and E0211 (Lesotho); *Prishtina Insight* (n 8).
- 12 'Jamaica rejects Kosovo claim it recognised its sovereignty', *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* (February 2020) <https://rferl.org/a/jamaica-rejects-kosovo-claim-sovereignty-recognised-thaci/30447025.html> accessed 12 October 2026.
- 13 Dataset, events E0219 (Jamaica), E0220 (Mali), E0221 (Myanmar) and E0213 (Oman).

- 14 Robert Muharremi, 'The "Washington Agreement" Between Kosovo and Serbia' (2021) 25(4) ASIL Insights <https://asil.org/insights/volume/25/issue/4/washington-agreement-between-kosovo-and-serbia> accessed 12 October 2026.
- 15 European External Action Service, 'Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue: Agreement on the path to normalisation between Kosovo and Serbia' (27 February 2023) arts 1 and 4 <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/426217> accessed 12 October 2026; the Implementation Annex was agreed at Ohrid on 18 March 2023.
- 16 *ibid.*
- 17 'Serbia vows diplomatic response to Kenya's recognition of Kosovo', *Capital FM* (Nairobi, March 2025) <https://capitalfm.africa/serbia-vows-diplomatic-response-to-kenyas-recognition-of-kosovo/> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 18 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, statement on Sudan (13 April 2025) <https://mfa.gov.rs/en/press-service/statements/mfa-serbia-capacity-current-government-sudan-make-decisions-vital-importance-international-relations-questionable> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 19 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Syrian Arab Republic, statement (Damascus, 29 October 2025) <https://mofaex.gov.sy/en/news/%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%BA%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-2> accessed 10 October 2026.
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CHAPTER 6

The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic

Thus the Court has not found legal ties of such a nature as might affect the application of resolution 1514 (XV) in the decolonization of Western Sahara.

Western Sahara, Advisory Opinion (16 October 1975), paragraph 162

AT THE cut-off date of this study, 36 members of the United Nations recognised the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. Eighty-four have recognised it at one time or another. Of the 48 that no longer count among its recognisers, 34 have withdrawn their recognition by an act of their own, 12 have frozen, suspended or qualified it, or suspended diplomatic relations in terms whose effect on recognition is uncertain, and in two cases the evidence conflicts. At its height, in 1994 and 1995, the entity was recognised by 73 members at the same moment. The present figure is less than half of that.

No other entity in this book has lost recognition on such a scale, and none illustrates as clearly the difference between a withdrawal and a freeze. This chapter sets out the origins of the claim, the growth of recognition to 1995, the entity's admission to the Organisation of African Unity, the United Nations process, and the sequence of withdrawals, freezes and resumptions that followed. It closes with the 36 states that recognise the Sahrawi Republic today.

THE TERRITORY AND THE OPINION OF 1975

Western Sahara was a Spanish colony, and the General Assembly has treated it since the 1960s as a non-self-governing territory. In December 1974 the Assembly asked the International Court of Justice whether the territory had been, at the time of colonisation by Spain, a territory belonging to no one, and, if not, what legal ties had existed between it and the Kingdom of Morocco and the 'Mauritanian entity'.¹ The Court delivered its opinion on 16 October 1975. It found that the territory had not been *terra nullius*, and that ties of allegiance had existed between the Sultan of Morocco and some of the tribes

of the territory, and rights relating to land between the Mauritanian entity and the territory. It found that the materials and information presented to it 'do not establish any tie of territorial sovereignty between the territory of Western Sahara and the Kingdom of Morocco or the Mauritanian entity', and concluded that it had 'not found legal ties of such a nature as might affect the application of resolution 1514 (XV) in the decolonization of Western Sahara'.²

The resolution to which the Court referred, General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, provides in its second paragraph:

All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.³

Events moved faster than the law. In November 1975 Morocco organised the 'Green March' of civilians into the territory, and on 14 November Spain, Morocco and Mauritania concluded the Madrid Accords, by which Spain agreed to transfer the administration of the territory to a temporary tripartite administration. Spain left on 26 February 1976. On 27 February the Frente Polisario proclaimed the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic at Bir Lahlou.⁴ Morocco and Mauritania divided the territory between them; Mauritania renounced its claim in an agreement with the Frente Polisario in August 1979, and Morocco extended its administration over the part Mauritania had held.

RECOGNITION TO 1995

Recognition began within days. Algeria recognised on 6 March 1976, Angola on 11 March, Mozambique on 13 March and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 16 March. By the end of 1976 ten present members had recognised; by the end of 1979, 34; by the end of 1984, 60.⁵ The recognisers of the first decade were for the most part African states, the socialist states of Asia, Cuba and, after 1979, a widening circle in Latin America: Nicaragua in September 1979, Mexico in the same month, Costa Rica in 1980 and Venezuela in 1982. Iran and Syria recognised in 1980. Mauritania, which had been a party to the Madrid Accords, recognised on 27 February 1984, the eighth anniversary of the proclamation. Nigeria followed in November 1984.

The growth slowed after 1985 and stopped in the early 1990s, when the United Nations settlement plan held out the prospect of a referendum. The year-end count reached 73 in 1994 and 1995. It has not been so high since.

The composition of the recognisers deserves note for what it lacks. No member of the Western European and Others Group has recognised the Sahrawi Republic at any time. Only two members of the Eastern European Group have done so: Albania, which

recognised in December 1987, and Serbia, whose predecessor, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, recognised in November 1984; Serbia and Montenegro cancelled that recognition in October 2004.⁶ None of the permanent members of the Security Council has recognised. Of the 84 members that have ever recognised, 37 are African, 29 are in Latin America and the Caribbean, 16 are in the Asia-Pacific Group and 2 are Eastern European.

THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

The decisive institutional event took place in Africa. In February 1982 the Council of Ministers of the Organisation of African Unity seated a delegation of the Sahrawi Republic as a member, over Morocco's objection. The question divided the Organisation for two years. When the Sahrawi delegation was seated at the summit of November 1984, Morocco withdrew from the Organisation. The Sahrawi Republic became a founding member of the African Union in 2002. Morocco was readmitted to the African Union in January 2017, without any decision on the Sahrawi Republic's membership, and both have been members since.⁷

The result is without parallel among the cases in this book. The Sahrawi Republic is a full member of a regional organisation of 55 members, a majority of which do not recognise it. Eighteen of the 54 African members of the United Nations recognised it at the cut-off date. Membership of the African Union and bilateral recognition by its members have become distinct questions, decided by different procedures.

THE UNITED NATIONS PROCESS

The United Nations has not treated the question as one of recognition. In 1988 the parties accepted in principle a settlement plan proposed by the Secretary-General and the Organisation of African Unity, which provided for a ceasefire and a referendum in which the people of the territory would choose between independence and integration with Morocco. On 29 April 1991 the Security Council established the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara.⁸ The ceasefire took effect in September 1991. The referendum has never been held; the parties could not agree on who was entitled to vote.

In April 2007 Morocco submitted to the Secretary-General an initiative for negotiating an autonomy statute for the region, which would remain part of Morocco.⁹ The Frente Polisario submitted a proposal of its own the same month. The Security Council's resolutions on the mission's mandate have since referred to both. On 10 December 2020 the United States proclaimed that it 'recognizes Moroccan sovereignty over the entire Western Sahara territory'.¹⁰ On 31 October 2025 the Security Council adopted resolution 2797 by eleven votes in favour, with three abstentions (China, Pakistan and the

Russian Federation); Algeria did not participate in the vote. The resolution called on the parties to engage in discussions ‘without preconditions, taking as basis Morocco’s Autonomy Proposal’, and stated that ‘genuine autonomy could represent a most feasible outcome’.¹¹ It extended the mission’s mandate to 31 October 2026.

The recognitions examined in this chapter must be read against that background. A state that recognises the Sahrawi Republic treats it as the state entitled to the territory. A state that endorses the autonomy proposal treats the territory as Moroccan. Several states have done both in succession, and some have done both at once.

WITHDRAWAL, FREEZE AND SUSPENSION

The decline came in three waves. The first, between 1996 and 2000, reduced the year-end count from 73 to 53. Burkina Faso, the Republic of the Congo, São Tomé and Príncipe, Benin, Togo, Eswatini, Liberia and Chad withdrew in 1996 and 1997; Guatemala in 1998; and India, Kiribati, Naoero (Nauru) and Tuvalu in 2000. The second, between 2010 and 2020, came from the Caribbean and from Africa, among them Saint Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada and Dominica in 2010, Haiti in 2013, Suriname and Jamaica in 2016, Malawi in 2017, El Salvador and Barbados in 2019 and Guyana in 2020. The third began in 2024 and continued to the cut-off date: Ecuador in October 2024, Panama in November 2024, Ghana in January 2025, Bolivia in February 2026, Mali and Honduras in April 2026, and Colombia in August 2026.¹²

*Of the 84 members that have recognised the Sahrawi Republic,
fewer than half recognise it today.*

Much of the record for the Sahrawi Republic rests on a single compilation, that of the Centro de Estudos sobre o Sahara Occidental, which the dataset treats as a tier 3 source. Where the Centro’s record and announcements made in Rabat diverge, the dataset codes the case as conflicting; where the Centro records an act that no other source corroborates, as with its report of a Ghanaian resumption in September 2026, the dataset says so and does not adopt it. The terms of these acts vary, and the variation is the reason the dataset distinguishes status C from status D. Haiti’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs withdrew recognition in October 2013 by a communiqué that expressed support for a settlement ‘par le Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies’.¹³ Mali’s foreign minister declared in April 2026, during a visit by his Moroccan counterpart, that Mali withdrew its recognition and supported autonomy ‘sous souveraineté marocaine’.¹⁴ Those are withdrawals. Ecuador suspended its recognition on 21 October 2024, notified the decision to the Secretary-General in December and recorded it in a joint communiqué

with Morocco.¹⁵ Panama suspended diplomatic relations in November 2024 without referring to recognition in terms.¹⁶ Ghana suspended diplomatic relations in January 2025.¹⁷ The Centro de Estudios recorded a resumption on 14 September 2026. Two days later Ghana's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that 'the State of Ghana's decision to withdraw its recognition', taken on 6 January 2025, 'remains in effect and has not been reversed', and that the Foreign Minister had received an envoy of the Polisario Front, not an accredited ambassador; on Ghana's own characterisation the dataset records a withdrawal.¹⁸ Honduras suspended its recognition by letter in April 2026.¹⁹ Colombia froze relations in August 2026; its ministry's statement referred to 'la entidad denominada como "República Árabe Saharaui Democrática"', a form of words that does not itself withdraw the recognition Colombia had given.²⁰ Kenya presents a different case. In May 2025 Kenya and Morocco issued a joint statement that endorsed the autonomy proposal; Kenya has not withdrawn its recognition, and the dataset codes the combination as a qualification.²¹ Mauritius may follow the same course. On 23 September 2026 its Foreign Minister, Dhananjay Ramful, was reported as saying, after a review by the Cabinet, that autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty was 'the most credible' solution.²² No act of the Government of Mauritius has been located; the dataset retains Mauritius among the recognisers. An act of the Government confirming the position would be coded as Kenya's is, and the count would then fall to 35.

Several states have changed position more than once, and the changes often follow changes of government. Bolivia suspended relations in January 2020, under an interim government, resumed them in September 2021, after an election, and suspended them again in February 2026.²³ Peru recognised in 1984, suspended relations in 1996, resumed them in 2021, announced a withdrawal in 2022 and suspended relations again in 2023; on 24 September 2026 a joint communiqué with Morocco reaffirmed Peru's support for Morocco's territorial integrity and its autonomy proposal, and announced a plan to open a consulate in Dakhla.²⁴ Honduras withdrew in 2000, resumed in 2013 and suspended in 2026. Malawi cancelled and resumed its recognition several times between 2001 and 2017. Burundi froze its recognition in 2006, resumed in 2008 and cancelled in 2010. Some recognitions have been resumed and held: Chad cancelled in 1997 and resumed in 2007; Vanuatu cancelled in 2000 and resumed in 2008; Mauritius cancelled in 2014 and resumed in 2015; South Sudan, which recognised on the day after its own independence in July 2011, cancelled in 2018 and resumed in 2022. Belize, which recognised in 1986, received the credentials of an ambassador of the Sahrawi Republic in August 2023, an act consistent only with continuing recognition.²⁵

Two cases remain unresolved. The foreign minister of Seychelles was reported in May 2013 to have withdrawn recognition after meeting his Moroccan counterpart, but no instrument has been located, and the research centre whose record the dataset follows lists Seychelles as recognising. Zambia announced cancellations in 2011 and 2016 and reaffirmed its recognition after each. Both are coded E.

THE THIRTY-SIX

Half of the 36 states that recognised the Sahrawi Republic at the cut-off date are African: Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Chad, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Libya, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Nine are in the Asia-Pacific Group: Afghanistan, Iran, Laos, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Syria, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu, Viet Nam and Yemen. Eight are in Latin America and the Caribbean: Belize, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela. One, Albania, is in Eastern Europe.

Belize is the only member that recognises both the Sahrawi Republic and the Republic of China, and the list overlaps only in part with the recognisers of the other entities in this book. The record of the Sahrawi Republic shows, more than any other case, how recognition given in one political setting can be reviewed in another, and how often the review takes the form of a suspension that leaves the earlier act standing.

NOTES

- 1 UNGA Res 3292 (XXIX) (13 December 1974) [https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/3292\(XXIX\)](https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/3292(XXIX)) accessed 18 October 2026.
- 2 *Western Sahara* (Advisory Opinion) [1975] ICJ Rep 12, para 162 <https://www.icj-cij.org/case/61> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 3 UNGA Res 1514 (XV) (14 December 1960) para 2 [https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/1514\(XV\)](https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/1514(XV)) accessed 18 October 2026.
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- 5 Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Centro de Estudos sobre o Sahara Occidental, 'RASD – Frente Polisario' (recognition record) <https://assets.usc.gal/en/investigar-na-usc/investigar/institutos-centros-investigacion/cpi/ceso/rasd-frente-polisario> accessed 12 October 2026. Year-end counts are those of the dataset, which applies the rules set out in chapter 2.
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- 7 'Morocco rejoins African Union', *Anadolu Agency* (30 January 2017).
- 8 UNSC Res 690 (29 April 1991) [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/690\(1991\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/690(1991)) accessed 18 October 2026.
- 9 Letter dated 11 April 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, UN Doc S/2007/206, annex ('Moroccan initiative for negotiating an autonomy statute for the Sahara region') <https://undocs.org/en/S/2007/206> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 10 Proclamation No 10126, 'Recognizing the Sovereignty of the Kingdom of Morocco Over the Western Sahara' (signed 4 December 2020, announced 10 December 2020) 85 FR 81329 <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/DCPD-202000886/html/DCPD-202000886.htm> accessed 10 October 2026.
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CHAPTER 7

The Republic of China (Taiwan)

The Government of the United States of America acknowledges the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China.

Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China (1 January 1979)

AT THE cut-off date of this study, eleven members of the United Nations maintained formal diplomatic relations with the Republic of China (Taiwan): Belize, Eswatini, Guatemala, Haiti, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tuvalu. The Holy See made a twelfth.¹ At the end of 1971 the corresponding figure, reconstructed in the same way, was 56. Since 1971, 78 of the present members of the United Nations have ended relations with Taipei at least once, and one of them, Saint Lucia, has restored them.

The Republic of China differs from every other entity in this book, and the differences determine how its record is read. It does not claim to have separated from another state. Until October 1971 it held the seat of China in the United Nations, including a permanent seat on the Security Council. Most of its partners, past and present, recognised it as the government of China, not as a new state; their decisions to transfer relations to Beijing were, in legal form, changes in the recognition of a government. The matrix therefore codes current formal diplomatic relations with Taipei, records the legal character of each act in the event register, and reports the Republic of China both within and apart from the comparative totals. This chapter traces the record from 1971 to 2024, identifies the periods of gain and loss, and examines the switches that have been reversed.

TWO GOVERNMENTS AND ONE SEAT

After 1949 two governments claimed to represent China: the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China in Beijing and the Government of the Republic of China in Taipei. Each insisted that it alone was the government of China, and each required its partners to choose. The joint communiqués by which states established relations with Beijing record that choice in a recurring formula: the recognising state recognises the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China and, in terms that vary from case to case, takes note of, acknowledges, understands and respects, or recognises Beijing's position that Taiwan is part of China. The communiqué with Japan of 29 September 1972 is an example of the middle of that range:

2. The Government of Japan recognizes that Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal Government of China.
3. The Government of the People's Republic of China reiterates that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the People's Republic of China. The Government of Japan fully understands and respects this stand of the Government of the People's Republic of China, and it firmly maintains its stand under Article 8 of the Potsdam Proclamation.²

The variation in these formulas is a matter of record and of long scholarly commentary. For the purposes of this book, the relevant fact is the consequence common to all of them: a state that establishes relations with Beijing ends formal relations with Taipei.

On 25 October 1971 the General Assembly adopted resolution 2758, which decided to restore the rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations and to recognise its representatives as the only legitimate representatives of China to the Organization. Chapter 3 sets out the text and its character as a decision on representation. Beijing holds that the resolution also settled the question of Taiwan's status; the government in Taipei maintains that it did not.

THE GREAT CONTRACTION, 1971 TO 1979

The switch of the 1970s began before the vote. Canada established relations with Beijing in October 1970 and Italy in November 1970. After resolution 2758 the movement became general. The reconstructed year-end count of Taipei's partners among the present members and the Holy See fell from 56 at the end of 1971 to 43 at the end of 1972, 39 in 1973, 32 in 1974, 27 in 1975, 23 in 1977 and 22 in 1978.³ Japan switched in September 1972, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and Greece in the same year, Spain in 1973, Brazil, Malaysia and Venezuela in 1974, the Philippines, Thailand and Portugal in 1975.

The United States established relations with Beijing on 1 January 1979. Its joint communiqué recognised the Government of the People's Republic of China 'as the sole legal Government of China' and acknowledged 'the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China', and stated that the people of the United States

would ‘maintain cultural, commercial, and other unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan’.⁴ The Taiwan Relations Act, enacted by the United States Congress in April 1979, gave those unofficial relations a statutory basis. Neither instrument recognised Taipei, and the dataset codes the United States as not maintaining relations from 1979.

COMPETITION AND STABILITY, 1980 TO 2015

For the next thirty-five years the count moved within a narrow band, between 22 and 30. Losses continued: Colombia in 1980, Côte d’Ivoire in 1983, Bolivia in 1985, Uruguay in 1988, Saudi Arabia in 1990, the Republic of Korea in 1992 and South Africa in 1998. They were offset by gains in Africa, the Caribbean, Central America and the Pacific. Belize, Grenada and the Bahamas established relations with Taipei in 1989; Lesotho, Guinea-Bissau and Nicaragua in 1990; the Central African Republic in 1991; Niger in 1992; Burkina Faso in 1994; the Gambia in 1995; Senegal in 1996; Chad, Liberia and São Tomé and Príncipe in 1997; the Marshall Islands in 1998; and Palau in 1999. Kiribati followed in 2003 and Naoero (Nauru) in 2005. The count reached 30 in 1992 and again in 1997.

Several of these relations proved brief. Papua New Guinea established relations with Taipei in July 1999, and the government that took office later that month withdrew them on 21 July.⁵ Vanuatu’s Prime Minister signed a communiqué establishing relations in Taipei on 3 November 2004; his Council of Ministers revoked it within days, and the government that succeeded his in December 2004 confirmed the break.⁶ North Macedonia maintained relations from 1999 to 2001. From 2008, the count stabilised at 23 for five years, a period often described as a diplomatic truce between the two governments. The Gambia ended relations with Taipei in November 2013; Beijing did not establish relations with it until 2016.

THE SECOND CONTRACTION, 2016 TO 2024

That period ended in December 2016, when São Tomé and Príncipe switched. Panama followed in June 2017, after more than a century of relations; the Dominican Republic, Burkina Faso and El Salvador in 2018; the Solomon Islands and Kiribati in September 2019; Nicaragua in December 2021; Honduras in March 2023; and Naoero in January 2024. The count fell from 22 at the end of 2015 to 12 at the end of 2024, where it stood at the cut-off date.

The joint communiqué with Honduras of 26 March 2023 illustrates the form these switches now take. In it, the Government of Honduras ‘recognizes that there is but one China in the world’ and that ‘Taiwan is an inalienable part of China’s territory’, and it ‘shall sever “diplomatic relations” with Taiwan as of this day’.⁷ The quotation marks around the words ‘diplomatic relations’ appear in the published text. They express, in a single typographical choice, the position of the government that drafted it on the character of the relations being ended.

NINETEEN COMMUNIQUÉS, 2001 TO 2024

Between 2001 and 2024 nineteen present members of the United Nations ended relations with Taipei and concluded a joint communiqué with Beijing. Table 7.1 lists them with the date of each communiqué, which is the date on which relations with Beijing were established or resumed.

TABLE 7.1. Switches from Taipei to Beijing by present members, 2001 to 2024, with the year in which the last period of relations with Taipei began and the date of the joint communiqué with the People's Republic of China. 'Resumed' marks a state that had earlier relations with Beijing. The Gambia ended relations with Taipei on 14 November 2013, more than two years before its communiqué with Beijing. Sources: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, table of dates of establishment of diplomatic relations and country pages; reports of the communiqués by Xinhua and *People's Daily*; *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12.

Member	With Taipei from	Communiqué with Beijing	Form
North Macedonia	1999	18 June 2001	Resumed
Liberia	1997	11 October 2003	Resumed
Dominica	1983	23 March 2004	Established
Grenada	1989	20 January 2005	Resumed
Senegal	1996	25 October 2005	Resumed
Chad	1997	6 August 2006	Resumed
Costa Rica	1941	1 June 2007	Established
Malawi	1966	28 December 2007	Established
Gambia	1995	17 March 2016	Resumed
São Tomé and Príncipe	1997	26 December 2016	Resumed
Panama	1912	13 June 2017	Established
Dominican Republic	1941	1 May 2018	Established
Burkina Faso	1994	26 May 2018	Resumed
El Salvador	1941	21 August 2018	Established
Solomon Islands	1983	21 September 2019	Established
Kiribati	2003	27 September 2019	Resumed
Nicaragua	1990	10 December 2021	Resumed
Honduras	1941	26 March 2023	Established
Naoero (Nauru)	2005	24 January 2024	Resumed

Eleven of the nineteen were resumptions: the state had recognised Beijing before, moved to Taipei and returned. The communiqués follow a common form. Each of those whose text was examined for this book, Chad's of 2006, the Gambia's of 2016, Panama's of 2017, Nicaragua's of 2021 and Honduras's of 2023, records the recognition by the other government that there is only one China, that the Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legitimate or legal government representing the whole of China and that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory.⁸ Panama's, as reported, adds an undertaking to have no official relations or contact with Taiwan. The form has not changed in substance between the first communiqué of the period and the last.

In the contest between Taipei and Beijing, recognition has followed governments no less than doctrine.

SWITCHES REVERSED

The record contains a series of switches that were later reversed, and in most of them the reversal followed a change of government in the switching state. Nicaragua is the clearest case. It maintained relations with Taipei from 1930; the Sandinista government transferred them to Beijing in December 1985; the government elected in 1990 restored relations with Taipei in November of that year; and the government of Daniel Ortega, returned to office in 2007, transferred them to Beijing again in December 2021. Saint Lucia established relations with Taipei in 1984, transferred them to Beijing in 1997 after a change of government, and restored them in 2007 after another. Liberia changed sides five times between 1977 and 2003, Senegal and the Central African Republic more than once, and Naoero ended relations with Taipei in 2002, restored them in 2005 and ended them again in 2024. Kiribati moved to Taipei in 2003 and back to Beijing in 2019.

Reversals in the other direction have been less frequent since 2007. Saint Lucia's restoration of that year is the most recent return to Taipei by a present member of the United Nations. The record does not show why each government acted as it did, and the book does not attribute motives that the governments did not state. It does show that relations of this kind, for small states in particular, have been held at the discretion of each successive government, and that the discretion has been exercised. In the contest between Taipei and Beijing, recognition has followed governments no less than doctrine.

DIVIDED STATES

The Republic of China is one of several cases since 1945 in which two authorities claimed to represent one state. The others were resolved by different routes. The two German states were admitted to the United Nations together on 18 September 1973, after the Basic Treaty of the previous year. The Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were admitted together on 17 September 1991. Viet Nam passed through a period with three authorities, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam in the north, the Republic of Viet Nam in the south and, from 1969, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, which a number of states recognised; it was reunified on 2 July 1976 and admitted to the United Nations in 1977. The question of China was resolved in 1971 by the transfer of a single seat rather than the admission of two members. Beijing has never accepted the simultaneous recognition of both governments. In the Korean and German cases, by contrast, most members came to maintain relations with both authorities, because each accepted, at least for the purposes of membership, the existence of the other.

RELATIONS WITH BOTH

No member of the United Nations maintained diplomatic relations with both Beijing and Taipei at the cut-off date, and none has done so for long. The record contains a handful of brief overlaps, each ended by one of the two governments. When a state that recognised Beijing opened relations with Taipei, Beijing ended its own relations, sometimes after a delay of days or weeks. North Macedonia recognised the Republic of China on 27 January 1999; Beijing severed relations in February, and on 25 February it voted against a draft resolution of the Security Council that would have extended the mandate of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force in the country.⁹ Kiribati opened relations with Taipei in November 2003, and Beijing ended its relations on 29 November.¹⁰ Saint Lucia restored relations with Taipei at the end of April 2007, and Beijing suspended its relations in the first days of May.¹¹ In Vanuatu's case of 2004 the overlap ended the other way: the recognising state withdrew from its arrangement with Taipei and kept its relations with Beijing.

The pattern has two sides. Beijing has treated relations with Taipei as incompatible with relations with itself, and has acted on that view whenever a partner tested it. Taipei, for its part, has not ended relations with a partner because that partner also dealt with Beijing; its relations have ended because the partner chose Beijing. The Gambia's experience shows a third possibility: between November 2013 and March 2016 it had relations with neither.

THE TWELVE

TABLE 7.2. The Republic of China (Taiwan): partners at 10 October 2026, with the date on which the present period of relations began. Saint Lucia had earlier relations from 1984 to 1997. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Taipei lists its partners without dates; the dates are those given by official statements on anniversaries where located (Tuvalu, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Paraguay) and otherwise by a compilation of the Republic of China's diplomatic allies, and published sources differ by a day for Belize (11 or 31 October 1989) and Palau (29 or 30 December 1999). Sources: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China (Taiwan), 'Diplomatic Allies'; Office of the President, Republic of China (Taiwan), news release (15 March 2013) (Tuvalu); 'St Vincent mark 45 years of diplomatic ties with Asian island', *Jamaica Gleaner* (13 August 2026); 'Relaciones diplomáticas entre Taiwán y Paraguay celebra su 67 aniversario', *La Nación* (Asunción, 12 July 2024); Taiwan Politics Database, 'Area and population of the ROC's diplomatic allies'; *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12.

Partner	Regional group	Relations with Taipei since
Holy See	(non-member observer state)	23 October 1942
Guatemala	Latin America and Caribbean	15 June 1933
Haiti	Latin America and Caribbean	25 April 1956
Paraguay	Latin America and Caribbean	8 July 1957
Eswatini	African	6 September 1968
Tuvalu	Asia-Pacific	19 September 1979
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Latin America and Caribbean	15 August 1981
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Latin America and Caribbean	9 October 1983
Belize	Latin America and Caribbean	11 October 1989
Marshall Islands	Asia-Pacific	20 November 1998
Palau	Asia-Pacific	29 December 1999
Saint Lucia	Latin America and Caribbean	30 April 2007

The present partners share several features. Seven of the eleven members are in Latin America and the Caribbean, three are in the Pacific and one is in Africa. All are small states; Guatemala, the largest by population, has fewer than twenty million inhabitants. Five of them, Guatemala, Haiti, Paraguay, Eswatini and the Holy See, have maintained relations without interruption since before 1971. The others established their present relations during the period of competition that followed.

The overlap between Taipei's partners and the recognisers of other entities is narrow. Eight of the eleven members recognise the State of Palestine. Only Belize also recognises the Sahrawi Republic. None recognises Abkhazia, South Ossetia or Northern Cyprus.

NOTES

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- 2 Joint Communiqué of the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China (29 September 1972) paras 2–3, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/china/joint72.html> accessed 13 October 2026.

- 3 Year-end counts are those of the dataset, reconstructed from the register of switches; dates of establishment of relations with Beijing are taken from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, '中华人民共和国与各国建立外交关系日期简表' (Table of dates of establishment of diplomatic relations) (updated 13 December 2021) https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ziliao_674904/2193_674977/200812/t20081221_9284708.shtml accessed 12 October 2026.
- 4 Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China (1 January 1979), text published by the United States Information Agency https://usinfo.org/docs/basic/prc_e.htm accessed 18 October 2026.
- 5 'Newsmakers', *Asiaweek* (30 July 1999) <https://us.cnn.com/ASIANOW/asiaweek/magazine/99/0730/newsmakers.html> accessed 18 October 2026, quoting the new Prime Minister: 'Normal procedures for opening diplomatic relations with other countries were not properly followed in this case.'
- 6 Melody Chen, 'Vanuatu switches allegiance back to China', *Taipei Times* (16 December 2004) <https://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2004/12/16/2003215279> accessed 18 October 2026, reproducing the letter of the new Prime Minister to the ambassador of the People's Republic of China; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Taipei maintained that the relations subsisted until it received a diplomatic note.
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- 8 'Chad cuts diplomatic ties with Taiwan', *China Daily* (6 August 2006) https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-08/06/content_657968.htm accessed 17 October 2026; 'China, Gambia resume diplomatic ties', *People's Daily Online* (Xinhua, 17 March 2016), via GlobalSecurity <https://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/china/2016/china-160317-pd001.htm> accessed 17 October 2026; 'China, Panama establish diplomatic relations', *People's Daily Online* (13 June 2017), via GlobalSecurity <https://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/china/2017/china-170613-pd002.htm> accessed 17 October 2026; Joint Communiqué on the Resumption of Diplomatic Relations between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Nicaragua (Tianjin, 10 December 2021), reported by *PLA Daily* via GlobalSecurity <https://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/china/2021/12/china-211210-pladaily01.htm> accessed 16 October 2026; Joint Communiqué with Honduras (n 7).
- 9 Czesław Tubilewicz, 'Taiwan's Balkan Option: A New Chapter in Republic of China "Dollar Diplomacy"' (2001) 12(1) *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 161 <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592290108406194> accessed 17 October 2026; UN Doc S/1999/201 (draft resolution, not adopted, 25 February 1999) <https://undocs.org/en/S/1999/201> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 10 Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Estonia, 'China ceases diplomatic relations with Kiribati' (29 November 2003).
- 11 'China suspends ties with St Lucia', *Al Jazeera* (6 May 2007).

CHAPTER 8

Abkhazia and South Ossetia

I have signed decrees on the recognition by the Russian Federation of the independence of South Ossetia and the independence of Abkhazia.

Statement of the President of the Russian Federation (26 August 2008)

AT THE cut-off date of this study, four members of the United Nations recognised the Republic of Abkhazia and the same four recognised the Republic of South Ossetia—the State of Alania: the Russian Federation, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Syria. Seven members have recognised Abkhazia at one time or another, and six have recognised South Ossetia. Every recognition of either entity has been given since August 2008, and every one followed the recognition by Russia. The two cases are treated together because their records are almost identical, and because both are inseparable from the policy of a single permanent member of the Security Council.

THE BACKGROUND

Both territories lie on the southern slopes of the Caucasus, within the boundaries of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic as they stood at the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and both held autonomous status within it: Abkhazia as an autonomous republic, South Ossetia as an autonomous region. As the Soviet Union dissolved, armed conflict broke out in South Ossetia in 1991 and 1992 and in Abkhazia in 1992 and 1993. The conflicts ended in ceasefires that left the authorities in Sukhumi and Tskhinvali in control of most of the two territories and displaced a large part of their ethnic Georgian population. A ceasefire agreement concluded at Sochi in June 1992 created a joint peacekeeping force in South Ossetia; an agreement concluded in Moscow in May 1994 placed peacekeepers of the Commonwealth of Independent States, in practice Russian forces, along the line in Abkhazia. The Security Council established the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia in August 1993.¹

For fifteen years no member of the United Nations recognised either territory. Abkhazia adopted a constitution in 1994 and an act of state independence in 1999; South Ossetia held referendums on independence in 1992 and 2006. The Security Council's resolutions on Abkhazia in this period reaffirmed the territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders.

THE WAR OF AUGUST 2008 AND THE RECOGNITION BY RUSSIA

Fighting between Georgian forces and the South Ossetian authorities escalated in the first days of August 2008. On the night of 7 to 8 August Georgia launched a military operation against Tskhinvali; Russia responded with forces that entered South Ossetia and Abkhazia and advanced into undisputed Georgian territory. A ceasefire plan of six points, negotiated by the President of France on behalf of the European Union, was accepted on 12 August.

The Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia, established by the Council of the European Union and led by Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini, reported in September 2009. It found that 'open hostilities began with a large-scale Georgian military operation against the town of Tskhinvali', that 'much of the Russian military action went far beyond the reasonable limits of defence', and that recognition of the two territories by a third country was 'contrary to international law'.² In 2021 the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights held that Russia exercised effective control over both territories after the cessation of active hostilities on 12 August 2008.³

On 26 August 2008 the President of the Russian Federation signed decrees recognising both entities. The foreign ministers of the Group of Seven, including those of France, the United Kingdom and the United States, responded the next day:

We, the Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United States and the United Kingdom, condemn the action of our fellow G8 member. Russia's recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia violates the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia and is contrary to UN Security Council Resolutions supported by Russia.⁴

China did not recognise either entity, then or later. Georgia severed diplomatic relations with Russia, enacted a law on the 'occupied territories', and has since treated recognition of either entity by any state as a breach of its territorial integrity. In 2014 and 2015 Russia concluded treaties of alliance with the authorities of both territories.

THE RECOGNISING STATES

Three states followed Russia. Nicaragua recognised both entities in September 2008, Venezuela in September 2009 and Naoero (Nauru) in December 2009.⁵ Two Pacific states recognised in 2011. Vanuatu recognised Abkhazia, in a decision whose authority was disputed within its own government, and withdrew the recognition in May 2013 when it established diplomatic relations with Georgia.⁶ Tuvalu recognised both entities in September 2011 and retracted the recognitions in March 2014, in the protocol by which it established diplomatic relations with Georgia.⁷ Syria recognised both on 29 May 2018; Georgia severed relations with Syria in response.

The count for Abkhazia therefore reached six in 2011 and fell to four by 2014; the count for South Ossetia reached five and fell to four. Syria's recognition in 2018 raised both counts to five. They fell to four in July 2026, when the cabinet of Naoero severed relations with both entities with immediate effect.⁸ Russia, Nicaragua and Venezuela have maintained their recognitions without interruption. Syria's recognition, given by the government of Bashar al-Assad, has not been withdrawn by the government that succeeded it in December 2024, although the European Union, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the government of Georgia have urged it to do so; in June 2025 the foreign minister of the authorities in Sukhumi visited Damascus.⁹ The dataset counts Syria as recognising at the cut-off date.

Every recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia has followed the recognition by Russia.

Two of the three withdrawals share a form. Vanuatu and Tuvalu withdrew in the instruments by which they established diplomatic relations with Georgia; in both cases recognition and its withdrawal were part of a choice between two sets of relations that the recognising state could not hold at once. Naoero's withdrawal of 2026 took the form of a cabinet decision severing relations with both entities.¹⁰

THE PERMANENT MEMBERS

The positions of the five permanent members of the Security Council are fixed and divided. Russia recognises both entities and maintains forces in both. The United States, the United Kingdom and France reject the recognitions as contrary to the territorial integrity of Georgia; France, which held the presidency of the European Union in 2008, negotiated the ceasefire. China has not recognised either entity. On 15 June 2009 Russia vetoed a draft resolution that would have extended the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia, which closed as a result; China abstained.¹¹ Since then the General Assembly has adopted annually, by recorded vote, a resolution on the status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia and South Ossetia that refers to them as parts of Georgia. The Geneva International Discussions, co-chaired by the European Union, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the United Nations, have met since October 2008 without resolving the question of status.

Admission of either entity to the United Nations is not in prospect. Any recommendation would face the opposition of three permanent members, and the recognisers, apart from Russia, are few and distant from the region. No member of the Commonwealth of Independent States other than Russia has recognised either entity. The non-recognisers include several states with close political ties to Moscow, among them Belarus, Cuba, Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as China. None has explained its position in terms the record discloses, and the dataset does not attribute one.

RECOGNITION BETWEEN UNRECOGNISED ENTITIES

Abkhazia and South Ossetia recognise each other, and both recognise, and are recognised by, Transnistria and, until its dissolution, the Republic of Artsakh. Those recognitions are recorded in the event register and are not counted in the matrix, because none of the parties is a member of the United Nations. They form a closed circle, and the dataset treats them as evidence of the entities' foreign relations rather than as recognition by states.

PROSPECTS

The recognitions that remain rest on three states besides Russia, and each is exposed to the kind of change the record shows elsewhere. Syria's government has changed since it recognised, and calls for the withdrawal of its recognitions have followed. Nicaragua's and Venezuela's recognitions were given by governments whose successors could take a different view, as successor governments have done in other cases. If all three were to withdraw, Russia would be the only recognising state.

The record contains two patterns of Russian conduct towards entities it has recognised. In Crimea in 2014 and in the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions in 2022, recognition was followed within days by incorporation; in Donetsk and Luhansk it was followed by incorporation seven months later. In Abkhazia and South Ossetia, recognition has been maintained since 2008 without incorporation. South Ossetia came close to the first pattern in 2022. On 13 May Anatoly Bibilov, its leader at the time, decreed a referendum on joining Russia, to be held on 17 July; on 30 May his successor, Alan Gagloev, suspended it, citing the 'uncertainty of the legal consequences' of the question and calling for consultations with Russia.¹² No comparable step has been taken in Abkhazia. The book does not forecast which course, if either, would follow a further loss of recognitions. It records that the question has been put once, by one of the entities, and set aside.

NOTES

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CHAPTER 9

The Republic of Somaliland

Historically unique and self-justified in African political history.

African Union fact-finding mission to Somaliland (2005), as reported

ON 26 December 2025 Israel recognised the Republic of Somaliland, and at the cut-off date of this study it remained the only member of the United Nations to have done so. Somaliland had then governed its territory for more than thirty-four years without the recognition of any member. The case is the mirror image of those in the preceding chapters. Abkhazia and South Ossetia owe their recognitions to a permanent member of the Security Council; Somaliland's claim has been met for three decades with a consensus, among the permanent members and the African Union, in favour of the territorial integrity of Somalia. The question the case poses is why an entity that exercises effective control over a defined territory, holds contested elections and transfers power between governments, has gathered so little recognition.

THE BACKGROUND

The territory of Somaliland corresponds to the former British Somaliland Protectorate. On 26 June 1960 the protectorate became independent as the State of Somaliland. The United Kingdom concluded a series of agreements and exchanges of letters with its government on that day, and Somaliland's government has stated that some 35 states recognised it in the days that followed.¹ The figure has not been documented state by state, and the largest state usually counted among the 35 did not recognise formally: the United States, according to the editorial record of its own diplomatic documents, sent a congratulatory message to the Somaliland Council of Ministers on 26 June 1960 but did not extend formal recognition, because the period of independence was to be so short.² On 1 July 1960 it united with the former Italian trust territory of Somalia to form the Somali Republic. The State of Somaliland of 1960 is recorded in Register 3, among the recognitions that ended.

The union did not hold. After years of conflict between the government in Mogadishu and the Somali National Movement, including the bombardment of Hargeisa in 1988, the central government collapsed in January 1991. On 18 May 1991 a congress of clan elders and the movement's leadership at Burao declared the restoration of Somaliland's independence within the boundaries of the former protectorate. A constitution approved by referendum in 2001 provides for an elected president and a bicameral legislature. Somaliland has held several presidential elections since 2003, and the election of November 2024 transferred the presidency to the opposition.

The government of Somalia regards Somaliland as part of its territory. Its position rests on the union of 1960 and on the principle, central to the practice of the Organisation of African Unity and the African Union, that the boundaries inherited at independence should be respected. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity stated the principle at Cairo in July 1964:

Solemnly declares that all Member States pledge themselves to respect the borders existing on their achievement of national independence.³

Somaliland's position rests on the same principle: it claims the boundaries of the colonial unit that was independent, and recognised, in June 1960.

THE AFRICAN UNION

The African Union sent a fact-finding mission to Somaliland in 2005. Its report, as published, described Somaliland's search for recognition as 'historically unique and self-justified in African political history' and recommended that the Union 'should find a special method of dealing with this outstanding case'.⁴ The Union has not acted on the recommendation. Its organs have continued to affirm the unity and territorial integrity of Somalia, and in December 2025 the Chairperson of the African Union Commission rejected Israel's recognition.⁵

ENGAGEMENT SHORT OF RECOGNITION

For three decades Somaliland conducted foreign relations without recognition. Several governments, the United Kingdom, Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates among them, maintained offices or programmes in Somaliland; the port of Berbera was developed with foreign investment. In 2020 Somaliland and the Republic of China (Taiwan) opened representative offices in each other's capitals, an exchange between two entities neither of which is a member of the United Nations.

On 1 January 2024 Ethiopia and Somaliland signed a memorandum of understanding under which Ethiopia would obtain access to the sea at Berbera; Somaliland's government stated that Ethiopia would in return consider recognising it. The text was not

published. Somalia treated the memorandum as a violation of its territorial integrity. In December 2024 Ethiopia and Somalia, with the mediation of Türkiye, agreed the Ankara Declaration, in which both recognised the potential benefits of Ethiopian access to the sea while ‘respecting the territorial integrity of Somalia’.⁶ Ethiopia did not recognise Somaliland.

THE RECOGNITION BY ISRAEL

Israel’s recognition was announced by its Prime Minister on 26 December 2025.⁷ At a meeting of the Security Council convened in response, Israel’s representative described the recognition as ‘a lawful, principled acknowledgement of a long-established reality’, stated that Israel had been among the states that recognised Somaliland in 1960, and argued that Somaliland had satisfied the criteria of the Montevideo Convention since 1991. Somalia’s representative described the recognition as a ‘flagrant assault’ on Somalia’s unity and territorial integrity and declared any arrangement undermining that integrity ‘null and void’.⁸

The positions of the permanent members, as stated at that meeting, illustrate how the question is framed in the Council. China described Somaliland as an inseparable part of Somali territory and called on its authorities to ‘stop separatist activities and collusion with external forces’. Russia called for Somalia’s internal disputes to be settled through ‘inclusive national dialogue without any external interference’. France stressed the need to avoid actions that could ‘compromise peace and security’ in the region and to settle internal disputes ‘in a negotiated manner in the context of a dialogue between all Somali stakeholders’. The United Kingdom urged Mogadishu and Hargeisa to cooperate against shared threats. The United States stated that Israel ‘has the same right to conduct diplomatic relations as any other sovereign State’ and that there had been no change in American policy on Somaliland.⁹

Somaliland’s claim rests on the same principle as Somalia’s objection: respect for the boundaries inherited at independence.

WHAT THE CASE SHOWS

Somaliland's record shows that effective governance is not, of itself, sufficient to attract recognition. Whatever view is taken of the factual criteria set out in chapter 3, the factors that the record discloses are the opposition of the state that claims the territory, the position of the regional organisation, and the reluctance of the permanent members to depart from it. Israel's recognition is the first breach in that consensus. The record to the cut-off date does not show whether others will follow. In September 2026 Somaliland's President made his first visit to the United States since taking office.¹⁰ The dataset records the visit and codes the United States, like every member other than Israel, as not recognising.

NOTES

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CHAPTER 10

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

Calls upon all States not to recognize any Cypriot State other than the Republic of Cyprus.

Security Council resolution 541 (18 November 1983), paragraph 7

THE TURKISH Republic of Northern Cyprus has been recognised by one member of the United Nations, Türkiye, since its proclamation on 15 November 1983, and by no other. Its record is the simplest in this book and among the most instructive. Three days after the proclamation, the Security Council declared it legally invalid and called on all states not to recognise any Cypriot state other than the Republic of Cyprus. For more than four decades that call has been heeded by every member except the one that offered its support on the first day.

THE BACKGROUND

The Republic of Cyprus became independent on 16 August 1960 under a constitution that divided power between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, and under a Treaty of Guarantee by which Greece, Türkiye and the United Kingdom guaranteed the independence, territorial integrity and constitutional order of the new state. The United Kingdom retained two Sovereign Base Areas on the island. The constitutional arrangements broke down in intercommunal violence in December 1963, and in March 1964 the Security Council established the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, which remained on the island at the cut-off date.¹

On 15 July 1974 the Cypriot National Guard, under the direction of the military government then in power in Athens, overthrew the President of Cyprus. On 20 July Türkiye, invoking its rights under the Treaty of Guarantee, landed forces on the island,

and in a second operation in August extended its control over about a third of it. The population was divided along the ceasefire line that the United Nations has patrolled since. In February 1975 the Turkish Cypriot authorities proclaimed the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus, which did not claim independence. On 15 November 1983 the Legislative Assembly of that entity proclaimed the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Türkiye recognised it the same day.

RESOLUTION 541 AND THE DUTY NOT TO RECOGNISE

The Security Council responded on 18 November 1983. Resolution 541, adopted by thirteen votes to one (Pakistan), with one abstention (Jordan), provided:

1. Deplores the declaration of the Turkish Cypriot authorities of the purported secession of part of the Republic of Cyprus;
2. Considers the declaration referred to above as legally invalid and calls for its withdrawal;
7. Calls upon all States not to recognize any Cypriot State other than the Republic of Cyprus.²

All five permanent members voted in favour. When Türkiye and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus exchanged ambassadors in 1984, the Council adopted resolution 550, which condemned the exchange and reiterated the call not to recognise.³ Resolution 541 is one of the instances, discussed in chapter 3, in which the Council has called on states not to recognise an entity, and it has been observed by every member but one. The European Court of Human Rights has since held Türkiye responsible under the European Convention on Human Rights for acts in the north of the island, on the basis of its effective control.⁴

THE SEARCH FOR A SETTLEMENT

The United Nations has pursued a settlement based on a bicomunal, bizonal federation. The most developed proposal, the plan named after Secretary-General Kofi Annan, was put to separate referendums in both communities on 24 April 2004. The Turkish Cypriot community approved it, with 64.91 per cent in favour; the Greek Cypriot community rejected it, with 75.83 per cent against. Because the plan required the approval of both, it did not enter into force.⁵ A week later, on 1 May 2004, the Republic of Cyprus acceded to the European Union, with the application of the Union's law suspended in the areas not under the effective control of its government.

Negotiations resumed at intervals and collapsed at Crans-Montana in July 2017. From 2021 the Turkish Cypriot leadership, with the support of the government of Türkiye, proposed instead a settlement between two states of equal status. In October 2025 Tufan Erhürman, who supports a federal settlement in line with the resolutions

of the United Nations, defeated the incumbent, Ersin Tatar, with 62.8 per cent of the vote.⁶ The question of status therefore stood, at the cut-off date, where the Security Council had placed it in 1983.

For more than four decades the call not to recognise has been heeded by every member except the one that offered its support on the first day.

PARTICIPATION WITHOUT RECOGNITION

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus has found forms of international participation that do not depend on recognition. It has taken part in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation as an observer since the late 1970s, at first under the designation ‘Turkish Muslim Community of Cyprus’ and, since 2005, as the ‘Turkish Cypriot State’.⁷ At the summit of the Organization of Turkic States in Samarkand in November 2022 it was admitted as an observer under its own name.⁸ Observer status in an organisation is not recognition by its members, and neither admission was accompanied by recognition from any member other than Türkiye. Azerbaijan, Türkiye’s closest partner in the Organization of Turkic States, has not recognised it.

ONE RECOGNISER

Northern Cyprus is the only entity in the core register recognised by a single state that is also its patron, and the record suggests why no other state has followed Türkiye. The calls of resolutions 541 and 550 set any recognising state against a decision of the Council supported by all five permanent members. Pakistan, the only member of the Council to vote against resolution 541, and Bangladesh were later reported to have recognised the new entity in November 1983 and to have withdrawn within days.⁹ The contemporaneous record does not bear the report out. Writing in 1984, Christopher Hitchens described Pakistan's government as 'the only foreign government to welcome' the declaration and added that it had 'stopped short of outright recognition'.¹⁰ On 15 December 1983 the representative of Cyprus told the Security Council that Türkiye was 'the only country which recognized that illegitimate entity'.¹¹ No contemporaneous report of a recognition by Bangladesh has been located; the claim appears in later secondary accounts without a source.¹² The dataset does not record either state as a recogniser.

The Republic of Cyprus has been a member of the European Union since 1 May 2004. The island as a whole entered the Union, and Protocol No 10 to the Act of Accession suspends the application of Union law 'in those areas of the Republic of Cyprus in which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control'.¹³ A recognition of Northern Cyprus would therefore set the recognising state against a member of the Union and against Greece, and the states closest to Türkiye have shown that they weigh that cost. In April 2025 the five Central Asian states, three of them members and one an observer of the Organization of Turkic States, joined the European Union at their first summit, in Samarkand, in a declaration that reaffirmed 'our strong commitment to the relevant UNSC Resolution 541(1983) and 550 (1984)'.¹⁴ Pakistan's government expressed its support for 'the people of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' in Ankara in April 2025, without recognising the entity.¹⁵

THE PERMANENT MEMBERS

The positions of the permanent members have not moved since 1983. All five voted for resolution 541, and none has recognised the entity. The United Kingdom, as a guarantor power with Sovereign Base Areas on the island, takes part in the settlement process. The question of status is not before the Council in a form that would require a vote, and the entity has never applied for membership of the United Nations.

The case thus completes a range. Somaliland exercises effective government, has met the stated opposition of one permanent member and the support of none, and holds one recognition. Abkhazia and South Ossetia hold recognitions that follow from the decision of one permanent member. Northern Cyprus holds the recognition of Türkiye alone and is subject to a call by the Council, supported by all five permanent members, that no other state recognise it.

NOTES

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- 2 UNSC Res 541 (18 November 1983) UN Doc S/RES/541, paras 1, 2 and 7 [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/541\(1983\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/541(1983)) accessed 18 October 2026.
- 3 UNSC Res 550 (11 May 1984) [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/550\(1984\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/550(1984)) accessed 18 October 2026.
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- 11 United Nations, Security Council, 2503rd meeting (15 December 1983), UN Doc S/PV.2503, statement of the representative of Cyprus <https://undocs.org/en/S/PV.2503> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 12 Przemysław Osiewicz, ‘The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as an Example of a Non-Recognized State’ (2020) 31(4) *Perspektywy Kultury* 149, 155 <https://czasopisma.ignatianum.edu.pl/pk/article/download/1700/1740> accessed 19 October 2026, where the claim is made without a source.
- 13 Act concerning the conditions of accession of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Cyprus [and others] [2003] OJ L236/33, Protocol No 10 on Cyprus, art 1(1).
- 14 Joint Declaration following the First European Union–Central Asia Summit (Samarkand, 4 April 2025) para 4 https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/n4lmrhon/250403_eu-ca-summit_joint-declaration.pdf accessed 17 October 2026.
- 15 *Cyprus Mail* (n 9).

PART III

Beyond the Core

CHAPTER II

Presence without Membership

The United States recognizes the Cook Islands as a sovereign and independent state.

Statement by the President of the United States (25 September 2023)

FOUR INTERNATIONAL persons hold a standing that the entities of Part II seek and do not have: they conduct relations with a large number of states, conclude agreements, and take part in international organisations, without being members of the United Nations and without any state contesting their existence. They are the Holy See, with the Vatican City State; the Sovereign Military Order of Malta; and the Cook Islands and Niue, two states in free association with New Zealand. The dataset records them in Register 2 and does not add them to the counts of the core register, because what states extend to them is diplomatic relations rather than recognition of a contested claim to statehood. They are examined here for the light they throw on that distinction.

THE HOLY SEE AND THE VATICAN CITY STATE

The Holy See and the Vatican City State are two legal persons. The Holy See is the supreme authority of the Catholic Church and has been a subject of international law for centuries; the Vatican City State is a territorial entity of 0.44 square kilometres created by the Lateran Treaty of 11 February 1929 to provide the Holy See with a territorial base. States accredit their ambassadors to the Holy See, not to the Vatican City State. The Vatican City State takes part in technical organisations such as the Universal Postal Union and the International Telecommunication Union, in some of them through the Holy See.¹

Between the loss of the Papal States in 1870 and the Lateran Treaty, the Holy See held no territory. It continued to send and receive envoys and to conclude concordats, and the Supreme Court of the United States treated it in 1908 as possessing a recognised

legal personality.² That period is the clearest modern instance of international personality maintained without territory, and it rested on relations established long before the territory was lost.

At the beginning of 2026 the Holy See maintained diplomatic relations with 184 states, 181 of them members of the United Nations, together with the European Union and the Sovereign Military Order of Malta; 93 states maintained resident embassies in Rome.³ Twelve states had no formal relations with it, among them Afghanistan, Bhutan, China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.⁴ The Holy See has been a permanent observer at the United Nations since 1964, and in 2004 the General Assembly defined its rights of participation as a non-member observer state in resolution 58/314.⁵ It is the one European partner of the Republic of China (Taiwan), and it concluded a comprehensive agreement with the State of Palestine in 2015.

THE SOVEREIGN MILITARY ORDER OF MALTA

The Order of Malta is a lay religious order of Catholic origin, recognised by a papal bull of 1113, which governed Rhodes from 1310 and Malta from 1530 until it lost the island to France in 1798. It has held no territory since. Its headquarters in Rome, the Palazzo Malta and the Villa on the Aventine, enjoy extraterritorial status under Italian law, but the Order makes no territorial claim. Its international personality survived the loss of Malta on the strength of continued recognition by other international actors.⁶

At the end of September 2026 the Order maintained diplomatic relations with 118 states, official relations with Belgium, Canada, France and the United Kingdom, and relations at the level of ambassador with the State of Palestine.⁷ The General Assembly granted it observer status in 1994.⁸ The resolution consists of a single operative sentence:

Decides to invite the Sovereign Military Order of Malta to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer.⁹

Its relations are conducted for the purposes of its medical and humanitarian work, and states that establish them do not treat it as a state. Antigua and Barbuda, to take one example from the Caribbean, established relations with it in 2009 and received its first ambassador in 2010.¹⁰

THE COOK ISLANDS AND NIUE

The Cook Islands have been self-governing in free association with New Zealand since 1965, and Niue since 1974. Their peoples hold New Zealand citizenship, and New Zealand retains responsibilities for defence in each case. New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has stated that both have 'their own individual international legal personalities'.¹¹ Both are members of several specialised agencies of the United

Nations and parties to treaties in their own name; the Cook Islands state that they are party to more than 180.¹² Neither has sought membership of the United Nations.

Their participation in multilateral treaties shows how far a non-member can go. The Secretary-General acts as depositary for several hundred multilateral treaties, many of them open to 'all States'. Membership of the United Nations is not a condition of participation; the question is whether the Secretary-General treats the entity as a state for the purposes of that formula. After the Cook Islands had been admitted to the World Health Organization and other specialised agencies as a full member, the Secretary-General concluded that it 'could henceforth be included in the "all States" formula', and he adopted the same solution for Niue in 1994.¹³ The Cook Islands ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on 15 February 1995, Niue on 11 October 2006; the Cook Islands deposited its accession to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on 18 July 2008, and its ratification of the Paris Agreement on 1 September 2016.¹⁴

Deposit should be distinguished from registration. Article 102 of the Charter provides:

Every treaty and every international agreement entered into by any Member of the United Nations after the present Charter comes into force shall as soon as possible be registered with the Secretariat and published by it.¹⁵

The obligation to register falls on members. Treaties to which only non-members are party may be filed and recorded by the Secretariat under the regulations that give effect to article 102.¹⁶ Deposit, by contrast, rests on the final clauses of each treaty: the Secretary-General receives the instruments of ratification and accession of any entity that the treaty admits, whether or not it is a member.

Their foreign relations have grown. In 2025 the Cook Islands maintained relations with 66 states and the European Union, and Niue with about 27.¹⁷ The People's Republic of China established relations with the Cook Islands on 25 July 1997 and with Niue on 12 December 2007; India established relations with Niue in 2012.¹⁸ On 25 September 2023 the United States recognised each as 'a sovereign and independent state' and established diplomatic relations with both.¹⁹

The arrangement has limits that the record now shows. In December 2024 New Zealand stated that a separate passport, a separate citizenship and membership of the United Nations were open only to fully independent states.²⁰ In February 2025 the Cook Islands concluded agreements with China without the consultation New Zealand regarded as required, and in June 2025 New Zealand paused development funding of nearly twenty million New Zealand dollars.²¹ The government of the Cook Islands has maintained that 'our foreign policy is our own to determine', citing the Joint Centenary Declaration of 2001.²² The episode shows a freely associated state exercising its capacity for foreign relations and the associated state responding through the instruments of the association, not by contesting the capacity itself.

None of the four is a member of the United Nations, and no state disputes the existence of any of them.

WHAT THE FOUR HAVE IN COMMON

None of the four is a member of the United Nations, and no state disputes the existence of any of them. Each holds its standing by a route that does not run through the recognition of a contested claim: centuries of practice in the case of the Holy See and the Order of Malta; a decolonisation settlement, agreed with the former administering power and accepted by the General Assembly, in the case of the Cook Islands and Niue. The relations that states extend to them are numerous, and with rare exceptions they do not set the state that extends them against any other state. That is the condition the entities of Part II lack.

LIFE OUTSIDE THE SYSTEM

Entities that lack membership, and some that lack any recognition, conduct much of the business of states by other means. James Ker-Lindsay, whose studies of contested states are the most extensive in the field, has shown that ‘in many ways states can interact with contested states in a manner that amounts to recognition in all but name’. The limit lies in intention: ‘To put it crudely, there cannot be accidental recognition.’²³ States therefore engage with entities they do not recognise through liaison offices, trade missions, technical agreements and contacts at the level of officials, each designed to fall short of the act that would recognise.

Kosovo, recognised by 96 members on the verified count, stands outside the United Nations but inside much of the wider international order. It became a member of the International Monetary Fund and of the World Bank in 2009.²⁴ Its football federation was admitted to FIFA on 13 May 2016, by 141 votes to 23. Where admission requires a two-thirds majority of states, Kosovo has failed: in November 2018 INTERPOL’s General Assembly rejected its application for the third time.²⁵ In regional forums it takes part under the designation ‘Kosovo*’, with the footnote that stands at the head of chapter 16, under an arrangement agreed in the dialogue with Serbia in 2012.

The Republic of China maintains offices in most states that do not recognise it, under names that avoid the words ‘embassy’ and ‘China’, among them the Tàipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) in the United States. It has been a member of the World Trade Organization since 1 January 2002 as the ‘Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu’, takes part in Asia-Pacific Economic Coop-

eration as ‘Chinese Taipei’, and competes in the Olympic Games under the same name.²⁶ Its economy is integrated into world trade at a scale few members of the United Nations match, and that integration rests on arrangements that do not depend on recognition.

States can interact with contested states in a manner that amounts to recognition in all but name.

RECOGNISED BY NONE

At the cut-off date one entity governs a defined territory, holds a monopoly of force within it and presents itself as a state without the recognition of any member of the United Nations: the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic, known as Transnistria. No member, Russia included, has recognised it;²⁷ its recognitions come from Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which stand outside the Organization themselves. It governs the territory east of the Dniester, issues its own currency and hosts a contingent of Russian forces; its residents travel on Moldovan, Russian or Ukrainian passports.

Its economy runs through the institutions of the state that claims it. Many of its firms ‘operate through Moldovan registration and customs channels’; in 2025, on Moldovan official figures, the European Union took 71 per cent of its exports; and the Sheriff group is estimated to control 60 to 70 per cent of its economic activity.²⁸ Its dependence became visible when the transit of Russian gas through Ukraine ended at the start of 2025 and its principal supply was cut.²⁹ Moldova, a candidate for membership of the European Union, has circulated an informal plan for gradual reintegration under an international transitional administration,³⁰ and its government aims to close its accession negotiations by 2028; the High Representative of the European Union said in October 2026 that ‘Transnistria will not be an obstacle to Moldova’s accession path’.³¹ The record does not show how the case will end. It shows that an entity can endure for more than three decades without recognition, through the tolerance of the state that claims it, the support of a patron and access to markets through the claimant’s own institutions. Transnistria is not offered here as a model; it is the clearest present instance of a state-like entity that lives wholly outside recognition.

Two other entities have left this category, in opposite directions. The Republic of Artsakh governed Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent districts within Azerbaijan from the early 1990s without the recognition of any member, Armenia included; in 2026 the Prime Minister of Armenia said that Armenia had always recognised Nagorno-Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan.³² After Azerbaijan’s military operation of September 2023, its president, Samvel Shahramanyan, signed a decree on 28 September 2023 order-

ing ‘To dissolve all state institutions and affiliated organizations until 1 January 2024’,³³ and nearly the whole of its Armenian population left for Armenia within two weeks.³⁴ On 8 August 2025, in Washington, the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan witnessed the initialling of the agreed text of an Agreement on Establishment of Peace and Inter-State Relations, which had not been signed at the cut-off date.³⁵ Whether recognition by any state would have changed that course is a question the record cannot answer. Somaliland left the category in the other direction: it governed for more than three decades without the recognition of any member, until Israel’s recognition of December 2025 made it an entity with limited recognition.

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CHAPTER 12

Recognitions that Ended

*Calls upon all Governments to deny any form of recognition to the
so-called independent Transkei.*

General Assembly resolution 31/6 A (26 October 1976)

MOST OF the recognitions counted in Part II are still in force, or were withdrawn by an act of the recognising state. A third group ended in a different way: the entity they recognised ceased to exist. It was defeated in war, absorbed by the state that recognised it, reincorporated into the state from which it had been detached, or superseded by a later settlement. No act of withdrawal was needed, because there was nothing left to recognise. The dataset records these cases in Register 3. They are few, and they fall into four patterns.

DEFEAT: BIAFRA

The Eastern Region of Nigeria declared its independence as the Republic of Biafra on 30 May 1967, and civil war followed. Four members of the United Nations recognised it in 1968: Tanzania on 13 April, the first, and Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire and Zambia in May. Haiti followed in March 1969.¹ France, Portugal and others gave material support without recognising it, and a memorandum to the United States Secretary of State in April 1969 recorded reports that the President of Côte d'Ivoire had held talks with South Africa and Rhodesia on support for Biafra.² The United Kingdom and the Soviet Union supported the federal government. The Organisation of African Unity supported the territorial integrity of Nigeria throughout.

Biafra surrendered on 15 January 1970, and its recognitions lapsed with it. Writing in 1971, David Ijalaye asked whether Biafra had at any time been a state in international law, and doubted it.³ The case shows that recognition, even by several members of the regional organisation, could not substitute for the outcome of the war.

CREATION BY THE RECOGNISING STATE: THE SOUTH AFRICAN HOMELANDS

Between 1976 and 1981 South Africa declared four of its homelands independent: Transkei in October 1976, Bophuthatswana in 1977, Venda in 1979 and Ciskei in 1981. South Africa recognised each, and the four recognised one another. No other member of the United Nations did so. The General Assembly, in resolution 31/6 A of 26 October 1976, rejected the independence of Transkei and called upon all governments ‘to deny any form of recognition to the so-called independent Transkei’.⁴ The four territories were reincorporated into South Africa on 27 April 1994.

South Africa did not leave the recognition of the homelands to chance. Before Transkei’s independence the Council of Ministers of the Organisation of African Unity urged all states, and committed its members, ‘not to accord recognition to any Bantustan’.⁵ When Lesotho refused to recognise Transkei, the closure of border posts that followed was treated by the Security Council as pressure to secure that recognition: in resolution 402 of 22 December 1976 the Council endorsed the call of resolution 31/6 A, commended Lesotho for its refusal and condemned any action by South Africa intended to coerce it.⁶ The homelands sought standing abroad on their own account. Bophuthatswana opened a representative office in London in September 1982, whose opening the British government permitted by issuing a travel document to its leader while declining to recognise the territory.⁷ Transkei itself broke off relations with South Africa on 10 April 1978 over a dispute about land, the only diplomatic relations it had, and restored them in February 1980.⁸ When Ciskei was proclaimed independent in December 1981, the President of the Security Council issued a statement on behalf of the Council condemning the proclamation.⁹

The homelands are the plainest instance in the dataset of recognition by the creating state alone. That recognition conferred no wider standing, and the collective call for non-recognition prevailed for the whole of their existence.

RECOGNITION AS A STEP TO INCORPORATION

A third pattern appeared in 2014 and recurred in 2022: recognition by a state of an entity that it then incorporated. On 17 March 2014 the President of Russia signed a decree recognising the Republic of Crimea; on the next day Russia concluded a treaty admitting it to the Russian Federation.¹⁰ The General Assembly responded in resolution 68/262 by affirming the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

On 21 February 2022 Russia recognised the Donetsk People’s Republic and the Luhansk People’s Republic. Syria recognised both on 29 June 2022 and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea on 13 July 2022.¹¹ On 29 September 2022 Russia recognised the ‘state sovereignty and independence’ of the occupied parts of the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, and on 30 September it declared all four territories incorporated.¹² On 12 October 2022 the General Assembly, in resolution ES-11/4, adopted by 143 votes

to 5 with 35 abstentions, called on all states not to recognise any alteration of the status of these regions.¹³

These recognitions lasted from a single day to seven months. They differ from every other case in this book: the recognising state recognised a new state in order to absorb it. The recognitions by Syria and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of the Donetsk and Luhansk republics ended, as a practical matter, when the republics ceased to exist as separate entities; neither state has been recorded as withdrawing them.

No act of withdrawal was needed, because there was nothing left to recognise.

SUPERSESSION: DIVIDED STATES AND PRECURSORS

The fourth pattern is supersession. Some recognitions ended because the entity they recognised was replaced by a settlement that made them unnecessary.

The German Democratic Republic, founded in 1949, was recognised in its first decade almost only by the socialist states. The Federal Republic of Germany treated recognition of the German Democratic Republic by third states as an unfriendly act, a policy known as the Hallstein Doctrine, and applied it by breaking relations with Yugoslavia in 1957 and with Cuba in 1963.¹⁴ A statement of the Federal Government of 28 June 1956 set out the policy:

The Federal Government cannot refrain from making it clear once again that it will feel compelled in future to regard the establishing of diplomatic relations with the so-called German Democratic Republic by third states with which the Federal Republic maintains diplomatic relations as an unfriendly act calculated to intensify and aggravate the partition of Germany.¹⁵

The German Democratic Republic built its relations in the meantime through trade missions, consulates and friendship societies short of embassies, with particular attention to Arab, Asian and African states.¹⁶ A wave of recognitions in 1969, among them Iraq, Cambodia, Sudan, Syria and Egypt, marked the end of the doctrine's effectiveness. After the Basic Treaty between the two German states of December 1972, both were admitted to the United Nations on 18 September 1973.¹⁷ The recognitions of the German Democratic Republic ended with unification in 1990. The episode remains the clearest historical precedent for a sustained campaign by one state against third states' recognition of another, of the kind examined in Part II.

The All-Palestine Government, proclaimed in Gaza in September 1948, was recognised in October 1948 by Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, and opposed by Jordan and the United Kingdom. It lost its foothold in Gaza within weeks, and its offices were closed in 1959.¹⁸ It is a precursor of the recognitions of 1988, given by regional states to a government that held almost no territory.

Two other cases in this pattern belong to entities examined in Part II and are recorded here only for completeness: the State of Somaliland of June 1960, which ended by union with Somalia after five days, and the Republic of Kosova of 1991, recognised by Albania alone and superseded by the declaration of 2008.

WHAT THE FOUR PATTERNS SHOW

Recognition can outlast neither the entity nor the settlement that replaces it. In the cases of defeat and creation, it failed to secure the entity's existence; in the cases of incorporation, it was a means to the entity's disappearance; in the cases of supersession, it was overtaken by an agreement that made it redundant. The one pattern absent from the record is the one that would matter most to a new entrant: an entity whose recognitions, few at first, carried it into membership of the United Nations while the state from which it emerged still opposed it.

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CHAPTER 13

The Outer Margins: Joseon and Non-Territorial Claims

A network state is a highly aligned online community with a capacity for collective action that crowdfunds territory around the world and eventually gains diplomatic recognition from pre-existing states.

Balaji Srinivasan, 'The Network State in One Sentence' (2022)

THE MONTEVIDEO Convention lists a defined territory among the qualifications of a state. Every entity examined in Part II claims territory and governs at least part of it. This chapter turns to claims that do not rest on territory at all, or rest on it only in part: polities organised online, a self-described nation in orbit, and the model of the network state. They are not counted in the matrix, and none has been recognised as a state by more than one member of the United Nations. They are examined because they put the territorial criterion to the test, and because one of them has received a documented act from a member.

PERSONALITY WITHOUT TERRITORY

International law knows two established cases of personality without territory, both described earlier in this Part: the Holy See between 1870 and 1929, and the Sovereign Military Order of Malta since 1798. Neither offers a model that a new entity could follow. Each held its standing before it lost its territory, on the strength of relations built over centuries, and neither claims to be a state in the sense of the Montevideo Convention. A new claimant without territory has no such inheritance.

POLITIES ORGANISED ONLINE

The first wave of digital polities followed the spread of blockchain technology. Bitnation began on 14 July 2014, when its founder, Susanne Tarkowski Tempelhof, circulated a proposal online; it described itself as a 'blockchain powered virtual nation' and offered pilot services such as a world citizenship identity document, a marriage registered on a blockchain and a public notary.¹ It made no territorial claim and sought no recognition from states in the sense examined in this book.

Asgardia, announced in October 2016 by the scientist Igor Ashurbeyli, described itself as the first 'space nation'. On 12 November 2017 it launched a nanosatellite, Asgardia-1, carrying the data of some 18,000 of its registered citizens, and it stated that membership of the United Nations was among its aims.² Admission would require, as for any applicant, the recommendation of the Security Council and a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly. No member has recognised it.

THE JOSEON CYBERNATION AND ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

One non-territorial entity has received a documented act from a member of the United Nations. The Joseon Cybernation, also styled the Joseon Empire, describes itself as a digital polity that 'makes no claim to any territory'. The announcement of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda described it as a 'non-territorial successor state' to the Joseon dynasty, founded in 1392, which its leader, Andrew Lee, has reimagined 'as a digital nation without territory or borders'.³ Lee styles himself King of Joseon and claims the succession of the Korean imperial house.⁴ The claim is to a dynastic inheritance, not to land: it sets the Joseon Cybernation against neither the Republic of Korea nor the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and it asks no recognising state to choose between them.

In April 2022 Antigua and Barbuda concluded an agreement with it that the government of Antigua and Barbuda described as conditional recognition. On 8 July 2023, after a decision of its Cabinet, the Office of the Prime Minister announced that Antigua and Barbuda had 'established diplomatic relations with the Joseon Cybernation effective this date', and reports described the amended arrangement as full recognition.⁵ The agreement of 5 April 2022 covered education, economic investment and other development initiatives, and the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff, Lionel Max Hurst, reported a contribution of US\$1.5 million towards the expansion of a secondary school. Asked about relations with the Republic of Korea, he said: 'There's no competition concerning the two relationships.'⁶ He likened the arrangement to the country's citizenship-by-investment programme and described it as part of 'experimenting with all forms of our sovereignty'; he added that relations would be ended in the event of improper conduct.⁷

The texts of the 2022 agreement and the 2023 amendment have not been located, and no withdrawal has been recorded. The legal character of the act depends on the theory of recognition applied, and on which instruments bind the recognising state. Antigua and

Barbuda, a British colony in 1933 and independent since 1 November 1981, is not a party to the Montevideo Convention.⁸ It is a member of the Organization of American States, whose Charter states the declaratory position in terms close to those of the Convention:

The political existence of the State is independent of recognition by other States. ... Recognition implies that the State granting it accepts the personality of the new State, with all the rights and duties that international law prescribes for the two States.⁹

The criteria of article 1 of the Montevideo Convention are cited as the standard statement of the factual qualifications of a state whether or not a given state is a party to it. On the declaratory theory, recognition cannot make a state of an entity that lacks one of those qualifications, and an entity without territory lacks one. On the constitutive theory, recognition creates the personality of the entity recognised in its relations with the recognising state; on that view an act of recognition by Antigua and Barbuda, if the act of 2023 was one, would give the Joseon Cybernation a standing in relation to Antigua and Barbuda, and to no other state. Two features of the record weigh on either reading. The announcement of 2023 used the language of diplomatic relations rather than of recognition. And the description of the 2022 agreement as conditional, together with the statement that relations could be ended, sits uneasily with article 6 of the Convention, which, for its parties, provides that 'Recognition is unconditional and irrevocable'.¹⁰ An agreement with such an entity may, moreover, be a political instrument rather than a treaty within the meaning of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. The Convention defines its subject in terms that presuppose states on both sides:

'treaty' means an international agreement concluded between States in written form and governed by international law, whether embodied in a single instrument or in two or more related instruments and whatever its particular designation.¹¹

The dataset records the act in Register 3 as a documented act of a member, without counting it as recognition of a state. Readers who hold the constitutive theory may give the act more weight than the dataset does; the record allows both readings, and the book does not choose between them.

A purely digital polity seeks recognition without territory; a network state, on its author's own definition, seeks territory first.

THE NETWORK STATE THEORY OF STATEHOOD

The most developed account of a path from online community to statehood is Balaji Srinivasan's *The Network State*, published in 2022. Its one-sentence definition is set out at the head of this chapter: a highly aligned online community, with a capacity for collective action, that crowdfunds territory around the world and eventually gains diplomatic recognition from existing states.¹² This book calls the sequence that definition implies the network state theory of statehood. It is not a theory of recognition in the sense of chapter 3; it is a proposed order of operations, in which community comes first, territory second and recognition last.

Two features of the model distinguish it from the purely digital polities described above. The first is that it is territorial in part. The network state acquires land, in many places if necessary, and so meets the Montevideo criterion in its own way, as an archipelago of holdings rather than a contiguous territory. The second is that its territory lies within existing states, and is held under their law. The position of Próspera, a private jurisdiction on the island of Roatán established under the Honduran statute on Zones for Employment and Economic Development (ZEDEs), illustrates the consequence. Próspera has not claimed statehood or independence, and the statute under which it was established describes each zone as 'an inalienable part of the State of Honduras, subject to the Constitution and the national government on issues related to sovereignty, application of justice, territory, national defense, foreign affairs, electoral issues, issuance of identity cards, and passports'.¹³ Próspera states that it operates 'in full compliance with Honduran and international law', with 'full compliance with Honduran criminal law'.¹⁴ The National Congress repealed the statute in April 2022, and on 20 September 2024 the Supreme Court declared the constitutional reform and the statute unconstitutional; the judgment, published in November 2024, gives the ruling effect from the origin of the regime while protecting investment and property acquired in good faith.¹⁵ Próspera rejects the ruling and continues to operate. Its claim against Honduras before the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes was pending at the cut-off date, and on 22 September 2026 it proposed talks with the government that took office in January 2026 to settle which rules apply to its investment.¹⁶ Other zones were established under the same statute, among them Ciudad Morazán, an industrial and residential zone near Choloma.¹⁷ Some critics in Honduras have described Próspera as a 'parallel state'; neither Próspera nor any other zone has stated an aim of independence or statehood.¹⁸ The case shows how far a holding that depends on the law of a host state can be reshaped by that state, and how much such a project depends on its relations with it.

THE ARGUMENTS FOR A CLEAN CONCEPTION

Proponents of non-territorial or network polities advance a set of arguments for why such an entity might be easier to recognise than the entities of Part II. They are set out here as their proponents make them, with the response the record gives to each.

The first is that such an entity has no parent state. It does not separate from any existing state, so no state has a claim to defend against it, and no recognising state need take sides in a dispute over territory. The record supports the premise: the absence of an opposing state is the condition that distinguishes the persons of Register 2 from the entities of Part II. It does not supply the missing criterion. An entity without territory meets no opposition because it claims nothing that any state holds.

The second is that such an entity carries none of the burdens of the contested cases: no unfinished war, no claim to remedial separation, no displaced population and no disputed boundary. That is correct, and it removes the grounds on which states have declined to recognise most of the entities in this book. It leaves the ground on which states would decline to recognise this one: that recognition of statehood presupposes a state.

The third is cost. A digital polity can be founded with little capital; the acquisition of land by agreement, which the law of territory requires of any claimant to new territory, cannot. The comparison is accurate, and it is the reason the model attracts interest. Whether it leads to recognition depends on whether any member of the United Nations is prepared to treat an entity without territory as a state, and on the record to the cut-off date, one member has gone part of the way and none further.

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CHAPTER 14

No Land Unclaimed

The continuous and peaceful display of territorial sovereignty (peaceful in relation to other States) is as good as a title.

Island of Palmas (1928)

A CLAIMANT who cannot obtain land from an existing state, and does not wish to separate from one, has one remaining course: to find land that belongs to no state. This chapter examines the places said to answer that description. They are few: two pockets of land on the Danube; a triangle of desert between Egypt and Sudan; a sector of Antarctica; the high seas; and outer space. Each has attracted claimants, and none of the claimants has been recognised by any member of the United Nations. The reasons differ from place to place, and they are set out in turn.

THE DANUBE POCKETS

The Free Republic of Liberland, proclaimed in 2015, and the Free Republic of Verdis, proclaimed in 2019, each rest their claim on a single proposition: that small pockets of land on the western bank of the Danube, between Croatia and Serbia, belong to no state and are therefore open to occupation. The proposition borrows the vocabulary of *terra nullius*, and its proponents invoke the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice in *Western Sahara* (1975) as the modern statement of that doctrine. Read with care, the opinion offers them no support. Four considerations, each independent of the others, lead to that conclusion.

The Court defined *terra nullius* as a historical category. The General Assembly did not ask the Court whether Western Sahara was *terra nullius* in 1975. It asked whether the territory had been ‘a territory belonging to no one (*terra nullius*)’ at the time of its colonisation by Spain, that is, in 1884.¹ The Court answered by reference to the law in force at that moment. It described *terra nullius* as ‘a territory belonging to no-one’ at

the time of the act alleged to constitute the occupation,² and it held that ‘territories inhabited by tribes or peoples having a social and political organization were not regarded as *terrae nullius*’.³ The opinion is retrospective in method and restrictive in effect. It did not announce a category available for present-day acquisition; it confined the category, as it stood in the colonial era, to land without organised inhabitants. Its holding narrowed the doctrine at the very moment the decolonisation of Africa was ending the period in which the doctrine had operated. A claimant who relies on *Western Sahara* to support a twenty-first-century acquisition reads the opinion against its grain.

Only states acquire territory by occupation. The modern law of territorial acquisition was set out by Max Huber, sitting as sole arbitrator, in *Island of Palmas* (1928). Huber defined territorial authority as ‘the right to exercise therein, to the exclusion of any other State, the functions of a State’,⁴ and he held that ‘the continuous and peaceful display of territorial sovereignty (peaceful in relation to other States) is as good as a title’.⁵ The Permanent Court of International Justice confirmed the structure five years later in *Legal Status of Eastern Greenland*, requiring both an intention and will to act as the holder of territorial authority and some actual exercise or display of that authority.⁶ In each formulation the actor is a state from the outset. Occupation is a mode by which an existing state extends its territory; it is not a mode by which a group of private persons brings a state into being. The difficulty is one of circularity. A proclaimed entity can acquire title by occupation only if it is already a state, and whether it is a state is the very question its occupation is meant to answer. No tribunal has resolved that circularity in favour of a private claimant, and the history of the high seas platforms, from Rose Island to Sealand, shows coastal states treating such claims as acts of private persons subject to their law.⁷

Gornja Siga does not belong to no one. The pockets exist because Croatia and Serbia disagree about where their boundary runs along the Danube. Croatia’s position follows the boundaries of the cadastral municipalities, which leave certain parcels on the western bank on the Serbian side; Serbia’s position follows the course of the river, which places the same parcels on the Croatian side.⁸ The result is that each state treats the pockets as belonging to the other. That is not an absence of claim in the sense the doctrine requires. Both states accept that the land falls to one of them; the open question is which, and it is a question for delimitation between the two states, not for occupation by a third party. The Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs has said as much in terms: the boundary with Serbia remains under negotiation, and the area is not ‘no man’s land (*terra nullius*)’ open to occupation by others.⁹ Boundary specialists reach the same conclusion about Bir Tawil, where Egypt and Sudan each rely on a line that assigns the triangle to the other, and decline for that reason to call it *terra nullius*.¹⁰ The Danube pockets are a boundary dispute in miniature, and a boundary dispute is the opposite of a void.

Croatia displays state authority on the ground. The fourth consideration is the

most practical. Since 2015 the Croatian border police have controlled access to the area, detained persons who entered it in the name of Liberland, and required visitors to comply with the law governing border crossings.¹¹ Measured against the *Palmas* standard, that conduct is a display of state authority over the territory: it is exercised by a state, through its officials, against private persons, and it is continuous. Whatever the eventual delimitation between Zagreb and Belgrade, the only authority displayed on the land is that of a state. A claimant whose presence depends on the forbearance of that state's police has not displaced it.

The Danube pockets in sum. The *Western Sahara* opinion narrows the doctrine on which the Danube claims depend; *Island of Palmas* and *Eastern Greenland* reserve acquisition by occupation to states; the pockets are the subject of a live boundary dispute between two states; and one of those states exercises control on the ground. None of this expresses a view on the merits of the projects concerned, which have attracted serious interest. It explains why even states that recognise contested entities with some freedom have not recognised either of them. Recognition would require a recognising state to take a position in a boundary dispute involving a member of the European Union and of the North Atlantic alliance, and to accept an acquisition that the law of territory does not admit. Taken with the Antarctic Treaty, the Law of the Sea Convention and the Outer Space Treaty, the analysis leaves almost no space on or above the earth that is both unclaimed and legally available. A new state seeking a place in the community of states in 2026 will, in practice, need land obtained by agreement with an existing state.

ARGUMENTS ADVANCED IN REPLY

Supporters of the Danube projects have answered the analysis above in several ways, and the reader is entitled to see the answers set out at their strongest, with the replies the law gives to each.

The opinion is advisory and binds no one. That is correct. An advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice does not bind states in the way a judgment binds the parties to a case. The analysis does not depend on it. The proposition that territory is acquired by states rests on *Island of Palmas*, an arbitral award, and on *Eastern Greenland*, a judgment of the Permanent Court, and on the practice of states over two centuries.¹² If the opinion were set aside, the conclusion would stand on those authorities.

The opinion concerned colonisation in 1884 and was given before the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Both facts are correct, and the first is the point made above: the Court described a historical category and confined it. The dissolution of Yugoslavia does not open the category again. The Arbitration Commission of the Conference on Yugoslavia advised in January 1992 that the boundaries between the former republics, unless altered by agreement, became frontiers protected by international law.¹³ On that view the line between Croatia and Serbia along the Danube is a frontier between two states whose course remains to be settled, which is the characterisation adopted above.

The Court's authority is doubted by some. Criticism of the Court's composition or of particular decisions is a matter of legitimate debate. It does not change the content of the rules, which the Court did not invent and which other tribunals and the practice of states restate. A claimant who rejects the Court still faces *Palmas*, *Eastern Greenland*, the arbitral award in *Clipperton Island* (1931), in which title by occupation was upheld because a state had acted, and the conduct of Croatia on the ground.¹⁴

Neither state claims the pockets, so they belong to no one. This is the claimants' central argument. Its premise is incomplete. Each state disclaims the western-bank pockets because it claims a different line, and each line allocates the pockets to the other state. The disclaimer by one state is not an abandonment by both. The absence of a claim, in the sense the doctrine requires, means that no state regards the land as belonging to any state; here both regard it as belonging to a state, and differ only as to which.

Statehood is a question of fact, and recognition is declaratory. The declaratory theory, set out in chapter 3, does not lower the factual threshold. It requires a permanent population, a defined territory and an effective government. The pockets have no resident population; access to them is controlled by the police of another state; and the territory claimed is the subject of an unresolved boundary between two states. The theory holds that recognition does not create a state; it does not hold that a proclamation does.

Occupation by private persons has founded states before. The historical examples were acquisitions made by or on behalf of existing states, and the modern attempts by private persons to occupy land or to build it at sea, examined later in this chapter, were ended

by the action of the nearest state. No member of the United Nations owes its existence to the occupation of *terra nullius* by private persons.

The reader may weigh these replies. On the law as it stands and as tribunals and states have applied it, the claims to the Danube pockets rest on a premise that the record does not support, and no member of the United Nations has recognised either of them. The analysis does not foreclose the route described in the author's note below: an agreement with the states concerned.

Author's note. I have met Vít Jedlička, President of the Free Republic of Liberland, and I wish the project every success, provided it can reach a negotiated settlement with Zagreb and Belgrade; on the analysis of this chapter, that is the route by which the project could obtain land by agreement. I also record that the Free Republic of Verdis has shown a remarkable capacity to attract the attention of the international press. These are the author's personal observations, set apart from the descriptive analysis, and they do not represent a position of the Startup States Society.

BIR TAWIL

Bir Tawil is a trapezoid of desert of about 2,060 square kilometres on the border between Egypt and Sudan. It exists as an unclaimed area because the two states rely on different lines. Egypt relies on the line of 1899, which follows the twenty-second parallel and places Bir Tawil in Sudan; Sudan relies on the administrative line of 1902, which places Bir Tawil in Egypt and the larger and more valuable Halayeb Triangle, on the Red Sea coast, in Sudan. Each state claims Halayeb, and neither claims Bir Tawil, because to claim it would be to accept the line that gives Halayeb to the other.¹⁵ The area has no known permanent settlement; members of the Ababda and Basharya peoples, who live in the wider region, are reported to cross it, and small groups of gold miners have been reported there.¹⁶

Bir Tawil has drawn private claims of its own. In June 2014 Jeremiah Heaton, a citizen of the United States, planted a flag there and proclaimed a 'Kingdom of North Sudan'. A 'Kingdom of Middle Earth' was proclaimed in December 2014, a 'Kingdom of Dixit' by Suyash Dixit, an Indian national, in November 2017, and a 'Kingdom of the Yellow Mountain' in 2019, among others; several claimants have disputed whether the others reached the territory at all.¹⁷ Neither Egypt nor Sudan has responded to them in terms, and neither has needed to: the area is reached only through the territory of one of the two states, and no claimant has established a presence there.

The analysis applied to the Danube pockets applies here with equal force. The absence of a claim to Bir Tawil is the by-product of a boundary dispute between two states, each of which regards the triangle as belonging to the other. Boundary specialists decline for that reason to call it *terra nullius*, and a private person cannot acquire title by occupation in any event.

MARIE BYRD LAND AND WESTARCTICA

Marie Byrd Land, the sector of Antarctica between 90° and 150° west, is the largest area of land on earth that no state claims. It lies between the claim of New Zealand, the Ross Dependency, to the west, and the claim of Chile to the east; the claims of Argentina and Australia lie elsewhere on the continent. No state maintains a permanent station there.

Its unclaimed status is the product of the Antarctic Treaty of 1959. Article IV(2) provides that ‘no new claim, or enlargement of an existing claim, to territorial sovereignty in Antarctica shall be asserted while the present Treaty is in force’.¹⁸ The United States and Russia have reserved a basis of claim to the continent without asserting one. The Treaty has 58 parties, and all five permanent members of the Security Council are among its 29 consultative parties.¹⁹

In 2001 Travis McHenry, a citizen of the United States, claimed Marie Byrd Land; the claim was restyled the Grand Duchy of Westarctica in 2004.²⁰ Its founder’s argument is that the Treaty forbids claims by states and says nothing of claims by private persons. The argument identifies a real feature of the Treaty, which binds its parties, and draws from it a conclusion the law of territory does not support. A private person cannot acquire territorial title by occupation, for the reasons given in the discussion of the Danube pockets; a claim made by a national of a party, if it were adopted by that party, would be a new claim of the kind article IV(2) forbids; and if it were not adopted, it would be no claim in international law at all. That no state is likely to send forces to remove a claimant from so remote a place does not alter the position. Remoteness may spare a claimant from enforcement; it does not supply a title.

Remoteness may spare a claimant from enforcement; it does not supply a title.

THE SEA

The high seas are open to all states and subject to none. Article 89 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea provides that ‘no State may validly purport to subject any part of the high seas to its sovereignty’, and article 60(8) provides that artificial islands, installations and structures do not possess the status of islands and have no territorial sea of their own.²¹ The same rules govern structures in a coastal state’s exclusive economic zone, where the coastal state has exclusive jurisdiction over artificial islands and installations. A platform built at sea cannot found a state’s territory, and a coastal state may act against one built off its coast. The record bears this out.

In 1968 the engineer Giorgio Rosa built a platform about 500 metres beyond the six-mile limit of the Italian territorial sea off Rimini and declared it, on 1 May 1968, the Republic of the Island of Roses. Italian police occupied it on 25 June 1968, and it was demolished in February 1969; the Italian Council of State upheld the demolition in November 1969.²²

In 1967 Roy Bates occupied Roughs Tower, a fort of the Second World War off the coast of Suffolk, and proclaimed the Principality of Sealand. In October 1968 the Essex Assizes held that a firearms charge against him could not proceed because the fort lay outside the three-mile territorial sea of the United Kingdom; the court did not find that Sealand was independent, and observed that Parliament could extend its jurisdiction. The Territorial Sea Act 1987 extended the territorial sea to twelve miles, bringing the fort within it.²³ No state has recognised Sealand.

In January 1972 the Ocean Life Research Foundation, associated with the American businessman Michael Oliver, proclaimed the Republic of Minerva on the Minerva Reefs in the South Pacific, which it had raised above the waterline. In June 1972 the King of Tonga, Taufa’ahau Tupou IV, led an expedition to the reefs, raised the Tongan flag and proclaimed Tongan territory there; Fiji supported Tonga and closed its ports to the Minerva group.²⁴

In April 2019 the Royal Thai Navy boarded a floating dwelling, a ‘seastead’, occupied by Chad Elwartowski, an American, and Supranee Thepdet, a Thai national, reported to lie some 24 nautical miles off Phuket, beyond the territorial sea and within Thailand’s exclusive economic zone. The navy announced that the structure would be destroyed, and the Thai authorities brought charges under section 119 of the Criminal Code, which concerns acts that impair the independence of the state or its authority over its territory, and which carries a maximum penalty of death. The occupants left the structure before they could be arrested.²⁵

The pattern is consistent across five decades and several seas. In each case the nearest state treated the platform or reef as subject to its law, and acted.

OUTER SPACE

The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 provides in article II that outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, 'is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means'.²⁶ The prohibition is addressed to states, and it forecloses the route of acquisition by occupation for any entity that claims to be one. Claims to territory in space, whether by private persons or by self-described nations, have received no recognition from any member.

NO LAND UNCLAIMED

On the earth's surface, the places said to belong to no one turn out, on examination, to belong to someone, to be the subject of a dispute between states, or to be held outside the reach of any claim by a treaty to which every permanent member of the Security Council is party. Beyond it, appropriation is forbidden by treaty. The conclusion stated in the discussion of the Danube pockets holds for all five: a new state seeking a place in the community of states in 2026 will, in practice, need land obtained by agreement with an existing state.

NOTES

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 - 11 Office of the Spokesperson, Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (n 9).
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 - 16 'Bir Tawil: the stateless land of many and no rulers', *Egyptian Streets* (20 July 2023) <https://egyptianstreet.com/2023/07/20/bir-tawil-the-stateless-land-of-many-and-no-rulers/> accessed 16 October 2026.
 - 17 *ibid*; 'A fictional country is reigniting real territorial fears', *Foreign Policy* (25 September 2019).
 - 18 The Antarctic Treaty (signed 1 December 1959, entered into force 23 June 1961) 402 UNTS 71, art IV(2) <https://www.ats.aq/e/antarctic treaty.html> accessed 18 October 2026.
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 - 20 Frank Jacobs, 'Westarctica: the micronation with a real-world purpose', *Big Think* (16 February 2024) <https://bigthink.com/strange-maps/westarctica-the-micronation-with-a-real-world-purpose/> accessed 16 October 2026.
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 - 22 Calabrese (n 7).
 - 23 *R v Bates* (Essex Assizes, Chelmsford, 25 October 1968), discussed in Harry Hobbs and George Williams, *Micronations and the Search for Sovereignty* (CUP 2022); Territorial Sea Act 1987.
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 - 25 'Phuket cops hunting down Thai-American seastealers', *Khaosod English* (18 April 2019) <https://www.khaosodenglish.com/news/2019/04/18/phuket-cops-hunting-down-thai-american-seastealers/> accessed 16 October 2026.
 - 26 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (opened for signature 27 January 1967, entered into force 10 October 1967) 610 UNTS 205, art II <https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/treaties/outerspacetreaty.html> accessed 18 October 2026.

PART IV

Analysis

CHAPTER 15

Hard to Win, Easy to Lose

We in Togo recognize only one Serbia.

Foreign Minister of Togo, on the withdrawal of Togo's recognition of Kosovo
(16 January 2023), as reported

THE CHAPTERS of Part II record recognitions given, withheld, withdrawn, frozen and resumed. This chapter draws the record together and asks what it shows about the durability of recognition: how often recognitions are lost, in what pattern, by what mechanisms, and which recognitions have never been lost at all.

THE ARITHMETIC OF REVERSAL

Table 15.1 sets out the status of each entity's recognitions at the cut-off date, using the codes defined in chapter 2.

TABLE 15.1. Status of recognition by the 193 members of the United Nations at 10 October 2026. For the Republic of China the table shows current partners among members only; since 1971, 78 members have ended relations with Taipei at least once, and one has restored them. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12.

Entity	Recognising (A)	Withdrawn (C)	Frozen or suspended (D)	Conflicting (E)
State of Palestine	154	0	0	3
Republic of Kosovo	96	1	1	22
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	36	34	12	2
Republic of China (Taiwan)	11			
Abkhazia	4	3	0	0
South Ossetia	4	2	0	0
Republic of Somaliland	1	0	0	0
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus	1	0	0	0

The figures divide the entities into three groups. The State of Palestine has never lost a recognition by a withdrawal: the only exceptions to its count are three listings whose present governments take a different view of their predecessors' acts. Somaliland and Northern Cyprus have too few recognitions to lose. The remaining four entities have each lost a substantial share of the recognitions they once held: the Sahrawi Republic more than half, the Republic of China more than three-quarters of the partners it had in 1971, Abkhazia three of seven, and Kosovo, on the most cautious reading, about one-fifth.

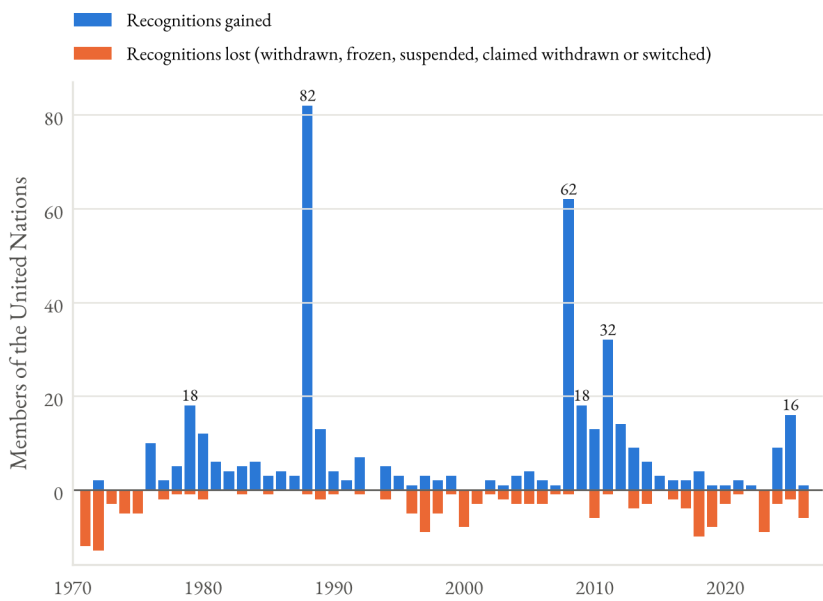


FIGURE 15.1. Recognitions gained and lost each year, 1971 to 2026, across the core register. Gains include new recognitions and resumptums; losses include withdrawals, freezes and suspensions, withdrawals announced by an opposing state, and switches of relations from Taipei to Beijing. Gains for the Republic of China count the start of each partner’s present period of relations; earlier periods are not shown. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12.

WAVES AND SINGLES

The timing of gains and losses differs. Figure 15.1 sets out, for each year from 1971, the recognitions gained and lost across the series.

Across the period the series records 414 gains and 160 losses. These totals are year-on-year changes in the year-end counts of the dataset’s Timelines sheet and, for the Republic of China, of the switch register; they are not counts of the acts in Table 2.1, and a gain and a loss by the same state within one year cancel out. The gains are concentrated: the five years with the most gains, led by 1988 (the proclamation of the State of Palestine) and 2008 (the declaration of Kosovo and the recognitions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia), account for just over half of them. The losses are dispersed: the five years with the most losses, led by 1971 and 1972, when states transferred relations from Taipei to Beijing, account for a third. No year after 1972 recorded more than ten losses. Recognition, on this evidence, is gained in waves tied to moments and lost one state at a time.

Recognition is gained in waves tied to moments and lost one state at a time.

HOW LONG RECOGNITIONS LAST

Figure 15.2 measures durability itself. For each entity it estimates the share of recognitions still in force a given number of years after they were given. A recognition ends, for this purpose, at the first withdrawal, freeze or suspension, at the first withdrawal announced by an opposing state and not refuted by the recognising state, or, for the Republic of China, at the end of relations; recognitions still in force at the cut-off date are counted for the years they have run.¹ Treating freezes and suspensions as ends lowers the curves of the entities whose recognitions are most often frozen, the Sahrawi Republic above all; a reader who regards a freeze as leaving recognition intact will read the Sahrawi curve as a lower bound.

The curves separate. No recognition of the State of Palestine has ended, and its curve does not fall. Of Kosovo's recognitions, an estimated 88 per cent were in force ten years after they were given and 83 per cent after twenty, on a count that treats each withdrawal announced by Serbia and not refuted as an end. The Sahrawi Republic's recognitions held almost as well for the first ten years, at 89 per cent, but fell to 67 per cent at twenty; half had ended within about thirty-one years. The recognitions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, thirteen in all, fell to 77 per cent at ten years and 58 per cent at twenty. Taipei's relations fell fastest: 38 per cent remained in force at ten years and 27 per cent at twenty, and half had ended within six years. The pattern of Table 15.1 is thus a pattern of time as well as of number. A recognition of the Republic of China has, on the record since 1971, been more likely than not to end within a decade; a recognition of the State of Palestine has not ended at all.

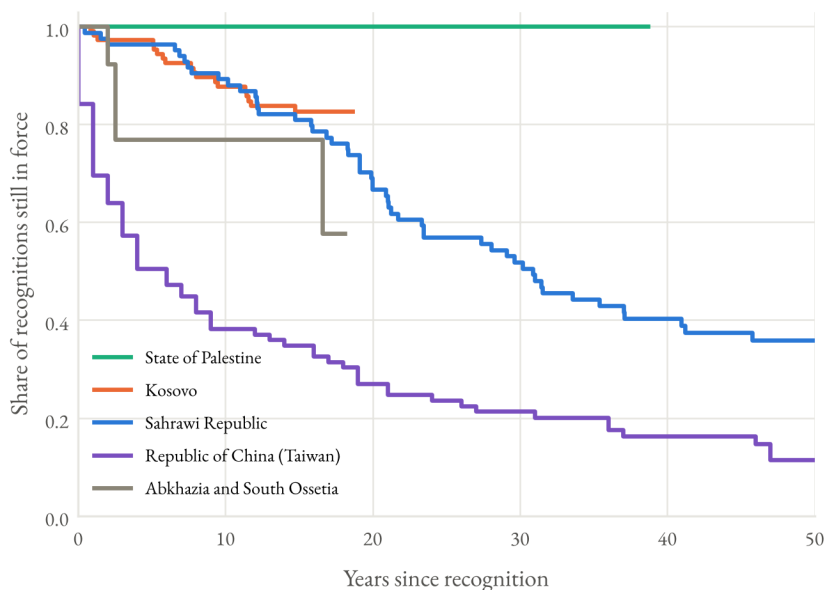


FIGURE 15.2. Share of recognitions remaining in force by years since recognition, for each entity of the core register with more than one recogniser (Kaplan–Meier estimates). For the Republic of China the clock starts in 1971 for relations already in force, or at the start of the present period of relations; Abkhazia and South Ossetia are combined. The fall at the origin of the curve for the Republic of China records the switches of 1971 and 1972. Sources: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12, sheets Durability and Event_Register; for the Sahrawi Republic, CESO, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela.

HOW RECOGNITION IS WON

The gains in the record were not won by entities acting alone. Each wave was prepared by diplomacy, and much of that diplomacy was conducted by states with an interest in the outcome: the initiatives of the Arab Group and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation for the State of Palestine, the coordinated recognitions of Kosovo by the United States and most members of the European Union in February 2008, and Russia’s recognitions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which preceded those of every other state. The role of patrons is examined in the next chapter. Entities have also drawn on specialist advisers, lawyers and lobbyists, and the record contains enough of their work to describe it.

Independent Diplomat, founded in 2004 by Carne Ross, a British diplomat who had resigned from the Foreign Office over its account of the case for the war in Iraq, describes itself as a diplomatic advisory group for governments and political groups that lack the

resources or access of established states.² Its published list of past projects includes advice to Kosovo on ‘the path to statehood’ in 2008, to South Sudan ahead of its independence in 2011 and diplomatic support for Somaliland, and the trade press recorded the renewal of a contract with the Polisario Front in 2012.³ A report of 2009 described it as a non-profit body funded by foundations, governments and fees scaled to clients’ means, which declined to act for groups engaged in armed struggle; Kosovo’s representative to the European Union said that ‘we received great assistance from them at a time when we needed it most’, while a senior official of the Council of the European Union warned that advisers ‘should not pretend that they have influence when they don’t’.⁴ The Public International Law and Policy Group, a non-governmental organisation of international lawyers, served as legal counsel to the Kosovar delegation at the Rambouillet negotiations of 1999, advised the government of Kosovo in the Vienna status negotiations and assisted in drafting its constitution of 2008.⁵

Lawyers appear at the decisive moments of litigation. When the International Court of Justice heard the request for an advisory opinion on Kosovo’s declaration in December 2009, the delegation of the authors of the declaration included as counsel Sir Michael Wood, a member of the International Law Commission, Professor Sean D Murphy and Daniel Müller.⁶ Lobbyists work in the legislatures and ministries of the states whose recognition is sought, and in the United States their engagement on behalf of foreign principals is a matter of public record under the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938.⁷ None of these advisers can confer recognition, and none claims to. What the record shows is that the acquisition and maintenance of recognition has become a professional field, with its own practitioners on every side of the disputes examined here.

MECHANISMS

The record discloses four mechanisms of loss. They are not exclusive, and in many cases more than one is present.

The first is a change of government in the recognising state. Nicaragua’s relations with Taipei were ended by the Sandinista government in 1985, restored by its successor in 1990 and ended again by the government of Daniel Ortega in 2021. Saint Lucia’s were ended in 1997 and restored in 2007, each time after an election. Bolivia suspended relations with the Sahrawi Republic under the interim government of Jeanine Áñez in January 2020, resumed them under the government of Luis Arce in September 2021, and suspended them again in February 2026. Syria’s recognitions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, given by the government of Bashar al-Assad, became the subject of calls for their withdrawal after that government fell, while the government that succeeded it recognised Kosovo.

The second is a sustained campaign by the state that opposes the entity. The Federal Republic of Germany’s campaign against recognition of the German Democratic

Republic is the historical model. Beijing's insistence that its partners end relations with Taipei, Morocco's diplomacy over the Sahrawi Republic, Serbia's campaign over Kosovo from 2017, and Georgia's diplomacy, in the course of which Vanuatu and Tuvalu withdrew their recognitions of Abkhazia on establishing relations with it, follow the same logic. Naoero (Nauru) followed in 2026. The campaigns differ in their means and their results. Beijing's has the clearest record: every state that has established relations with it has ended formal relations with Taipei, in a joint communiqué that records the choice in terms.

The third is the coincidence of a change of recognition with an offer of assistance. The record documents coincidences, not bargains, and the book does not infer the one from the other. When Dominica transferred relations from Taipei to Beijing in 2004, China pledged assistance of some US\$112 million.⁸ When Naoero did so in January 2024, its government described the decision as 'a significant first step in moving forward with Nauru's development'; Taipei's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that China had 'used economic assistance to induce' the change.⁹ Both statements are those of interested parties, and both are reported as such. The statement of the Government of Naoero itself took the form that Beijing's partners now use:

The Republic of Nauru will no longer recognise the Republic of China [Taiwan] as a separate country but rather as an inalienable part of China's territory, and will sever diplomatic relations with Taiwan as of this day.¹⁰

The fourth is a change in the recognising state's alignment on the underlying dispute. The freezes and suspensions of recognition of the Sahrawi Republic since 2024 have accompanied endorsements of Morocco's autonomy proposal, and in Kenya's case the endorsement was made without a withdrawal. The recognising state does not abandon its earlier act; it adopts a later position that cannot be reconciled with it.

THE FREEZE AS AN INSTRUMENT

The distinction between a withdrawal and a freeze, on which the dataset insists, matters in practice because states use the freeze to preserve their freedom to act again. Of the 48 members that once recognised the Sahrawi Republic and no longer count among its recognisers, 13 have frozen, suspended or qualified their recognition without withdrawing it. Several recognitions have been resumed after a freeze or cancellation: Chad's, Vanuatu's, Mauritius's and South Sudan's of the Sahrawi Republic, and Palau's of Kosovo. A freeze is the form a reversal takes when the reversing state wishes to keep the earlier act in reserve.

WHO REVERSES, AND WHY

The reversals are concentrated among a minority of the recognising states. Table 15.2 lists the members with three or more reversals on the record: withdrawals of recognition of the Sahrawi Republic, Kosovo, Abkhazia or South Ossetia; freezes and suspensions; and the ending of relations with Taipei. It sets against them the resumptions of recognition and the returns to Taipei.

TABLE 15.2. Members with three or more reversals of recognition, all entities, to 10 October 2026. Withdrawals and freezes of recognition of the Sahrawi Republic follow the record of the Centro de Estudos sobre o Sahara Occidental; claimed withdrawals not made by the state concerned, and denied cancellations, are excluded. Periods of relations with Taipei follow the register of switches, which records earlier periods where they are known. Sources: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Centro de Estudos sobre o Sahara Occidental, 'RASD -- Frente Polisario' (recognition record), accessed 16 October 2026; *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12, sheets Event_Register and ROC_Former_Partners.

Member	Withdrawals	Freezes and suspensions	Relations with Taipei ended	Resumptions and returns	Reversals in all
Naoero (Nauru)	3	0	2	1	5
Liberia	1	0	3	2	4
Malawi	3	0	1	2	4
Peru	1	2	1	1	4
Nicaragua	0	1	2	2	3
Chad	1	0	2	2	3
Central African Republic	0	0	3	2	3
Senegal	0	0	3	2	3
Benin	1	0	2	1	3
Bolivia	0	2	1	1	3
Burkina Faso	1	0	2	1	3
Cambodia	1	0	2	1	3
Colombia	0	2	1	1	3
El Salvador	2	0	1	1	3
Guinea-Bissau	2	0	1	1	3
Honduras	0	2	1	1	3
Panama	0	2	1	1	3
Saint Lucia	2	0	1	1	3
Vanuatu	2	0	1	1	3
Barbados	1	1	1	0	3
Grenada	1	1	1	0	3
Togo	2	0	1	0	3
Tuvalu	3	0	0	0	3

Four features stand out. The first is geography. Of the 23 members in the table, ten are in Latin America and the Caribbean, nine in Africa and four in the Asia-Pacific region; none belongs to the Western European and Others Group or the Eastern European Group. These are the regions in which the contests between Beijing and Taipei and between Rabat and the Polisario Front have been fought, and the reversals record the fronts of those contests as much as the character of the reversing states.

The second is that reversal follows government. Peru suspended relations with the Sahrawi Republic in 1996, resumed them in September 2021, cancelled its recognition in August 2022 and suspended relations again in September 2023, a sequence that tracks changes of government and of foreign minister in Lima. Bolivia suspended in 2020, resumed in 2021 and suspended in 2026; Colombia resumed in 2022 and suspended in 2026. Liberia's relations with Taipei have been ended three times and restored twice. In each case the state's position moved with its government.

The third is that reversal repeats. Malawi cancelled its recognition of the Sahrawi Republic three times and resumed it twice, between 2001 and 2017. Naoero (Nauru) stands at the end of the range. It ended relations with Taipei in 2002, restored them in 2005 and ended them again in 2024; it cancelled its recognition of the Sahrawi Republic in 2000; and in July 2026 it withdrew its recognitions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, given in December 2009.¹¹ It has recognised five of the eight entities at one time or another and recognised none of them at the cut-off date.

The fourth concerns resumption. Resumptions are fewer than reversals, and most take one of two forms: the return of a state to Taipei after a change of government, as in the cases of Liberia, Senegal, the Central African Republic and Nicaragua, or the restoration of relations with the Sahrawi Republic ‘at embassy level’ after a freeze, as Malawi, Ghana, Kenya, Vanuatu, El Salvador and Panama did between 2008 and 2016. A resumption restores the earlier position without settling it; several of the states that resumed later reversed again. The record thus describes a group of states for which recognition is an active instrument of policy, used, withdrawn and reused, and a larger group for which it is a settled act that is not revisited.

WHAT HAS NOT BEEN REVERSED

Some recognitions have not been reversed at all. No permanent member of the Security Council has withdrawn its recognition of the State of Palestine, Kosovo, Abkhazia or South Ossetia. No member of the League of Arab States has withdrawn its recognition of the State of Palestine, and none of its recognisers has withdrawn on any ground. Russia, Nicaragua and Venezuela have maintained their recognitions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia since 2008 and 2009. The recognitions least exposed to reversal are those given by states whose position on the underlying dispute is itself fixed, and the recognitions most exposed are those given by small states whose relations with the opposing state are a matter of active choice.

NOTES

- 1 The estimates follow the product-limit method of EL Kaplan and P Meier, 'Nonparametric Estimation from Incomplete Observations' (1958) 53 *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 457 <https://doi.org/10.1080/01621459.1958.10501452> accessed 18 October 2026. The records used, with the start and end date of each recognition, are set out in the Durability sheet of the dataset.
- 2 Carne Ross, 'About' <https://www.carneross.com> accessed 17 October 2026.
- 3 Independent Diplomat, 'Past projects' <https://independentdiplomat.org/our-work/past-projects> accessed 17 October 2026; Kevin McCauley, 'Polisario renews Independent Diplomat', *O'Dwyer's* (June 2012).
- 4 'Freelance diplomats lend a hand to would-be states', *NBC News* (Associated Press, 2009).
- 5 Public International Law and Policy Group, 'Europe and Eurasia' <https://www.publicinternationallawandpolicygroup.org/europe-eurasia> accessed 17 October 2026.
- 6 *Accordance with International Law of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Respect of Kosovo* (Request for Advisory Opinion), Verbatim Record (7 December 2009), list of participants <https://www.icj-cij.org/case/141> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 7 Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, 22 USC §§ 611–621 <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/22/chapter-11/subchapter-II> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 8 AidData, Chinese development finance dataset, project record 39825 (recording a pledge of US\$112 million in assistance after Dominica ended relations with Taipei in 2004) <https://china.aiddata.org/projects/39825/> accessed 16 October 2026.
- 9 'Nauru severs diplomatic ties with Taiwan, to seek full relations with China', *Radio Free Asia* (15 January 2024) <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/pacific/nauru-cuts-taiwan-ties-01152024031116.html> accessed 16 October 2026.
- 10 Statement of the Government of Nauru (15 January 2024), as reported in *Radio Free Asia* (n 9).
- 11 Dataset, Event_Register (Naoero); 'Nauru confirms withdrawal of recognition of Abkhazia, Tskhinvali region', *Georgia Today* (31 July 2026) <https://georgiatoday.ge/nauru-confirms-withdrawal-of-recognition-of-abkhazia-tskhinvali-region/> accessed 10 October 2026.

CHAPTER 16

Neighbours, Regional Bodies and Great Powers

This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Footnote used by the institutions of the European Union in references to Kosovo

RECOGNITION is a decision of each state, but states do not decide alone. They decide as members of regions, of regional organisations and of alignments led by great powers, and the record shows the imprint of each. This chapter examines the distribution of recognition across the regional groups of the United Nations, the positions taken by regional organisations, and the positions of the five permanent members of the Security Council, whose concurrence is required for admission to the Organization.

THE REGIONAL PATTERN

Figure 16.1 shows, for each regional group, the share of its members that recognise each entity.

The pattern is sharp. The State of Palestine is recognised by almost every member in Africa and in Latin America and the Caribbean, and by a majority in each other group. Kosovo is recognised by almost every member of the Western European and Others Group, by about half of the Asia-Pacific and Eastern European groups, and by under a third of the African group. The Sahrawi Republic draws a third of the African group and a quarter of Latin America and the Caribbean, and none of the Western group. The Republic of China's partners are concentrated in Latin America and the Caribbean. Abkhazia and South Ossetia are recognised by four members drawn from three groups.

African (54)	96% (52)	31% (17)	33% (18)	2% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Asia-Pacific (54)	72% (39)	50% (27)	17% (9)	6% (3)	2% (1)	2% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Eastern European (23)	65% (15)	52% (12)	4% (1)	0% (0)	4% (1)	4% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Latin America and Caribbean (33)	97% (32)	39% (13)	24% (8)	21% (7)	6% (2)	6% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Western European and Others (29)	55% (16)	93% (27)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	3% (1)	3% (1)
	Palestine	Kosovo	Sahrawi Rep.	Rep. of China	Abkhazia	South Ossetia	Somali- land	Northern Cyprus

FIGURE 16.1. Share of each regional group of the United Nations recognising each entity (status A, 10 October 2026), with the number of recognising members in brackets. For the Republic of China, status A records diplomatic relations with Taipei, which the book treats as distinct from recognition in terms (chapter 2). Group sizes in brackets beside each group; Türkiye and the United States are counted with the Western European and Others Group. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12.

Only the State of Palestine and Kosovo are recognised by a majority of more than one group.

REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Table 16.1 sets the same evidence against the membership of seven regional and political organisations.

TABLE 16.1. Recognising members of seven organisations (status A, 10 October 2026). Only members of the United Nations are counted; the African Union's member the Sahrawi Republic, the League of Arab States' member Palestine and the Pacific Islands Forum's members the Cook Islands and Niue are excluded. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12.

Organisation (members)	Palestine	Kosovo	Sahrawi Rep.	Rep. of China	Abkhazia	South Ossetia	Somaliland	N. Cyprus
African Union (54)	52	17	18	1	0	0	0	0
League of Arab States (21)	21	13	5	0	1	1	0	0
European Union (27)	13	22	0	0	0	0	0	0
NATO (32)	17	28	1	0	0	0	0	1
CARICOM (14)	14	6	2	5	0	0	0	0
ASEAN (11)	9	5	3	0	0	0	0	0
Pacific Islands Forum (14)	2	10	1	3	0	0	0	0

Three features stand out. Every member of the League of Arab States and every member of CARICOM recognises the State of Palestine. The European Union divides on both of the entities it has had to consider: 22 of its 27 members recognise Kosovo and 13 recognise Palestine, and on each question the Union as such takes no position. And the Pacific Islands Forum, whose members include three of Taipei's partners, is the one organisation in which most members do not recognise the State of Palestine.

Regional organisations have also acted in their own right. The Organisation of African Unity admitted the Sahrawi Republic as a member in 1982, and the African Union has maintained its membership while a majority of its members do not recognise it. The European Union refers to Kosovo in its documents with a footnote stating that the designation is without prejudice to positions on status. The League of Arab States treats Palestine as a member. In each case the organisation has made a decision on participation that its members have not matched by recognition.

Four of the eight entities are recognised by no permanent member of the Security Council.

NEIGHBOURS

Neighbouring states divide. Kosovo is recognised by Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia, three of the four states with which it shares a boundary; the fourth is Serbia. The Sahrawi Republic is recognised by Algeria and Mauritania, the two neighbours of the territory other than Morocco. Abkhazia and South Ossetia are recognised by Russia, their only neighbour other than Georgia. Northern Cyprus is recognised by Türkiye. Somaliland is recognised by none of its neighbours: Djibouti and Ethiopia, the states with which it shares a land boundary, have not recognised it, and Ethiopia’s memorandum of understanding of 2024 did not lead to recognition. Where a neighbour of the claimed territory recognises, it is in most cases a state engaged in the dispute itself.

THE PERMANENT MEMBERS

Admission to the United Nations depends on a recommendation of the Security Council, and article 27(3) of the Charter governs how the Council decides:

Decisions of the Security Council on all other matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members; provided that, in decisions under Chapter VI, and under paragraph 3 of Article 52, a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting.¹

Table 16.2 sets out the position of each permanent member.

TABLE 16.2. Status of recognition by the five permanent members of the Security Council at 10 October 2026 (A: recognises; B: does not). Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12.

Permanent member	Palestine	Kosovo	Sahrawi Rep.	Rep. of China	Abkhazia	South Ossetia	Somaliland	N. Cyprus
China	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
France	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B
Russia	A	B	B	B	A	A	B	B
United Kingdom	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B
United States	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B

The table states the arithmetic of admission. A recommendation of admission requires the concurring votes of all five permanent members, or at least the abstention of any that does not concur. The State of Palestine is recognised by four; the fifth cast the vote that defeated the recommendation of April 2024. Kosovo is recognised by three, and two would oppose its admission. Abkhazia and South Ossetia are recognised by one. The Republic of China, the Sahrawi Republic, Somaliland and Northern Cyprus are recognised by none. No entity in the core register has the recognition of all five, and only one has the recognition of four.

VOTES AND RECOGNITION

Recognition is one act and a vote in the General Assembly is another, and the record allows the two to be compared for one entity. On 10 May 2024 the Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/23 by 143 votes to 9, with 25 abstentions. Its first operative paragraph:

Determines that the State of Palestine is qualified for membership in the United Nations in accordance with Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations and should therefore be admitted to membership in the United Nations.²

On 12 September 2025 the Assembly endorsed the New York Declaration on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the implementation of the two-state solution, by 142 votes to 10, with 12 abstentions. Table 16.3 sets the votes of each member against its status in relation to the State of Palestine at the cut-off date.

TABLE 16.3. Votes of members on General Assembly resolution ES-10/23 (10 May 2024) and on the endorsement of the New York Declaration (12 September 2025), by status in relation to the State of Palestine at 10 October 2026. The published record of the 2025 vote names the members voting against and abstaining; the 142 votes in favour and the 29 members not voting are shown together. Sources: votes by member as recorded by the UN Votes project and by Human Rights Voices; totals from UN press releases GA/12599 and GA/12707; status from the *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12.

Status in relation to Palestine (members)	2024: in favour	2024: against	2024: abstained	2024: not voting	2025: against	2025: abstained	2025: in favour or not voting
Recognises, A (154)	131	1	12	10	2	6	146
Does not recognise, B (36)	12	5	13	6	6	5	25
Conflicting evidence, E (3)	0	3	0	0	2	1	0
Total (193)	143	9	25	16	10	12	171

The votes and the recognitions run together, with exceptions in each direction.³ Of the 154 members that recognise the State of Palestine, 131 voted for resolution ES-10/23. Several of the twelve recognisers that abstained in 2024, among them Canada and the United Kingdom, recognised the State of Palestine only in 2025, so that the table compares a vote cast before their recognition with their status after it. One recogniser, Argentina, voted against both texts, and a second, Paraguay, abstained in 2024 and voted against in 2025. In the other direction, twelve members that do not recognise the State of Palestine voted in 2024 to determine that it was qualified for membership: Belgium, Denmark, Eritrea, Estonia, Greece, Japan, Liechtenstein, Myanmar, New Zealand, Panama, Singapore and South Korea. The three members whose evidence is conflicting, Czechia,

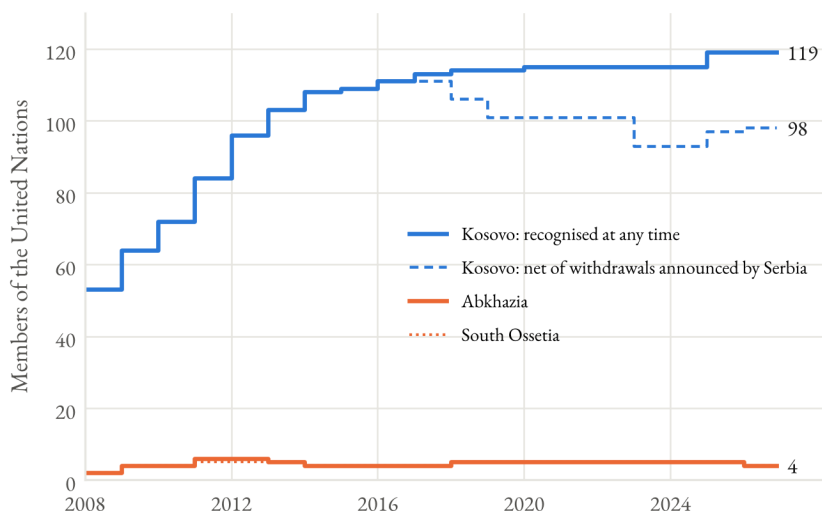


FIGURE 16.2. Members of the United Nations recognising Kosovo, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, counted at the end of each year, 2008 to 2026. The dashed line for Kosovo deducts the withdrawals announced by Serbia, including those the dataset does not treat as verified; the verified current count is 96. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12, sheet Timelines.

Hungary and Papua New Guinea, voted against in 2024; in 2025 Hungary and Papua New Guinea voted against and Czechia abstained. A vote that a claimant is qualified for membership is not an act of recognition, and members have treated the two as distinct.

PATRONS

Kosovo and Abkhazia offer the closest comparison in the record between recognitions led by different permanent members. Kosovo declared independence on 17 February 2008; Russia recognised Abkhazia and South Ossetia on 26 August of the same year. The United States, the United Kingdom and France recognised Kosovo on 18 February 2008. The Secretary of State announced:

The United States has today formally recognized Kosovo as a sovereign and independent state. We congratulate the people of Kosovo on this historic occasion.⁴

The outcomes diverged, as Figure 16.2 shows. Kosovo held the recognition of 53 members at the end of 2008 and of 119 at one time or another. Abkhazia held two at the end of 2008 and seven at one time or another; it held four at the cut-off date, after the withdrawals of Vanuatu in 2013, Tuvalu in 2014 and Naoero (Nauru) in 2026.

Three differences in the record bear on the divergence. The first is the breadth of the coalition. Kosovo's first recognisers included three permanent members and most members of the European Union and NATO, which carried the question to their partners over the following decade; the agreements concluded at the White House in September 2020 included a commitment by Israel and Kosovo to recognise each other. Russia's recognitions were followed in 2008 by Nicaragua's alone, and no organisation of which Russia is a member adopted its position. Coggins's account of recognition as a strategic decision of great powers would predict that the support of one permanent member without a coalition yields few recognitions, and the record is consistent with that prediction.⁵

The second is the background of each case. Kosovo had been administered by the United Nations since 1999 under resolution 1244, and its status had been the subject of a process led by a Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, who recommended independence supervised by the international community. The recognitions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia followed an armed conflict between Russia and Georgia, and the Security Council had reaffirmed, in successive resolutions, the commitment of all members to the territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders, the last of them before the war being resolution 1808 of April 2008.⁶ States that weighed recognition weighed those records as well as the wishes of the patron.

The third is the attention each patron has given. The United States and its partners pursued further recognitions of Kosovo for more than a decade after 2008. No state has recognised Abkhazia or South Ossetia since Syria in 2018, and since 2022 Russia's diplomacy has been dominated by the war in Ukraine. The record does not show whether Russia has sought further recognitions, and the book does not infer an answer. It shows only that the gap between the two cases, already wide at the end of 2008, has not narrowed.

PALESTINE'S NON-RECOGNISERS AND TAIPEI'S PARTNERS

The relation between the two most clearly defined lists in this book, the members that do not recognise the State of Palestine and the members that maintain relations with Taipei, is set out in Figure 16.3.

The two lists overlap only in the Pacific. The non-recognisers of the State of Palestine are concentrated in the Asia-Pacific and Western groups; Taipei's partners are concentrated in Latin America and the Caribbean, where almost every member recognises the State of Palestine. The intuition that the two lists might be drawn from the same small states is not borne out. They are drawn from different regions and, for the most part, from different alignments.

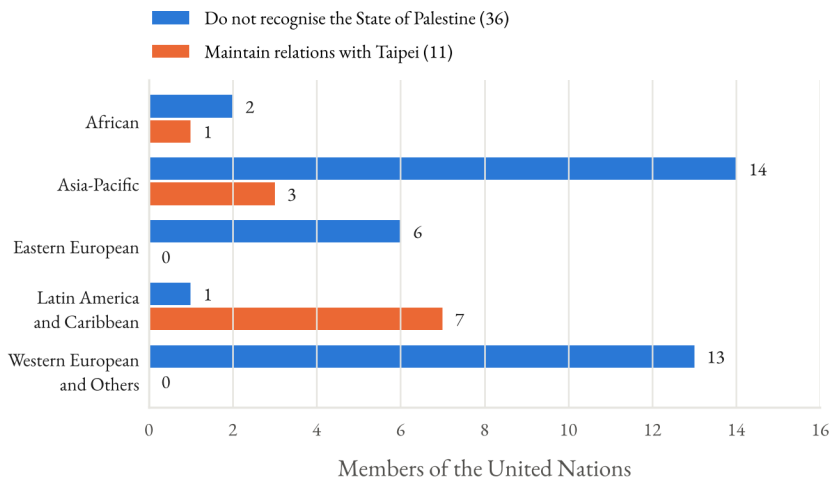


FIGURE 16.3. Members that do not recognise the State of Palestine and members that maintain relations with Taipei, by regional group (10 October 2026). Three states appear in both groups: the Marshall Islands, Palau and Tuvalu. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12.

VOTES ON INDEPENDENCE

Recognition answers a claim to statehood; in several territories the question that comes first is a vote. Five recent cases show how such votes, and the interest of outside powers in their outcome, shape the field from which future claimants may come.

Tokelau, a non-self-governing territory administered by New Zealand, has voted twice on self-government in free association with New Zealand, the status that the Cook Islands and Niue hold. The option put to voters was free association, not independence. In February 2006 about 60 per cent of voters supported it.⁷ In October 2007, 446 of 692 valid votes, or 64.4 per cent, did so, 16 votes short of the two-thirds majority that Tokelau’s General Fono had set; observers sent by the United Nations judged the process credible.⁸ Tokelau remains on the United Nations list of non-self-governing territories.

New Caledonia voted three times under the Nouméa Accord. Voters rejected independence in November 2018 and October 2020, by a majority that fell from about 56 to about 53 per cent, and again in December 2021, when pro-independence parties boycotted the vote and fewer than half of registered voters took part.⁹ In May 2024 a constitutional amendment that would have opened provincial elections to residents of ten years’ standing set off unrest in which thirteen people died, two of them members of the security forces.¹⁰ The French Minister of the Interior, Gérald Darmanin, accused Azerbaijan

of interfering, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan rejected the accusation.¹¹ The Digital Forensic Research Lab later documented coordinated posts by accounts presenting themselves as members of Azerbaijan's governing party, and advertising by the Baku Initiative Group, an organisation founded in 2023 that describes itself as a platform against colonialism; France's agency against foreign digital interference, VIGINUM, attributed part of the activity to supporters of that party.¹² Agreements reached at Bougainville in July 2025 and at the Élysée in January 2026 would have created a 'State of New Caledonia' within the French Republic; the main pro-independence coalition opposed them, and on 2 April 2026 the National Assembly rejected the constitutional bill that would have given them effect.¹³ Provincial elections held on 28 June 2026 gave no bloc a majority.¹⁴ The President of France, Emmanuel Macron, had described China in 2018 as 'building its hegemony step by step' in the Pacific, a view that places the territory's future in a wider strategic setting.¹⁵

Bougainville voted in 2019, under the Bougainville Peace Agreement, and 97.7 per cent of voters chose independence; the result takes effect only through the National Parliament of Papua New Guinea, which had not decided at the cut-off date.¹⁶ In June 2026 the President of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, Ishmael Toroama, set out a pathway under which 'Beginning on 1 September 2027, Bougainville will enter a period of self-government', with independence on a date to be set in 2030.¹⁷ The Panguna copper and gold mine has drawn the interest of investors from China; Australia regards the island as part of its 'inner security arc', and Bougainville has reportedly approached the United States as well.¹⁸

Greenland holds a statutory route to independence. Section 21 of the Act on Greenland Self-Government of 2009 provides:

Decision regarding Greenland's independence shall be taken by the people of Greenland.¹⁹

An agreement on independence requires the consent of Greenland's parliament, endorsement in a referendum in Greenland and the consent of the Danish parliament. In January 2026 the President of the United States, Donald J Trump, pressed for Greenland to become part of the United States and at first declined to rule out the use of force; he withdrew the threats after announcing a framework agreed with the Secretary General of NATO, and Denmark and NATO agreed to increase the alliance's engagement in the Arctic.²⁰ On 22 September 2026 the United States, Denmark and Greenland signed an agreement that allows new United States defence areas; bars any military installation or persistent military presence of a state outside NATO without the consent of all three parties; requires the same consent for investment by states or investors from outside the European Union and NATO in particularly sensitive sectors; and continues to apply if Greenland becomes independent.²¹ The Premier of Greenland, Jens-Frederik Nielsen, said that it 'recognizes that we are a people with the right to self-determination'.²² The

agreement settles in advance part of the position of a possible future state with a small population, a large territory and a strategic location.

A vote of a different kind was held in Canada on 19 October 2026, the last day covered by the sweep of events for this book. Voters in Alberta were asked: 'Should Alberta remain a province of Canada, or should the Government of Alberta commence the legal process required under the Canadian Constitution to hold a binding provincial referendum on whether or not Alberta should separate from Canada?'²³ The question does not itself decide the matter. In the *Reference re Secession of Quebec* the Supreme Court of Canada held that a clear majority on a clear question would trigger an obligation on the rest of the country to negotiate in good faith, not a right to separate unilaterally, and the Clarity Act of 2000 gives the House of Commons the task of judging whether a question and a majority are clear.²⁴ Polling before the vote showed a large majority for remaining in Canada.²⁵ The result was not known when this book was completed.

SMALL STATES AND OUTSIDE POWERS

The Pacific record also shows pressures that bear on recognition directly. When Solomon Islands transferred its relations from Taipei to Beijing in September 2019, the province of Malaita opposed the decision. In November 2021 protests in Honiara, drawn largely from Malaita and fed also by an unanswered petition and long-standing complaints of neglect, turned into three days of looting and fires, in which businesses in Chinatown were damaged and three people died.²⁶ In Tonga, riots in Nuku'alofa on 16 November 2006 damaged 144 businesses, 33 of them owned by Chinese nationals or naturalised Tongans of Chinese origin.²⁷ Tensions in Fiji have been of another kind, rooted in relations between the iTaukei and Indo-Fijian communities rather than in a choice between outside governments. The domestic causes of these episodes cannot be separated from foreign ones on the record. They show that, for small island states, a decision to recognise or to switch can pass into domestic politics, and that a new state created by a vote would enter the same field.

*A new state created by a vote would enter a field already shaped
by outside powers.*

NOTES

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CHAPTER 17

The Recognisers

*The government of the Republic of Nicaragua recognizes that there is
but one China in the world.*

Joint Communiqué of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of
Nicaragua (Tianjin, 10 December 2021)

THE PRECEDING chapters have examined recognition from the side of the entities that seek it. This chapter turns to the states that give it. It asks how far the members of the United Nations recognise, which combinations of recognitions occur and which do not, and what the portfolios of the most active recognisers show.

HOW FAR STATES RECOGNISE

Table 17.1 sets out the number of the eight entities of the core register that each member recognised at the cut-off date.

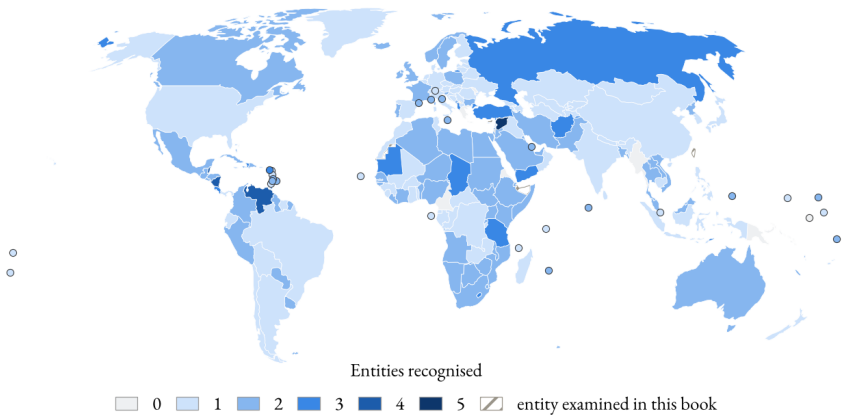


FIGURE 17.I. Number of entities of the core register recognised by each member of the United Nations (status A, including relations with Taipei, 10 October 2026). Members too small to show at this scale are marked by dots. Dependent territories take the shading of the state responsible for them; territories claimed by entities of the core register are hatched. Robinson projection; boundaries from Natural Earth, shown for illustration and implying no position on any boundary or status. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12.

TABLE 17.I. Members of the United Nations by the number of core entities they recognise (status A, including relations with Taipei, 10 October 2026). Shares are rounded. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12.

Entities recognised	Members	Share
None	8	4%
One	85	44%
Two	83	43%
Three	13	7%
Four	3	2%
Five	1	1%
Six to eight	0	0%
Total	193	100%

Almost nine members in ten recognise one or two of the eight entities, and in four cases out of five one of them is the State of Palestine. Eight members recognise none: Cameroon, Eritrea, Greece, Moldova, Myanmar, Naoero (Nauru), Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. One, Syria, recognises five. No member recognises more than five.

Figure 17.1 shows the same distribution on a map.

The map shows breadth more than depth. The members that recognise three or more entities are found in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe, though none in Oceania:

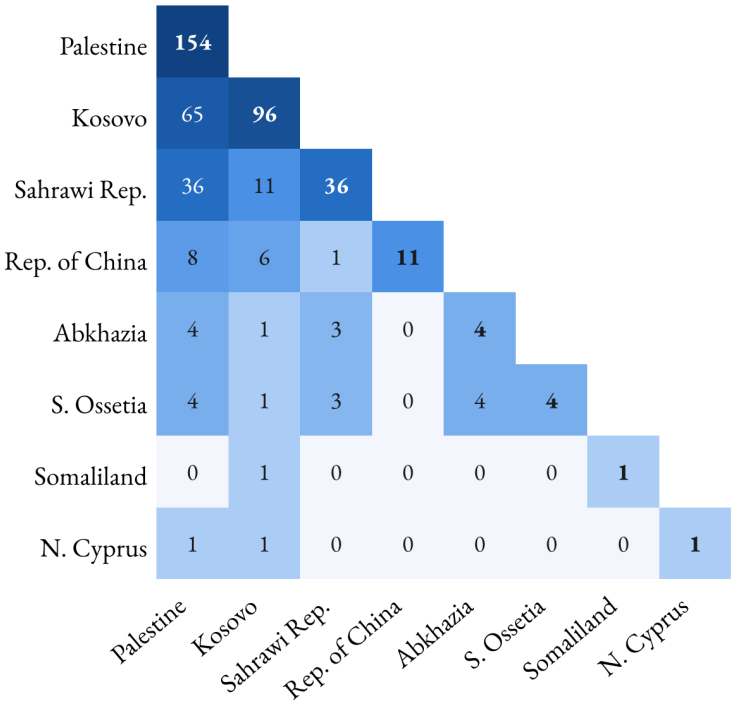


FIGURE 17.2. Members of the United Nations recognising both entities of each pair (status A, 10 October 2026; for the Republic of China, diplomatic relations with Taipei). The diagonal gives each entity’s total. Shading is on a logarithmic scale. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset VI.12.

they run from Russia and Türkiye to Haiti, Tanzania and Timor-Leste. Those that recognise none are found in Europe, Africa and the Pacific, with Myanmar in Asia. Most of the Americas, Africa and Asia recognise one or two.

COALITIONS

The combinations that occur, and those that do not, are shown in Figure 17.2.

The figure shows three regularities. The first is that the State of Palestine is the common ground: every member that recognises the Sahrawi Republic, Abkhazia or South Ossetia also recognises the State of Palestine, as do 65 of the 96 that recognise Kosovo and eight of Taipei's eleven partners among members. The second is that two pairs almost never occur. Only one member, Belize, recognises both the Republic of China and the Sahrawi Republic, and only one, Syria, recognises both Kosovo and Abkhazia. The third is that the thirteen members that recognise three entities fall into a few combinations. Nine recognise Kosovo, Palestine and the Sahrawi Republic: Afghanistan, Albania, Chad, Costa Rica, Lesotho, Mauritania, Tanzania, Timor-Leste and Yemen. Haiti and Saint Kitts and Nevis recognise Kosovo, Palestine and the Republic of China. Russia recognises Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Palestine; Türkiye recognises Kosovo, Northern Cyprus and Palestine.

The combinations follow alignments. A member that recognises Kosovo is, with one exception, a member that does not recognise Abkhazia or South Ossetia. A member that maintains relations with Taipei is, with one exception, a member that does not recognise the Sahrawi Republic. The coalitions are distinct, and a recognising state that joins one has, on the record, almost never joined the other.

*A recognising state that joins one coalition has, on the record,
almost never joined the other.*

THE BROADEST RECOGNISERS, PAST AND PRESENT

Present portfolios understate how widely some states have recognised. Table 17.2 sets the present portfolio of the broadest recognisers against the number of entities each has recognised at any time, and against a wider measure that adds diplomatic relations with the persons of Register 2 and recognitions of entities that have ceased to exist.

TABLE 17.2. The broadest recognisers (status A now; ever, counting former relations with Taipei; all registers ever, adding Register 2 relations and Register 3 recognitions), 10 October 2026. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12, sheet Extended_Portfolio.

Member	Core entities now	Core entities ever	All registers ever
Naoero (Nauru)	0	5	9
Syria	5	5	8
Peru	2	4	8
Russia	3	3	8
Nicaragua	4	5	7
Venezuela	4	5	7
Tuvalu	2	5	7
Vanuatu	2	5	7
Haiti	3	4	7
Türkiye	3	4	7
Papua New Guinea	0	4	7
Thailand	2	3	7
Antigua and Barbuda	1	3	7
Belize	4	4	6

The table separates two kinds of breadth. Syria, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Belize are broad now. Naoero (Nauru), Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea were broad once and are narrow now: Naoero, Tuvalu and Vanuatu each recognised five of the eight entities at one time, and Naoero and Papua New Guinea recognise none of them at the cut-off date. Their breadth is the trace of reversal, not of accumulation. Peru and Thailand reach the top of the wider measure through relations with all four persons of Register 2.

Russia's breadth appears only on the wider measure, and the reason lies in what followed its recognitions. Since 2008 it has recognised seven entities on territory claimed by a neighbouring state: Abkhazia and South Ossetia in August 2008, the Republic of Crimea in March 2014, the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics in February 2022, and the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions in September 2022. It declared five of the seven incorporated into the Russian Federation, Crimea on the day after its recognition and the other four on 30 September 2022. The other two remain recognised as states, each bound to Russia by a treaty: on alliance and strategic partnership with Abkhazia, signed on 24 November 2014,¹ and on alliance and integration with South Ossetia, signed on 18 March 2015.² The only other member in the dataset whose recognitions ended in the absorption of the entity recognised is South Africa, which reabsorbed the four homelands when apartheid ended in 1994. The pattern has an antecedent in the practice of the Soviet state. Soviet Russia recognised Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania by the peace treaties of 1920; by the Treaty of Tartu it 'unreservedly recognises the independence and sovereignty of the State of Estonia'.³ In August 1940 the Soviet Union incorporated all three. The United States announced on 23 July 1940 that it would not recognise the incorporation, and held to that position until the three states regained their independence in 1991.⁴

WHY SOME STATES RECOGNISE MORE

The record cannot prove why any state recognised, and states seldom say. It can show which features the broad recognisers share, and those features match the explanations offered in the literature.

The first is alignment. The broad present portfolios belong to states that have recognised together with a patron or a coalition: Nicaragua and Venezuela recognised Abkhazia and South Ossetia in 2008 and 2009, after Russia, and Syria did so in 2018. Coggins, testing a dataset of great-power recognition from 1931 to 2000, argues that leaders 'use decisions regarding new members strategically to advance their own interests'.⁵ The coalitions described above are the visible form of that strategy.

The second is solidarity. The recognitions of the Sahrawi Republic and the State of Palestine in the 1970s and 1980s came in large part from members of the Non-Aligned Movement in Africa, Asia and Latin America, which presented recognition as support for self-determination in the context of decolonisation. Algeria, a leading member of the Movement, recognised the Sahrawi Republic on 6 March 1976, eight days after its proclamation. Of the 68 recognitions by present members recorded between 1976 and 1986, 32 came from Africa, 20 from Latin America and the Caribbean and 15 from the Asia-Pacific region; one came from Eastern Europe and none from the Western group.⁶

The third is size and the diplomatic economy of small states. The broadest recognisers of the past, and most of the frequent reversers, are small states, for which a recognition is one of the few assets of foreign policy that can be offered or withdrawn. The coincidence of some recognitions and switches with offers of assistance has been recorded in the chapters above, without inference of motive.

The fourth runs the other way: states with territorial disputes or separatist claims of their own recognise less. Of the eight members that recognise none of the eight entities, Moldova faces the separation of Transnistria, Papua New Guinea the claim of Bougainville, whose voters chose independence in a referendum of 2019, and Myanmar and Cameroon armed movements in parts of their territory. Within the European Union, the five members that do not recognise Kosovo (Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain) include several with concerns of this kind. Ker-Lindsay's study of the foreign policy of counter-secession found that in the practice of states 'the principle of the territorial integrity of states has tended to take precedence over the right of self-determination'.⁷ A state that might one day face a claim to separate has a reason, independent of the merits of any case, not to help establish a precedent.

FIVE PORTFOLIOS

Table 17.3 sets out the portfolios of five members whose records illustrate the range: the four members that recognise the largest number of entities, and Antigua and Barbuda, whose record extends to non-territorial and Register 2 entities.

TABLE 17.3. Five recognising states (10 October 2026). Register 2 relations are diplomatic relations with the Holy See, the Order of Malta, the Cook Islands and Niue; Register 3 acts are recognitions of entities that have ceased to exist or are not counted in the core register. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12.

Member	Core entities recognised now	Core entities ever, including former Taipei relations	Register 2 relations	Register 3 acts
Syria	5	5	1	2
Venezuela	4	5	2	0
Nicaragua	4	5	2	0
Belize	4	4	2	0
Antigua and Barbuda	1	3	3	1

Syria recognises the State of Palestine (listed from 2011), the Sahrawi Republic (since 1980), Abkhazia and South Ossetia (since May 2018) and Kosovo (since October 2025). It is the only member whose portfolio spans the two coalitions described above, and the reason lies in a change of government. The recognitions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and of the Donetsk and Luhansk republics in 2022, were acts of the government of Bashar al-Assad; the recognition of Kosovo was an act of the government that succeeded it, announced after a meeting in Riyadh. Syria's portfolio is the record of two governments with different alignments, held together in one state.

Venezuela recognises the State of Palestine (since 2009), the Sahrawi Republic (since 1982), and Abkhazia and South Ossetia (since September 2009). It ended relations with Taipei in 1974. Its portfolio is that of one coalition, held without interruption.

Nicaragua recognises the State of Palestine (listed from 1988), the Sahrawi Republic (since 1979), and Abkhazia and South Ossetia (since September 2008). Its relations with Taipei have followed its governments: ended in 1985, restored in 1990 and ended again in December 2021, by a joint communiqué in which Nicaragua stated:

The government of the Republic of Nicaragua recognizes that there is but one China in the world, the government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory. The government of the Republic of Nicaragua shall sever 'diplomatic relations' with Taiwan as of this day and undertakes that it shall no longer develop any official relations or official exchanges with Taiwan.⁸

Nicaragua's withdrawal from the Organization of American States took effect in November 2023.

Belize recognises the Republic of China (since 1989), Kosovo (since August 2008), the State of Palestine (since September 2011) and the Sahrawi Republic (since 1986), and maintains relations with the Holy See and the Order of Malta. It is the only member that recognises both Taipei and the Sahrawi Republic, and in August 2023 its Governor-General received the credentials of an ambassador of the Sahrawi Republic. Its relations with Taipei have continued since 1989 through successive changes of government. Belize is a member of CARICOM and of the Commonwealth.

Antigua and Barbuda recognises the State of Palestine (since 2011). Its recognition of Kosovo (2015) is the subject of a withdrawal announced by Serbia and not confirmed by Antigua and Barbuda, and it cancelled its recognition of the Sahrawi Republic in 2010. It maintains relations with the Holy See, the Order of Malta (since 2009) and the Cook Islands, and in 2022 and 2023 it entered into the arrangement with the Joseon Cybernation described in chapter 13. Its record spans the core register and Registers 2 and 3, while its present recognitions in the core register are among the fewest.

TWO DOORS

Belize and Nicaragua share two recognitions, of the State of Palestine and the Sahrawi Republic, and differ on every other entity in the core register. Belize recognises Taipei and Kosovo; Nicaragua recognises Abkhazia and South Ossetia and has twice ended relations with Taipei. Both belong to the Central American Integration System; Belize belongs also to CARICOM and the Commonwealth, and Nicaragua to the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America. Each stands at the entrance to a different coalition, and each portfolio shows which recognitions have accompanied membership of that coalition and which have not. The record also shows how durable each has been: Belize's recognitions have outlasted its changes of government, while Nicaragua's relations with Taipei have changed with its governments.

NOTES

- 1 'Moscow, Sokhumi Sign Treaty on "Alliance and Strategic Partnership"', *Civil Georgia* (24 November 2014) <https://oldwp.civil.ge/archives/124178> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 2 Maciej Falkowski, 'Russia is absorbing South Ossetia', *OSW Analyses* (Centre for Eastern Studies, 25 March 2015) <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2015-03-25/russia-absorbing-south-ossetia> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 3 Peace Treaty between Estonia and Russia (Tartu, 2 February 1920) art II, as published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, 'Tartu Peace, 2 February 1920' <https://vm.ee/en/tartu-peace> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 4 Press Release Issued by the Department of State (23 July 1940), *Department of State Bulletin* (27 July 1940) 48, reprinted in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1940*, vol I, *General*, doc 412 <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1940vol1/d412> accessed 18 October 2026.

- 5 Bridget Coggins, 'Friends in High Places: International Politics and the Emergence of States from Secessionism' (2011) 65 *International Organization* 433, abstract <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818311000105> accessed 18 October 2026; see also Bridget Coggins, *Power Politics and State Formation in the Twentieth Century: The Dynamics of Recognition* (CUP 2014).
- 6 Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Centro de Estudos sobre o Sahara Occidental, 'RASD – Frente Polisario' (recognition record) <https://assets.usc.gal/en/investigar-na-usc/investigar/institutos-centros-investigacion/cpi/ceso/rasd-frente-polisario> accessed 16 October 2026, with regional groups from the dataset.
- 7 James Ker-Lindsay, *The Foreign Policy of Counter Secession: Preventing the Recognition of Contested States* (OUP 2012), abstract.
- 8 Joint Communiqué on the Resumption of Diplomatic Relations between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Nicaragua (Tianjin, 10 December 2021), reported by *PLA Daily* via GlobalSecurity <https://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/china/2021/12/china-211210-pladaily01.htm> accessed 16 October 2026.

CHAPTER 18

Conclusions

*No territorial acquisition resulting from the threat or use of force shall
be recognized as legal.*

Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly
Relations, General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) (24 October 1970)

THIS BOOK set out to establish which members of the United Nations recognise which of the entities that stand outside it, how that pattern has changed since 1945, and what it shows. The answers rest on the dataset published with the book, and they can be stated in a few paragraphs.

WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS

Table 18.1 brings together, for each entity, the measures developed in the preceding chapters.

TABLE 18.1. The core register at 10 October 2026: members recognising (status A); recognitions withdrawn or frozen (C, D) and those in doubt (E), or for the Republic of China relations ended since 1971; the estimated share of recognitions in force ten years after they were given (Kaplan-Meier); and the number of permanent members of the Security Council recognising. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12.

Entity	Recognising now	Ended or in doubt	In force after ten years	Permanent members recognising
State of Palestine	154	3 in doubt	100%	4
Kosovo	96	2 ended or frozen; 22 in doubt	88%	3
Sahrawi Republic	36	46 ended or frozen; 2 in doubt	89%	0
Republic of China (Taiwan)	11	78 ended since 1971	38%	0
Abkhazia	4	3 ended	77%	1
South Ossetia	4	2 ended	(with Abkhazia)	1
Somaliland	1	none	not measured	0
Northern Cyprus	1	none	not measured	0

The findings set out at the beginning of the book hold on the full evidence, and the evidence adds to each of them. On the rhythm of gains and losses, it shows that time matters as much as number: a relation with Taipei has been more likely than not to end within a decade, while no recognition of the State of Palestine has ended at all. On coalitions, it shows that the members vote as they recognise, with exceptions in both directions, and that the broadest portfolios belong either to states aligned with a patron or to small states whose breadth records their reversals. On opposing states, it shows that reversal is concentrated in a few regions and a few governments, and that resumption, where it occurs, restores a position without settling it. On membership, the table states the arithmetic: no entity has the recognition of all five permanent members, and only one has the recognition of four. On patrons, the comparison between Kosovo and Abkhazia shows that a permanent member acting with a coalition has carried recognition far further than a permanent member acting alone.

The persons of Register 2 complete the picture from the other side. The Holy See, the Order of Malta, the Cook Islands and Niue hold extensive relations and no state contests their existence. What they share is not a large number of recognitions but the absence of an opposing state.

CONSENT AND SPEED

The contrast between contested and consensual cases is the sharpest in the record. When the state from which a new state emerges consents, recognition follows at once and admission within weeks. Sudan recognised South Sudan on 8 July 2011, the day before its independence; the Security Council recommended its admission, and on 14 July the General Assembly adopted resolution 65/308:

Decides to admit the Republic of South Sudan to membership in the United Nations.¹

Montenegro, whose independence Serbia accepted, was admitted in June 2006 within four weeks of its declaration. Where the parent state objects, the record is the one set out in Part II, and no entity has been admitted. No entity in the dataset has passed from the second condition to membership without the consent of the state that opposed it.

No entity in the dataset has passed into membership of the United Nations without the consent of the state that opposed it.

THE BOARD

The record can be read as a game of chess, and the analogy, used with care, clarifies what the numbers alone do not. A claimant does not play on an empty board. It begins with a position already occupied: an opposing state whose king it threatens, permanent members of the Security Council who move across the whole board and can end a line of play with a single veto, regional organisations that act along fixed files, courts and doctrines that work on the diagonals, and a large number of states that advance one square at a time. Figure 18.1 sets out the pieces.

Several lessons of the board correspond to the record. The opening matters, but it does not decide: the waves of recognition that follow a declaration or a judgment resemble a strong opening, and the cases of Part II show how often an advantage won in the opening was lost in the middle game. Material is not the same as position. A count of recognitions is a count of material, and the State of Palestine's count, the largest in the register, has not overcome a single piece placed at the gate of admission. Small pieces can move first. Knights jump over the lines, and the small states that recognise early and alone have often opened lines that larger states then followed, though their positions are also the easiest to exchange. And the opponent moves too. Every campaign examined in this book, from the Hallstein Doctrine to the diplomacy of Beijing, Rabat and Belgrade, was a reply.

Three positions in the record correspond to familiar endings. Taiwan and Kosovo stand in something close to a stalemate: neither side can force the other's king, and both continue to move. The cases in which a new state was admitted within weeks, South Sudan in 2011 and Montenegro in 2006, resemble a game agreed between the players, in which the opposing state accepted the result before the pieces were moved. And the classical school of chess, associated with Wilhelm Steinitz, taught that a decisive attack should be prepared by the slow accumulation of small advantages and launched only

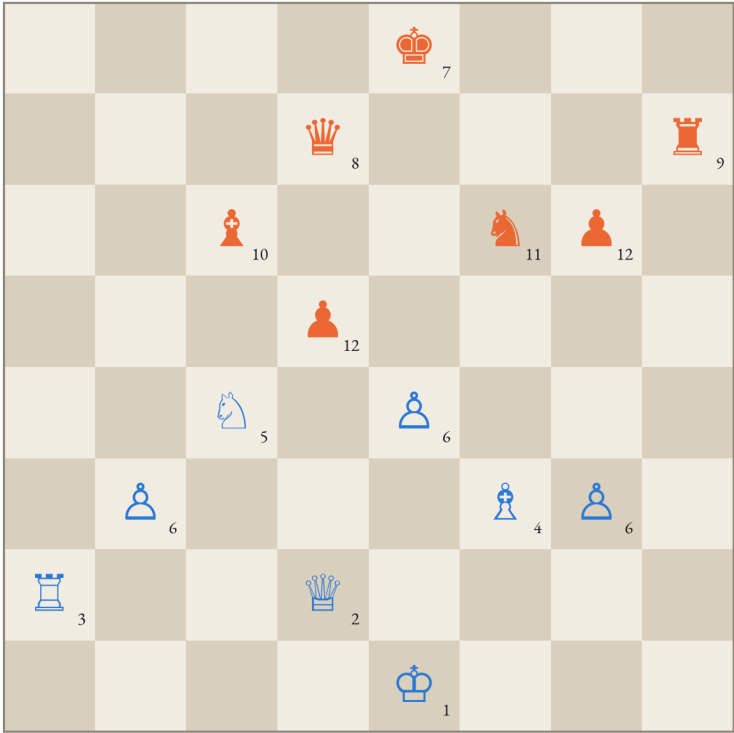


FIGURE 18.1. The recognition game as a chessboard. Blue, the claimant's side; orange, the opposing state's. 1 and 7: the claimant and the opposing state, whose survival is the object of the game; 2 and 8: patrons among the permanent members; 3 and 9: regional organisations; 4 and 10: legal argument and the courts; 5 and 11: small states able to move first and to jump the lines; 6 and 12: the many states whose recognitions, or refusals, accumulate one at a time. The position is illustrative and represents no particular case.

when the position justifies it. The record suggests the same of recognition: those who have gained most from it accumulated recognitions over time.

A MODEL CLAIMANT

The record can be brought to bear on a hypothetical case. Suppose a group of founders proposes a new polity with no history of conflict, no claim to remedial separation and no displaced population, and wishes, in time, to be recognised by members of the United Nations. The record does not tell such founders what to do. It does show what each of their choices has meant for those who made it before.

If the polity is non-territorial, a digital community without land, it meets no opposing state, because it claims nothing that any state holds. It also lacks a defined territory, which the declaratory theory treats as a condition of statehood. On the constitutive theory, recognition could give such an entity standing in relation to each state that recognised it, and to no other. The only documented act by a member towards such an entity, Antigua and Barbuda's arrangement with the Joseon Cybernation, was framed by its own government as an experiment, and its character as recognition of a state remains open.

If the polity is territorial, its land must come from somewhere, and the record shows that it cannot come from unclaimed territory. It can come from an existing state, by agreement: by purchase, by lease, by cession or by a shared arrangement, in which the transferring state consents. A polity founded in that way would present recognising states with a defined territory and with no opposing state, the two conditions whose absence has held back every entity in Part II. The record contains no completed example of this route in the period studied, and the conditions any transferring state would impose are a matter for negotiation, not for this book.

In either case the founders would face the coalition structure described in chapter 17. The first members to recognise a new polity would, on the record, draw it into the coalition to which they belong. A polity that sought recognition first from Nicaragua would enter by one door, and one that sought it first from Belize by another; the portfolios of the two states show which further recognitions have accompanied each, and which have not. A polity that sought to stand apart from both coalitions would find its common ground where the coalitions meet: among the states that recognise neither Taipei nor Abkhazia, and that have shown, in their recognitions of the State of Palestine and the Sahrawi Republic, a willingness to recognise entities whose status others contest. For such a polity the record of reversal carries a warning: the first recognitions are likely to come from small states, and those are the recognitions that changes of government have most often undone.

A CHECKLIST FOR FOUNDERS

The founders of cyber nations, network states and other new polities ask, in effect, the question this book has examined from the side of the recognising state. Table 18.2 turns the record into the questions such founders face. It records what the evidence shows; it is not legal advice, and it does not recommend any course.

TABLE 18.2. Questions for the founders of a new polity, and what the record shows. The table records evidence; it is not legal advice.

Question	What the record shows
Purpose. What does the polity offer its members, and why must it be a polity at all?	An association, a cooperative, a foundation, a non-profit or a mutual-benefit corporation gives legal personality, property, contracts and self-government under the law of a host state. A claim to statehood adds personality in international law, treaty capacity, nationality and immunities, and with them the burden of the criteria and of recognition.
Terms. Is the aim autonomy, self-government, a polity or statehood?	Autonomy and self-government are exercised within a state. A polity is any organised political community. Statehood is a claim under international law, tested against the Montevideo criteria. A founder who uses the term that matches the aim avoids making claims the project does not intend.
Territory. Does the polity claim land, and from whom?	Article 1 of the Montevideo Convention lists a defined territory. No land remains open to acquisition by declaration; land can come only by agreement with an existing state. Entities without territory have held relations with states, as the Order of Malta does, but none has been recognised as a state.
Strictness. Will recognisers apply the criteria to the letter?	Practice has been flexible where states had a political purpose: 88 present members recognised the State of Palestine by the end of 1989 although it governed none of the territory it claimed. That flexibility has served causes with wide support; it has not been extended to claimants in general.
Continuity. How will the polity survive the loss of its founders, its hosting or its members?	A constitution, rules of succession, durable records and rules for dissolution show that the polity is more than its founders. States facing a loss of land have written continuity into law and treaty.
Data and hosting. Where are the servers, and whose law governs them?	Data on a server are within the jurisdiction of the state where the server stands. Mirrors in several jurisdictions and agreements with host states reduce exposure to seizure, outage and attack, including denial of service, the loss of a domain and the compromise of keys. A data store abroad does not enjoy diplomatic immunity unless a treaty confers it.
Members. Who may join, and after what checks?	Due diligence, sanctions screening and background checks protect the polity and any state that deals with it. Recognition obliges no state to admit a polity's members or to accept its documents, and documents that the state of entry does not accept have led to refusal and detention.
Offices. Will the polity hold premises in recognising states?	The inviolability of article 22 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations belongs to the missions of states; the offices of unrecognised entities depend on the law of the host and on agreement. Premises that also house servers would share that protection and its limits. Even full inviolability has been breached in practice.
Pressure. Can recognisers withstand pressure to withdraw?	Recognitions of contested entities have been bargained against other relations, and small recognisers have most often reversed. A polity with no opposing state removes the main source of pressure, though not the concern of states that fear a precedent.
Reputation. Is the record clean?	A recognising state answers for what it recognises. A polity with no dispute with any state, no sale of documents, transparent finances and a clear account of its purpose gives a recogniser least to defend.
First recognisers. Whose recognition comes first?	The first recognisers draw a polity into their coalition, and the first recognitions, often from small states, are the likeliest to be undone by a change of government.

The practice of states supplies adjacent examples for several rows. On continuity, Tuvalu amended its constitution in 2023 to declare its statehood and maritime zones permanent whatever the loss of land to the sea;² in the Falepili Union Treaty, signed on 9 November 2023, Australia recognised that ‘the statehood and sovereignty of Tuvalu will continue, and the rights and duties inherent thereto will be maintained, notwithstanding the impact of climate change-related sea-level rise’;³ and the leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum adopted a declaration to the same effect on the same day.⁴ On data, Estonia keeps copies of the databases on which the continuity of its government depends

in a national data centre in Luxembourg, under an agreement signed in 2017; the Estonian parliament was told that the data embassy ‘is not a diplomatic mission on which the same privileges and immunity are applied as on embassies’, which is why a treaty was needed.⁵ On membership, Estonia’s e-residency, launched on 1 December 2014, gives a digital identity to non-residents; its officials stated at the launch that it ‘does not give the right to stay and live in Estonia’ and ‘does not ensure Estonian citizenship’.⁶ On premises, article 22(1) of the Vienna Convention provides: ‘The premises of the mission shall be inviolable.’⁷ On 5 April 2024 Ecuadorian officers entered the Mexican embassy in Quito by force and removed a former Vice-President of Ecuador who had been granted asylum there, and Mexico brought proceedings before the International Court of Justice.⁸ On pressure, Vanuatu’s recognition of Abkhazia ended in 2013 in the instrument by which it established relations with Georgia, a choice between two sets of relations that it could not hold together.

PROPOSITIONS

The findings can be stated as propositions. Each rests on the record to 10 October 2026, and each could be overturned by a case the record does not yet contain.

1. Recognition is counted; admission is decided. The gate to the United Nations is article 4(2) of the Charter, and no count of recognitions has opened it.
2. No entity has entered the United Nations over the objection of the state from which it emerged.
3. Consent is the shortest road: South Sudan was admitted five days after its independence.
4. Material is not position. The largest count in the register has not removed a single veto.
5. States recognise in coalitions, and the first recogniser chooses the door.
6. What one government gives, the next may take back. The first recognitions are the likeliest to be undone.
7. The absence of an opposing state has done more for standing than any number of recognitions.
8. Recognition has been a step to independence and a step to incorporation. The record contains both.
9. No land remains that a new state can take by declaration.
10. Without territory a polity can hold relations; whether it can hold recognition as a state, the record leaves open.

THE PRACTICE OF RECOGNITION

The law of recognition leaves states free to recognise or not, subject to the duty not to recognise situations created by serious breaches of fundamental norms. The practice shows how that freedom is used. States recognise in coalitions, at moments, for reasons they do not always state; they withdraw, freeze and resume; they are pressed, persuaded and rewarded. The counts that result measure decisions, not the merit of any claim.

Recognition is given by states one at a time, and it can be taken back the same way.

NOTES

- 1 UNGA Res 65/308 (14 July 2011) <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/65/308> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 2 Simon Kofe and Jess Marinaccio, 'Tuvalu Constitution updated: culture, climate change and decolonisation', *Devpolicy Blog* (21 September 2023), reporting the Constitution of Tuvalu Act 2023, in force on 1 October 2023 <https://devpolicy.org/tuvalu-constitution-updated-culture-climate-change-and-decolonisation-20230921/> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 3 Falepili Union Treaty between Australia and Tuvalu (signed 9 November 2023, entered into force 28 August 2024) art 2(2)(b) <https://www.dfat.gov.au/countries/tuvalu/treaty-text-falepili-union> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 4 Pacific Islands Forum, '2023 Declaration on the Continuity of Statehood and the Protection of Persons in the Face of Climate Change-related Sea-Level Rise' (9 November 2023), as reported by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'Pacific Islands Forum Declaration on Statehood and Sea-Level Rise' (5 December 2023) <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/media-and-resources/pacific-islands-forum-declaration-on-statehood-and-sea-level-rise> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 5 Riigikogu, 'The Riigikogu approved establishing of Luxembourg data embassy' (press release) <https://www.riigikogu.ee/en/press-releases/plenary-assembly/riigikogu-approved-establishing-luxembourg-data-embassy/> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 6 'Estonia becomes first country in world to offer e-residency', *The Baltic Times* (1 December 2014), quoting Margit Ratnik <https://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/35820> accessed 18 October 2026.
- 7 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (adopted 18 April 1961, entered into force 24 April 1964) 500 UNTS 95, art 22(1) https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9_1_1961.pdf accessed 18 October 2026.
- 8 International Court of Justice, 'Mexico institutes proceedings against Ecuador and requests the Court to indicate provisional measures', Press Release No 2024/30 (11 April 2024) <https://www.icj-cij.org/node/203895> accessed 18 October 2026.

APPENDIX A

The Matrix

THIS APPENDIX sets out the status of each of the 193 members of the United Nations in relation to each entity of the core register at 10 October 2026. The codes are those defined in chapter 2 and in Appendix F: A, recognition documented and in force; B, no act of recognition identified; C, recognition withdrawn; D, recognition frozen, suspended or qualified; E, conflicting or insufficient evidence. For the Republic of China, A records current formal diplomatic relations. Members are listed in the alphabetical order of their short names. Regional groups: AF, African; AP, Asia-Pacific; EE, Eastern European; LAC, Latin American and Caribbean; WEOG, Western European and Others (including Türkiye and the United States).

TABLE A.I. Status of the 193 members of the United Nations in relation to the eight entities of the core register (10 October 2026). Total: number of entities recognised (status A). Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12, sheet Matrix.

Member	Group	Pal.	Kos.	Sah.	ROC	Abk.	S.Oss.	Som.	N.Cyp.	Total
Afghanistan	AP	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	3
Albania	EE	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	3
Algeria	AF	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
Andorra	WEOG	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Angola	AF	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
Antigua and Barbuda	LAC	A	E	C	B	B	B	B	B	1
Argentina	LAC	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Armenia	EE	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Australia	WEOG	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Austria	WEOG	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Azerbaijan	EE	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Bahamas	LAC	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Bahrain	AP	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Bangladesh	AP	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Barbados	LAC	A	A	C	B	B	B	B	B	2
Belarus	EE	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Belgium	WEOG	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Belize	LAC	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	4
Benin	AF	A	A	C	B	B	B	B	B	2
Bhutan	AP	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1

Member	Group	Pal.	Kos.	Sah.	ROC	Abk.	S.Oss.	Som.	N.Cyp.	Total
Bolivia	LAC	A	B	D	B	B	B	B	B	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	EE	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Botswana	AF	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
Brazil	LAC	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Brunei	AP	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Bulgaria	EE	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Burkina Faso	AF	A	E	C	B	B	B	B	B	1
Burundi	AF	A	E	C	B	B	B	B	B	1
Cabo Verde	AF	A	B	D	B	B	B	B	B	1
Cambodia	AP	A	B	C	B	B	B	B	B	1
Cameroon	AF	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	0
Canada	WEOG	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Central African Republic	AF	A	E	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Chad	AF	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	3
Chile	LAC	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
China	AP	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Colombia	LAC	A	A	D	B	B	B	B	B	2
Comoros	AF	A	E	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Congo (Republic of the)	AF	A	B	C	B	B	B	B	B	1
Costa Rica	LAC	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	3
Croatia	EE	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Cuba	LAC	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
Cyprus	AP	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Czechia	EE	E	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Côte d'Ivoire	AF	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Democratic Republic of the Congo	AF	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Denmark	WEOG	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Djibouti	AF	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Dominica	LAC	A	E	C	B	B	B	B	B	1
Dominican Republic	LAC	A	A	C	B	B	B	B	B	2
Ecuador	LAC	A	B	D	B	B	B	B	B	1
Egypt	AF	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
El Salvador	LAC	A	A	C	B	B	B	B	B	2
Equatorial Guinea	AF	A	B	C	B	B	B	B	B	1
Eritrea	AF	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	0
Estonia	EE	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Eswatini	AF	A	E	C	A	B	B	B	B	2
Ethiopia	AF	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
Fiji	AP	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Finland	WEOG	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
France	WEOG	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Gabon	AF	A	E	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Gambia	AF	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Georgia	EE	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Germany	WEOG	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Ghana	AF	A	E	C	B	B	B	B	B	1
Greece	WEOG	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	0
Grenada	LAC	A	D	C	B	B	B	B	B	1
Guatemala	LAC	A	B	C	A	B	B	B	B	2
Guinea	AF	A	E	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Guinea-Bissau	AF	A	A	C	B	B	B	B	B	2
Guyana	LAC	A	A	C	B	B	B	B	B	2
Haiti	LAC	A	A	C	A	B	B	B	B	3
Honduras	LAC	A	A	D	B	B	B	B	B	2
Hungary	EE	E	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Iceland	WEOG	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
India	AP	A	B	C	B	B	B	B	B	1
Indonesia	AP	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Iran	AP	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2

Member	Group	Pal.	Kos.	Sah.	ROC	Abk.	S.Oss.	Som.	N.Cyp.	Total
Iraq	AP	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Ireland	WEOG	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Israel	WEOG	B	A	B	B	B	B	A	B	2
Italy	WEOG	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Jamaica	LAC	A	B	C	B	B	B	B	B	1
Japan	AP	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Jordan	AP	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Kazakhstan	AP	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Kenya	AF	A	A	D	B	B	B	B	B	2
Kiribati	AP	B	A	C	B	B	B	B	B	1
Kuwait	AP	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Kyrgyzstan	AP	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Laos	AP	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
Latvia	EE	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Lebanon	AP	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Lesotho	AF	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	3
Liberia	AF	A	A	C	B	B	B	B	B	2
Libya	AF	A	E	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
Liechtenstein	WEOG	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Lithuania	EE	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Luxembourg	WEOG	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Madagascar	AF	A	E	D	B	B	B	B	B	1
Malawi	AF	A	A	C	B	B	B	B	B	2
Malaysia	AP	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Maldives	AP	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Mali	AF	A	B	C	B	B	B	B	B	1
Malta	WEOG	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Marshall Islands	AP	B	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	2
Mauritania	AF	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	3
Mauritius	AF	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
Mexico	LAC	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
Micronesia	AP	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Moldova	EE	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	0
Monaco	WEOG	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Mongolia	AP	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Montenegro	EE	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Morocco	AF	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Mozambique	AF	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
Myanmar	AP	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	0
Namibia	AF	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
Naoero	AP	B	E	C	B	C	C	B	B	0
Nepal	AP	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Netherlands	WEOG	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
New Zealand	WEOG	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Nicaragua	LAC	A	B	A	B	A	A	B	B	4
Niger	AF	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Nigeria	AF	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
North Korea	AP	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
North Macedonia	EE	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Norway	WEOG	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Oman	AP	A	E	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Pakistan	AP	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Palau	AP	B	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	2
Panama	LAC	B	A	D	B	B	B	B	B	1
Papua New Guinea	AP	E	E	C	B	B	B	B	B	0
Paraguay	LAC	A	B	D	A	B	B	B	B	2
Peru	LAC	A	A	D	B	B	B	B	B	2
Philippines	AP	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Poland	EE	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2

Member	Group	Pal.	Kos.	Sah.	ROC	Abk.	S.Oss.	Som.	N.Cyp.	Total
Portugal	WEOG	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Qatar	AP	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Romania	EE	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Russia	EE	A	B	B	B	A	A	B	B	3
Rwanda	AF	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
Saint Kitts and Nevis	LAC	A	A	C	A	B	B	B	B	3
Saint Lucia	LAC	A	E	C	A	B	B	B	B	2
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	LAC	A	B	D	A	B	B	B	B	2
Samoa	AP	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
San Marino	WEOG	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Saudi Arabia	AP	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Senegal	AF	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Serbia	EE	A	B	C	B	B	B	B	B	1
Seychelles	AF	A	B	E	B	B	B	B	B	1
Sierra Leone	AF	A	E	D	B	B	B	B	B	1
Singapore	AP	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Slovakia	EE	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Slovenia	EE	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Solomon Islands	AP	B	E	C	B	B	B	B	B	0
Somalia	AF	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
South Africa	AF	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
South Korea	AP	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
South Sudan	AF	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
Spain	WEOG	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Sri Lanka	AP	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Sudan	AF	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Suriname	LAC	A	E	C	B	B	B	B	B	1
Sweden	WEOG	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Switzerland	WEOG	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Syria	AP	A	A	A	B	A	A	B	B	5
São Tomé and Príncipe	AF	A	E	C	B	B	B	B	B	1
Tajikistan	AP	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Tanzania	AF	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	3
Thailand	AP	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
Timor-Leste	AP	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	3
Togo	AF	A	C	C	B	B	B	B	B	1
Tonga	AP	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Trinidad and Tobago	LAC	A	E	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
Tunisia	AF	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Turkmenistan	AP	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Tuvalu	AP	B	A	C	A	C	C	B	B	2
Türkiye	WEOG	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	A	3
Uganda	AF	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
Ukraine	EE	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
United Arab Emirates	AP	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
United Kingdom	WEOG	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	2
United States	WEOG	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Uruguay	LAC	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
Uzbekistan	AP	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	1
Vanuatu	AP	A	E	A	B	C	B	B	B	2
Venezuela	LAC	A	B	A	B	A	A	B	B	4
Viet Nam	AP	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
Yemen	AP	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	3
Zambia	AF	A	B	E	B	B	B	B	B	1
Zimbabwe	AF	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	2
Total recognising (A)		154	96	36	11	4	4	1	1	

APPENDIX B

The Event Register

THIS APPENDIX lists the acts recorded in the event register of the dataset: one line for each act, with its identifier, the acting state, the entity concerned, the act code (Appendix F) and the date announced. Rows that record a negative search, with no act identified, are omitted; they are retained in the dataset. Dates are given in the form year-month-day, as in the dataset. Legal assessments, wording, sources and later events are recorded in the dataset against each identifier.

TABLE B.I. Acts recorded in the event register (517 rows). Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12, sheet Event_Register.

ID	Acting state	Entity	Act	Date
E0001	Belize	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1986-11-18
E0002	Belize	Sahrawi Republic	RS-IMP	2023-08-14
E0003	Belize	Palestine	RS-EXP	2011-09-09
E0004	Belize	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-08
E0005	Belize	Republic of China	DR	1989-10-11
E0006	Guatemala	Palestine	RS-EXP	2013-04-08
E0007	Guatemala	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1986-04-10
E0008	Guatemala	Sahrawi Republic	WR	1998-04
E0009	Guatemala	Republic of China	DR	1933-06-15
E0011	Haiti	Republic of China	DR	1956-04-25
E0012	Haiti	Palestine	RS-EXP	2013-09
E0013	Haiti	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	2006-11-23
E0014	Haiti	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2013-10-02
E0044	Haiti	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2012-02-10
E0015	Paraguay	Palestine	DR	2005
E0016	Paraguay	Palestine	RS-EXP	2011-01-28
E0017	Paraguay	Sahrawi Republic	D-SEQ	2000-02 to 2014-01-03
E0019	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Palestine	DR	2019-07-29
E0020	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2010-08-16
E0021	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2012-11-28
E0022	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Republic of China	DR	1983-10-09
E0023	Saint Lucia	Sahrawi Republic	WR	1989-03-21 or 2010-08-16
E0024	Saint Lucia	Kosovo	WR- CLAIM	2023-01-04

ID	Acting state	Entity	Act	Date
E0025	Saint Lucia	Palestine	DR	2015-09-14
E0045	Saint Lucia	Republic of China	DR	2007-04-30
E0026	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Palestine	RS-EXP	2011-08-29
E0027	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Sahrawi Republic	FZ	2013-02-15
E0046	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Republic of China	DR	1981-08-15
E0028	Eswatini	Kosovo	WR-CLAIM	2023-01-04
E0029	Eswatini	Sahrawi Republic	WR	1997-07-04
E0047	Eswatini	Palestine	RS-EXP	1991-07-01
E0048	Eswatini	Republic of China	DR	1968-09-06
E0030	Palau	Kosovo	FZ	2019-01-17
E0031	Palau	Kosovo	RE	2023-10
E0049	Palau	Republic of China	DR	1999-12-29
E0032	Marshall Islands	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-04-17
E0050	Marshall Islands	Republic of China	DR	1998-11-20
E0033	Tuvalu	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2010-11-18
E0034	Tuvalu	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2000-09-15
E0035	Tuvalu	Abkhazia	WR	2014-03-31
E0036	Tuvalu	South Ossetia	WR	2014-03-31
E0051	Tuvalu	Republic of China	DR	1979-09-19
E0040	Israel	Somaliland	RS-EXP	2025-12-26
E0101	Costa Rica	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-17
E0102	Afghanistan	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-18
E0103	Albania	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-18
E0104	France	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-18
E0105	Senegal	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-18
E0106	Türkiye	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-18
E0107	United Kingdom	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-18
E0108	United States	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-18
E0109	Australia	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-19
E0110	Latvia	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-20
E0111	Germany	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-20
E0112	Estonia	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-21
E0113	Italy	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-21
E0114	Denmark	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-21
E0115	Luxembourg	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-21
E0116	Peru	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-22
E0117	Belgium	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-24
E0118	Poland	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-26
E0119	Switzerland	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-27
E0120	Austria	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-28
E0121	Ireland	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-02-29
E0122	Sweden	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-03-04
E0123	Netherlands	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-03-04
E0124	Iceland	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-03-05
E0125	Slovenia	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-03-05
E0126	Finland	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-03-07
E0127	Canada	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-03-18
E0128	Japan	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-03-18
E0129	Monaco	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-03-19
E0130	Hungary	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-03-19
E0131	Croatia	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-03-19
E0132	Bulgaria	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-03-20
E0133	Liechtenstein	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-03-25
E0134	South Korea	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-03-28
E0135	Norway	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-03-28
E0136	Marshall Islands	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-04-17
E0137	Lithuania	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-05-06
E0138	San Marino	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-05-12

ID	Acting state	Entity	Act	Date
E0139	Czechia	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-05-21
E0140	Colombia	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-08-04
E0141	Belize	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-08-07
E0142	Malta	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-08-22
E0143	Samoa	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-09-15
E0144	Portugal	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-10-07
E0145	Montenegro	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-10-09
E0146	North Macedonia	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-10-09
E0147	United Arab Emirates	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-10-14
E0148	Malaysia	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-10-30
E0149	Micronesia	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2008-12-05
E0150	Panama	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2009-01-16
E0151	Gambia	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2009-04-07
E0152	Saudi Arabia	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2009-04-20
E0153	Bahrain	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2009-05-19
E0154	Jordan	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2009-07-07
E0155	Dominican Republic	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2009-07-10
E0156	New Zealand	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2009-11-09
E0157	Malawi	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2009-12-14
E0158	Mauritania	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2010-01-12
E0159	Djibouti	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2010-05-08
E0160	Honduras	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2010-09-03
E0161	Kiribati	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2010-10-21
E0162	Tuvalu	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2010-11-18
E0163	Qatar	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2011-01-07
E0164	Andorra	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2011-06-08
E0165	Niger	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2011-08-15
E0166	Benin	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2011-08-18
E0167	Côte d'Ivoire	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2011-09-16
E0168	Kuwait	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2011-10-11
E0169	Haiti	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2012-02-10
E0170	Brunei	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2012-04-25
E0171	Chad	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2012-06-01
E0172	Timor-Leste	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2012-09-20
E0173	Fiji	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2012-11-19
E0174	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2012-11-28
E0175	Pakistan	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2012-12-24
E0176	Tanzania	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2013-05-29
E0177	Yemen	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2013-06-11
E0178	Guyana	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2013-06-13
E0179	Egypt	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2013-06-26
E0180	Thailand	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2013-09-24
E0181	Tonga	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2014-01-20
E0182	El Salvador	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2014-10-18
E0183	Singapore	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2016-12-01
E0184	Bangladesh	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2017-02-27
E0185	Barbados	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2018-02-15
E0186	Israel	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2020-09-04
E0187	Kenya	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2025-03-26
E0188	Sudan	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2025-04-12
E0189	Bahamas	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2025-12-19
E0190	Burundi	Kosovo	WR- CLAIM	2018-02-15
E0191	Papua New Guinea	Kosovo	WR- CLAIM	2018-07-05
E0192	Dominica	Kosovo	WR- CLAIM	2018-11-02
E0193	Solomon Islands	Kosovo	WR- CLAIM	2018-11-28

ID	Acting state	Entity	Act	Date
E0194	Madagascar	Kosovo	WR-CLAIM	2018-12-07
E0195	Togo	Kosovo	WR	2023-01-16
E0196	Central African Republic	Kosovo	WR-CLAIM	2019-07-24
E0197	Naoero	Kosovo	WR-CLAIM	2019-11-13
E0198	Burkina Faso	Kosovo	WR-CLAIM	2023-01
E0199	Maldives	Kosovo	RE	2023-05
E0200	Somalia	Kosovo	RE	2026-02-17
E0201	Guinea	Kosovo	WR-CLAIM	2023-01
E0202	Gabon	Kosovo	WR-CLAIM	2023-01
E0203	Libya	Kosovo	WR-CLAIM	2023-01
E0204	Antigua and Barbuda	Kosovo	WR-CLAIM	2023-01
E0205	Ghana	Kosovo	WR-CLAIM	2019-11
E0206	Grenada	Kosovo	FZ	2018-10-30
E0207	Liberia	Kosovo	RE	2018-06
E0208	Guinea-Bissau	Kosovo	RE	2018-02-02
E0209	Comoros	Kosovo	WR-CLAIM	2018-11-01
E0210	Sierra Leone	Kosovo	WR-CLAIM	2020-03-02
E0211	Lesotho	Kosovo	RE	2018-10
E0212	Suriname	Kosovo	WR-CLAIM	2017-10-27
E0213	Oman	Kosovo	WR-CLAIM	
E0214	São Tomé and Príncipe	Kosovo	WR-CLAIM	2013-01
E0215	Trinidad and Tobago	Kosovo	WR-CLAIM	
E0216	Vanuatu	Kosovo	WR-CLAIM	2023
E0217	Syria	Kosovo	RS-EXP	2025-10-29
E0401	Afghanistan	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1979-05-23
E0402	Albania	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1987-12-29
E0403	Algeria	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1976-03-06
E0404	Angola	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1976-03-11
E0405	Botswana	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1980-05-14
E0406	Costa Rica	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1980-10-30
E0407	Cuba	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1980-01-20
E0408	Timor-Leste	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	2002-05-20
E0409	Ethiopia	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1979-02-24
E0410	Iran	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1980-02-27
E0411	Laos	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1979-05-09
E0412	Lesotho	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1979-10-09
E0413	Libya	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1980-04-15
E0414	Mauritania	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1984-02-27
E0415	Mexico	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1979-09-08
E0416	Mozambique	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1976-03-13
E0417	Namibia	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1990-06-11
E0418	Nicaragua	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1979-09-06
E0419	Nigeria	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1984-11-12

ID	Acting state	Entity	Act	Date
E0420	North Korea	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1976-03-16
E0421	Rwanda	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1976-04-01
E0422	South Africa	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	2004-09-15
E0423	Syria	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1980-04-15
E0424	Tanzania	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1978-11-09
E0425	Trinidad and Tobago	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1986-11-01
E0426	Uganda	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1979-09-06
E0427	Uruguay	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	2005-12-26
E0428	Venezuela	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1982-08-03
E0429	Viet Nam	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1979-03-02
E0430	Yemen	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1977-02-02
E0431	Zimbabwe	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	1980-07-03
E0432	Chad	Sahrawi Republic	RE	2007-07-17
E0433	Mauritius	Sahrawi Republic	RE	2015-11-23
E0434	South Sudan	Sahrawi Republic	RE	2022-09-20
E0435	Vanuatu	Sahrawi Republic	RE	2008-07-31
E0436	Belize	Sahrawi Republic	RS-EXP	
E0437	Cabo Verde	Sahrawi Republic	FZ	2007-07-27
E0438	Madagascar	Sahrawi Republic	FZ	2005-04-06
E0439	Sierra Leone	Sahrawi Republic	FZ	2003-07-16
E0440	Ecuador	Sahrawi Republic	FZ	2024-10-21
E0441	Honduras	Sahrawi Republic	FZ	2026-04-22
E0442	Panama	Sahrawi Republic	SV	2024-11-21
E0443	Peru	Sahrawi Republic	SV	2023-09-08
E0444	Ghana	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2025-01-06
E0445	Colombia	Sahrawi Republic	SV	2026-08-10
E0446	Bolivia	Sahrawi Republic	FZ	2026-02-23
E0447	Kenya	Sahrawi Republic	QL	2025-05-26
E0448	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Sahrawi Republic	FZ	2013-02-15
E0449	Paraguay	Sahrawi Republic	D-SEQ	2014-01-03
E0450	Antigua and Barbuda	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2010-08-16
E0451	Barbados	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2019-06-21
E0452	Benin	Sahrawi Republic	WR	1997-03-21
E0453	Burkina Faso	Sahrawi Republic	WR	1996-06-05
E0454	Burundi	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2010-10-25
E0455	Cambodia	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2006-08-14
E0456	Congo (Republic of the)	Sahrawi Republic	WR	1996-09-13
E0457	Dominica	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2010-07-23
E0458	Dominican Republic	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2002-05
E0459	El Salvador	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2019-06-15
E0460	Equatorial Guinea	Sahrawi Republic	WR	1980-05
E0461	Grenada	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2010-08-16
E0462	Guinea-Bissau	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2010-03-30
E0463	Guyana	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2020-11-14
E0464	India	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2000-06-26
E0465	Jamaica	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2016-09-14
E0466	Kiribati	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2000-09-15
E0467	Liberia	Sahrawi Republic	WR	1997-09-05
E0468	Malawi	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2017-05-05
E0469	Mali	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2026-04-10
E0470	Naoro	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2000-09-15
E0471	Papua New Guinea	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2011-03-30
E0472	Solomon Islands	Sahrawi Republic	WR	1989-01
E0473	Suriname	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2016-03-09
E0474	São Tomé and Príncipe	Sahrawi Republic	WR	1996-10-23
E0475	Togo	Sahrawi Republic	WR	1997-06-18
E0476	Serbia	Sahrawi Republic	WR	2004-10-27
E0477	Seychelles	Sahrawi Republic	WR-CLAIM	

ID	Acting state	Entity	Act	Date
E0478	Zambia	Sahrawi Republic	WR-CLAIM	
E0479	United States	Western Sahara (territorial question)	Third-state act	2020-12-04
E0480	Russia	Abkhazia	RS-EXP	2008-08-26
E0481	Nicaragua	Abkhazia	RS-EXP	2008-09-05
E0482	Venezuela	Abkhazia	RS-EXP	2009-09-10
E0483	Syria	Abkhazia	RS-EXP	2018-05-29
E0484	Naoero	Abkhazia	WR	2026-07-21
E0485	Vanuatu	Abkhazia	WR	2013-05-20
E0486	Russia	South Ossetia	RS-EXP	2008-08-26
E0487	Nicaragua	South Ossetia	RS-EXP	2008-09-05
E0488	Venezuela	South Ossetia	RS-EXP	2009-09-10
E0489	Syria	South Ossetia	RS-EXP	2018-05-29
E0490	Naoero	South Ossetia	WR	2026-07-21
E0491	Türkiye	Northern Cyprus	RS-EXP	1983-11-15
E0737	Czechia	Palestine	WR-CLAIM	1988 to 2025
E0738	Hungary	Palestine	WR-CLAIM	1988 to 2025
E0739	Papua New Guinea	Palestine	WR-CLAIM	1988 to 2025
E0740	Afghanistan	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-16
E0741	Albania	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-17
E0742	Algeria	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-15
E0743	Andorra	Palestine	RS-EXP	2025-09-22
E0744	Angola	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-12-06
E0745	Antigua and Barbuda	Palestine	RS-EXP	2011-09-22
E0746	Argentina	Palestine	RS-EXP	2010-12-06
E0747	Armenia	Palestine	RS-EXP	2024-06-21
E0748	Australia	Palestine	RS-EXP	2025-09-21
E0749	Azerbaijan	Palestine	RS-EXP	1992-04-15
E0750	Bahamas	Palestine	RS-EXP	2024-05-07
E0751	Bahrain	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-15
E0752	Bangladesh	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-16
E0753	Barbados	Palestine	RS-EXP	2024-04-19
E0754	Belarus	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-19
E0755	Benin	Palestine	RS-EXP	1989-05-12
E0756	Bhutan	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-12-25
E0757	Bolivia	Palestine	RS-EXP	2010-12-17
E0758	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Palestine	RS-EXP	1992-05-27
E0759	Botswana	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-12-19
E0760	Brazil	Palestine	RS-EXP	2010-12-03
E0761	Brunei	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-17
E0762	Bulgaria	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-25
E0763	Burkina Faso	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-21
E0764	Burundi	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-12-22
E0765	Cabo Verde	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-24
E0766	Cambodia	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-21
E0767	Canada	Palestine	RS-EXP	2025-09-21
E0768	Central African Republic	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-12-23
E0769	Chad	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-12-01
E0770	Chile	Palestine	RS-EXP	2011-01-07
E0771	China	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-20
E0772	Colombia	Palestine	RS-EXP	2018-08-03
E0773	Comoros	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-21
E0774	Congo (Republic of the)	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-12-05
E0775	Costa Rica	Palestine	RS-EXP	2008-02-05
E0776	Côte d'Ivoire	Palestine	RS-EXP	2008-12-01

ID	Acting state	Entity	Act	Date
E0777	Cuba	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-16
E0778	Cyprus	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-18
E0779	North Korea	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-24
E0780	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-12-18
E0781	Djibouti	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-17
E0782	Dominica	Palestine	RS-EXP	2011-09-19
E0783	Dominican Republic	Palestine	RS-EXP	2009-07-15
E0784	Ecuador	Palestine	RS-EXP	2010-12-27
E0785	Egypt	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-18
E0786	El Salvador	Palestine	RS-EXP	2011-08-25
E0787	Equatorial Guinea	Palestine	RS-EXP	1989-05
E0788	Eswatini	Palestine	RS-EXP	1991-07-01
E0789	Ethiopia	Palestine	RS-EXP	1989-02-04
E0790	France	Palestine	RS-EXP	2025-09-22
E0791	Gabon	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-12-12
E0792	Gambia	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-18
E0793	Georgia	Palestine	RS-EXP	1992-04-25
E0794	Ghana	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-29
E0795	Grenada	Palestine	RS-EXP	2011-09-25
E0796	Guinea	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-21
E0797	Guinea-Bissau	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-21
E0798	Guyana	Palestine	RS-EXP	2011-01-13
E0799	Haiti	Palestine	RS-EXP	2013-09-27
E0800	Honduras	Palestine	RS-EXP	2011-08-26
E0801	Iceland	Palestine	RS-EXP	2011-12-15
E0802	India	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-18
E0803	Indonesia	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-15
E0804	Iran	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-02-04
E0805	Iraq	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-15
E0806	Ireland	Palestine	RS-EXP	2024-05-28
E0807	Jamaica	Palestine	RS-EXP	2024-04-22
E0808	Jordan	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-16
E0809	Kazakhstan	Palestine	RS-EXP	1992-04-06
E0810	Kenya	Palestine	RS-EXP	1989-05-12
E0811	Kuwait	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-15
E0812	Kyrgyzstan	Palestine	RS-EXP	1995-11
E0813	Laos	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-12-02
E0814	Lebanon	Palestine	RS-EXP	2008-11-30
E0815	Lesotho	Palestine	RS-EXP	2011-05-03
E0816	Liberia	Palestine	RS-EXP	2011-07-19
E0817	Libya	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-15
E0818	Luxembourg	Palestine	RS-EXP	2025-09-22
E0819	Madagascar	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-16
E0820	Malawi	Palestine	RS-EXP	1998-10-23
E0821	Malaysia	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-15
E0822	Maldives	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-28
E0823	Mali	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-21
E0824	Malta	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-16
E0825	Mauritania	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-15
E0826	Mauritius	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-17
E0827	Mexico	Palestine	RS-EXP	2023-06-02
E0828	Monaco	Palestine	RS-EXP	2025-09-22
E0829	Mongolia	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-22
E0830	Montenegro	Palestine	RS-EXP	2006-07-24
E0831	Morocco	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-15
E0832	Mozambique	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-12-08
E0833	Namibia	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-19
E0834	Nepal	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-12-19
E0835	Nicaragua	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-16

ID	Acting state	Entity	Act	Date
E0836	Niger	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-24
E0837	Nigeria	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-18
E0838	Norway	Palestine	RS-EXP	2024-05-28
E0839	Oman	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-12-13
E0840	Pakistan	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-16
E0841	Peru	Palestine	RS-EXP	2011-01-24
E0842	Philippines	Palestine	RS-EXP	1989-09-04
E0843	Poland	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-12-14
E0844	Portugal	Palestine	RS-EXP	2025-09-21
E0845	Qatar	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-16
E0846	Romania	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-24
E0847	Russia	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-19
E0848	Rwanda	Palestine	RS-EXP	1989-01-02
E0849	San Marino	Palestine	RS-EXP	2025-09-23
E0850	São Tomé and Príncipe	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-12-10
E0851	Saudi Arabia	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-16
E0852	Senegal	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-22
E0853	Serbia	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-16
E0854	Seychelles	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-18
E0855	Sierra Leone	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-12-03
E0856	Slovakia	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-18
E0857	Slovenia	Palestine	RS-EXP	2024-06-04
E0858	Somalia	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-15
E0859	South Africa	Palestine	RS-EXP	1995-02-15
E0860	South Sudan	Palestine	RS-EXP	2011-07-14
E0861	Spain	Palestine	RS-EXP	2024-05-28
E0862	Sri Lanka	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-18
E0863	Sudan	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-17
E0864	Suriname	Palestine	RS-EXP	2011-01-26
E0865	Sweden	Palestine	RS-EXP	2014-10-30
E0866	Syria	Palestine	RS-EXP	2011-07-18
E0867	Tajikistan	Palestine	RS-EXP	1994-04-02
E0868	Thailand	Palestine	RS-EXP	2012-01-18
E0869	Timor-Leste	Palestine	RS-EXP	2004-03-01
E0870	Togo	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-29
E0871	Trinidad and Tobago	Palestine	RS-EXP	2024-05-02
E0872	Tunisia	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-15
E0873	Türkiye	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-15
E0874	Turkmenistan	Palestine	RS-EXP	1992-04-17
E0875	Uganda	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-12-03
E0876	Ukraine	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-19
E0877	United Arab Emirates	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-16
E0878	United Kingdom	Palestine	RS-EXP	2025-09-21
E0879	Tanzania	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-24
E0880	Uruguay	Palestine	RS-EXP	2011-03-16
E0881	Uzbekistan	Palestine	RS-EXP	1994-09-25
E0882	Vanuatu	Palestine	RS-EXP	1989-08-21
E0883	Venezuela	Palestine	RS-EXP	2009-04-27
E0884	Viet Nam	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-19
E0885	Yemen	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-15
E0886	Zambia	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-16
E0887	Zimbabwe	Palestine	RS-EXP	1988-11-29
E1001	United States	Cook Islands	RS-EXP	2023-09-25
E1002	United States	Niue	RS-EXP	2023-09-25
E1003	China	Cook Islands	DR	1997-07-25
E1004	China	Niue	DR	2007-12-12
E1005	India	Niue	DR	2012-08-30
E1101	Tanzania	Biafra	RS-EXP	1968-04-13
E1102	Gabon	Biafra	RS-EXP	1968-05-08

ID	Acting state	Entity	Act	Date
E1103	Côte d'Ivoire	Biafra	RS-EXP	1968-05-14
E1104	Zambia	Biafra	RS-EXP	1968-05-20
E1105	Haiti	Biafra	RS-EXP	1969-03-22
E1106	Biafra	Biafra	DS	1970-01-15
E1107	South Africa	Transkei	RS-EXP	1976-10-26
E1108	South Africa	Bophuthatswana	RS-EXP	1977-12-06
E1109	South Africa	Venda	RS-EXP	1979-09-13
E1110	South Africa	Ciskei	RS-EXP	1981-12-04
E1111	Russia	Donetsk People's Republic	RS-EXP	2022-02-21
E1112	Syria	Donetsk People's Republic	RS-EXP	2022-06-29
E1113	North Korea	Donetsk People's Republic	RS-EXP	2022-07-13
E1114	Russia	Luhansk People's Republic	RS-EXP	2022-02-21
E1115	Syria	Luhansk People's Republic	RS-EXP	2022-06-29
E1116	North Korea	Luhansk People's Republic	RS-EXP	2022-07-13
E1117	Russia	Republic of Crimea (2014)	RS-EXP	2014-03-17
E1118	Albania	Republic of Kosova (1991)	RS-EXP	1991-10-21
E1119	Antigua and Barbuda	Joseon Cybernation	TR	2022-04-05
E1120	Antigua and Barbuda	Joseon Cybernation	DR	2023-07-08
E1201	United Kingdom	State of Somaliland (1960)	RS-IMP	1960-06-26
E1202	Thirty-five states (claimed)	State of Somaliland (1960)	RS-IMP	1960-06
E1203	Egypt	All-Palestine Government (1948)	RG	1948-10
E1204	Iraq	All-Palestine Government (1948)	RG	1948-10
E1205	Syria	All-Palestine Government (1948)	RG	1948-10
E1206	Lebanon	All-Palestine Government (1948)	RG	1948-10
E1207	Saudi Arabia	All-Palestine Government (1948)	RG	1948-10
E1208	Yugoslavia (predecessor)	German Democratic Republic	DR	1957-10
E1209	Cuba	German Democratic Republic	DR	1963-01
E1301	Argentina	Republic of China	SW	1972
E1302	Australia	Republic of China	SW	1972
E1303	Austria	Republic of China	SW	1971
E1304	Bahamas	Republic of China	SW	1997
E1305	Barbados	Republic of China	SW	1977
E1306	Belgium	Republic of China	SW	1971
E1307	Bolivia	Republic of China	SW	1985
E1308	Botswana	Republic of China	SW	1974
E1309	Brazil	Republic of China	SW	1974
E1310	Burkina Faso	Republic of China	SW	2018-05-24
E1311	Cambodia	Republic of China	SW	1975
E1312	Cameroon	Republic of China	SW	1971
E1313	Central African Republic	Republic of China	SW	1998
E1314	Chad	Republic of China	SW	2006-08-06
E1315	Chile	Republic of China	SW	1971
E1316	Colombia	Republic of China	SW	1980
E1317	Costa Rica	Republic of China	SW	2007-06
E1318	Côte d'Ivoire	Republic of China	SW	1983
E1319	Cyprus	Republic of China	SW	1972
E1320	Benin	Republic of China	SW	1973
E1321	Dominica	Republic of China	SW	2004
E1322	Dominican Republic	Republic of China	SW	2018-05
E1323	Ecuador	Republic of China	SW	1971
E1324	El Salvador	Republic of China	SW	2018-08
E1325	Gabon	Republic of China	SW	1974
E1326	Gambia	Republic of China	SW	2013-11-14
E1327	Germany	Republic of China	SW	1972

ID	Acting state	Entity	Act	Date
E1328	Greece	Republic of China	SW	1972
E1329	Grenada	Republic of China	SW	2005-01-20
E1330	Guinea-Bissau	Republic of China	SW	1998
E1331	Honduras	Republic of China	SW	2023-03
E1332	Iran	Republic of China	SW	1971
E1333	Jamaica	Republic of China	SW	1972
E1334	Japan	Republic of China	SW	1972
E1335	Jordan	Republic of China	SW	1977
E1336	Kiribati	Republic of China	SW	2019-09
E1337	South Korea	Republic of China	SW	1992
E1338	Kuwait	Republic of China	SW	1971
E1339	Latvia	Republic of China	SW	1994
E1340	Lebanon	Republic of China	SW	1971
E1341	Lesotho	Republic of China	SW	1994
E1342	Liberia	Republic of China	SW	2003-10-11
E1343	Libya	Republic of China	SW	1978
E1344	Luxembourg	Republic of China	SW	1972
E1345	Madagascar	Republic of China	SW	1972
E1346	Malawi	Republic of China	SW	2008-01
E1347	Malaysia	Republic of China	SW	1974
E1348	Malta	Republic of China	SW	1972
E1349	Mexico	Republic of China	SW	1971
E1350	Naoero	Republic of China	SW	2024-01
E1351	New Zealand	Republic of China	SW	1972
E1352	Nicaragua	Republic of China	SW	2021-12-09
E1353	Niger	Republic of China	SW	1996
E1354	North Macedonia	Republic of China	SW	2001-06-18
E1355	Panama	Republic of China	SW	2017-06
E1356	Papua New Guinea	Republic of China	SW	1999
E1357	Peru	Republic of China	SW	1971
E1358	Philippines	Republic of China	SW	1975
E1359	Portugal	Republic of China	SW	1975
E1360	Rwanda	Republic of China	SW	1972
E1361	São Tomé and Príncipe	Republic of China	SW	2016-12-26
E1362	Saudi Arabia	Republic of China	SW	1990
E1363	Senegal	Republic of China	SW	2005-10-25
E1364	Sierra Leone	Republic of China	SW	1971
E1365	Solomon Islands	Republic of China	SW	2019-09
E1366	South Africa	Republic of China	SW	1998
E1367	Spain	Republic of China	SW	1973
E1368	Saint Lucia	Republic of China	SW	1997
E1369	Thailand	Republic of China	SW	1975
E1370	Togo	Republic of China	SW	1972
E1371	Tonga	Republic of China	SW	1998
E1372	Türkiye	Republic of China	SW	1971
E1373	United States	Republic of China	SW	1979-01-01
E1374	Uruguay	Republic of China	SW	1988
E1375	Vanuatu	Republic of China	SW	2004-11-03
E1376	Venezuela	Republic of China	SW	1974
E1377	Samoa	Republic of China	SW	1975
E1378	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Republic of China	SW	1973
E1400	Russia	Kherson (2022)	RS-EXP	2022-09-29
E1401	Russia	Zaporizhzhia (2022)	RS-EXP	2022-09-29
E1402	Paraguay	Republic of China	DR	1957-07-08

APPENDIX C

Registers 2, 3 and 4

REGISTER 2: PERSONS WITH STANDING OUTSIDE MEMBERSHIP

TABLE C.I. Register 2 (10 October 2026). Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12, sheet Register_2.

Entity	Category	Status at the United Nations	Relations with states
Cook Islands	Self-governing state in free association with New Zealand (since 1965)	Not a UN member; member of several UN specialised agencies	66 (plus the EU) (Office of the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, June 2025)
Holy See (with Vatican City State)	Holy See: non-territorial international person (the supreme authority of the Catholic Church). Vatican City State: territorial entity created by the Lateran Treaty (1929), under the Holy See's authority	Holy See: non-member observer state (since 1964; rights defined by GA Res 58/314 of 2004)	184 states, plus the EU and the Order of Malta (Holy See Press Office, 9 January 2026)
Niue	Self-governing state in free association with New Zealand (since 1974)	Not a UN member; member of several UN specialised agencies	27 (2024) (The Diplomat, September 2024 ; no count published by the Government of Niue located)
Sovereign Military Order of Malta	Sui generis subject of international law: a lay religious order with no territorial claim	General Assembly observer (GA Res 48/265, 1994)	118 states, plus official relations with 4 and ambassador-level relations with Palestine (Order of Malta, 29 September 2026)

REGISTER 3: RECOGNITIONS THAT ENDED AND NON-TERRITORIAL CASES

TABLE C.2. Register 3. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12, sheet Register_3.

Entity	Engaging states	Dates	Outcome
Republic of Biafra	Tanzania, Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire, Zambia, Haiti	1968-04-13 to 1969-03-22	Lapsed on dissolution, 15 Jan 1970
Republic of Transkei; Bophuthatswana; Venda; Ciskei	South Africa (only UN member)	1976--1981	Reincorporated 27 Apr 1994
Donetsk People's Republic; Luhansk People's Republic	Russia, Syria, North Korea	2022-02-21 to 2022-07-13	Annexed by Russia 30 Sep 2022
Republic of Crimea (2014)	Russia	2014-03-17	Treaty of accession 18 Mar 2014
Republic of Kosovo (1991)	Albania	1991-10-21	Superseded by the 2008 declaration
Joseon Cybernation (also styled Joseon Empire)	Antigua and Barbuda	2022-04-05; 2023-07-08	No withdrawal located
Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Knights of Malta, Federation of the Autonomous Priorities	Antigua and Barbuda (claimed)	2016 (claimed)	Reported termination (statement attributed to the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff) not yet located
State of Somaliland (26 June to 1 July 1960)	United Kingdom (treaty relations); 35 states claimed by Somaliland	1960-06-26	Ended by union with Somalia, 1 July 1960
All-Palestine Government (1948--1959)	Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia	1948-10	Lapsed; offices closed by Nasser in 1959
German Democratic Republic (to 1973)	Communist states; Yugoslavia (1957); Cuba (1963); others before 1973	1949--1972	Superseded by UN admission and unification
Republic of South Vietnam / Provisional Revolutionary Government (1969--1976)	Many states, not counted in the dataset, including Gabon and Cameroon (1973)	1969--1976	Ended by unification, 2 July 1976
Democratic Republic of East Timor (1975)	Several Lusophone African and other states, as reported; acts not located	1975-11-28 onwards	Indonesian annexation (1976); later independence (2002)
Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (1958--1962)	Several Arab, Asian and communist states; acts not located	1958--1962	Succeeded by independent Algeria (1962)
Kherson and Zaporizhzhia (2022)	Russia	2022-09-29	Annexed 30 Sep 2022

REGISTER 4: CANDIDATES INVESTIGATED AND EXCLUDED

TABLE C.3. Register 4. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12, sheet Register_4.

Candidate	Category	Reason for exclusion
Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (Transnistria)	De facto state	Recognised only by Abkhazia, South Ossetia and (formerly) Artsakh; not recognised by any UN member, including Russia.
Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh)	Former de facto state (dissolved 2024)	Not recognised by any UN member, including Armenia.
Rhodesia (1965–1979) and Zimbabwe Rhodesia (1979)	Unrecognised state	SC Res 217 (1965) called on all states not to recognise. No UN member did so, including South Africa and Portugal. Mozambique, independent from June 1975, closed the border and imposed full sanctions in March 1976; no evidence of any Mozambican move towards recognition.
Chechen Republic of Ichkeria	De facto state (1991–2000)	Recognised only by the Taliban authorities (2000), then not the UN-recognised government of Afghanistan.
Principality of Hutt River	Micronation (dissolved 2020)	No UN-member recognition.
Principality of Sealand	Micronation	No UN-member recognition.
Principality of Seborga	Micronation	No UN-member recognition.
Free Republic of Liberland	Micronation	No UN-member recognition.
Kingdom of Sikkim (to 1975)	Protected state	Indian protectorate under the 1950 treaty, barred from dealings with foreign powers; no UN-member recognition as an independent state located. Merged with India after the 1975 referendum; China's acceptance implicit (2003, 2005).

APPENDIX D

The Kosovo Ledger

THIS APPENDIX sets each withdrawal or suspension of recognition of Kosovo that has been announced or reported, most of them since 2017, against the record of the state concerned, with the status the dataset assigns at 10 October 2026. Oman and Trinidad and Tobago, coded E because the evidence of recognition itself is in doubt, are included for completeness.

TABLE D.1. Withdrawals of recognition of Kosovo announced or reported, and the response of the state concerned (10 October 2026). Status codes as in Appendix A. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12, sheet Event_Register.

State	Recognised	Announcement and response	Status
Antigua and Barbuda	2023-01	Recognised 2015-05-20. Withdrawal claimed by Serbia (Jan 2023); Kosovo's president cited the 2015 recognition in June 2025.	E
Burkina Faso	2023-01	Recognised 2008-04-23. Withdrawal claimed by Serbia (Jan 2023); later 'confirmation' of unnamed source.	E
Burundi	2018-02-15	Recognised 2012-10-16. Withdrawal claimed by Serbia (15 Feb 2018); no Burundian act located.	E
Central African Republic	2019-07-24	Recognised 2011-07-22. Withdrawal claimed by Serbia (24 Jul 2019).	E
Comoros	2018-11-01	Recognised 2009-05-14. Withdrawal reported (1 Nov 2018); letter of Feb 2021 says recognition 'remains intact', in ambiguous terms.	E
Dominica	2018-11-02	Recognised 2012-12-11. Withdrawal claimed by Serbia (2 Nov 2018); no Dominican act located.	E
Eswatini	2010-04-12	Recognition 12 Apr 2010 according to an aggregator. Serbia claims withdrawal and later speaks of 'non-recognition'; Kosovo rebuts with evidence of a January 2023 meeting. No Eswatini act located.	E
Gabon	2023-01	Recognised 2011-09-15. Withdrawal claimed by Serbia (Jan 2023); Kosovo rebuttal by evidence of a meeting (Jan 2023).	E
Ghana	2019-11	Recognised 2012-01-23. The deputy foreign minister told AFP (Nov 2019) Ghana had withdrawn; Kosovo-side reports of reaffirmation in 2025.	E
Grenada	2018-10-30	Recognised 2013-09-25. Recognition reported suspended (30 Oct 2018); the foreign minister reportedly stood by recognition (Mar 2019).	D

State	Recognised	Announcement and response	Status
Guinea	2023-01	Recognised 2011-08-12. Withdrawal claimed by Serbia (Jan 2023).	E
Guinea-Bissau	2018-02-02	Recognised 2011-01-10. Withdrawal of 21 Nov 2017 annulled on 2 Feb 2018.	A
Lesotho	2018-10	Recognised 2014-02-11. Withdrawal reported (16 Oct 2018); Prime Minister declared it invalid and reaffirmed recognition (Oct 2018).	A
Liberia	2018-06	Recognised 2008-05-30. A foreign ministry note annulling recognition (Jun 2018) refuted by the ministry days later.	A
Libya	2023-01	Recognised 2013-09-25. Withdrawal claimed by Serbia (Jan 2023); Kosovo rebuttal by evidence of a meeting (Jan 2023).	E
Madagascar	2018-12-07	Recognised 2017-11-24. Withdrawal claimed by Serbia (7 Dec 2018).	E
Maldives	2023-05	Recognised 2009-02-19. Serbian claim of Jan 2023 denied by the Maldives (May 2023); recognition confirmed Feb 2024 and Feb 2025.	A
Naoero	2019-11-13	Recognised 2008-04-23. Withdrawal claimed by Serbia (13 Nov 2019).	E
Oman		Recognition announced by Kosovo 2011-02-04. Recognition announced by Kosovo; Serbia says Oman never recognised; Oman has not confirmed.	E
Palau	2009-03-06	Suspension by diplomatic note to Serbia (recognised 6 Mar 2009). Resumption by conduct: President Whipps received credentials of the Kosovan non-resident ambassador.	A
Papua New Guinea	2018-07-05	Recognised 2012-10-03. Withdrawal claimed by Serbia (5 Jul 2018); no act of Papua New Guinea located.	E
Saint Lucia	2011-08-19	Recognised 19 Aug 2011 (according to an aggregator). Withdrawal claimed by Serbia; no act of Saint Lucia located; Kosovo did not specifically rebut.	E
Sierra Leone	2020-03-02	Recognised 2008-06-11. Withdrawal reported (2 Mar 2020).	E
Solomon Islands	2018-11-28	Recognised 2014-08-13. Note of 28 Nov 2018 reportedly sent from the Solomon Islands office in Australia, conditioning recognition on the outcome of the dialogue; Kosovo's foreign ministry denied receipt through official channels.	E
Somalia	2026-02-17	Recognised 2010-05-19. Serbian claim of Jan 2023; Somali presidential letter of 17 Feb 2026 confirms continued recognition.	A
Suriname	2017-10-27	Recognised 2016-07-08. First reported withdrawal (27 Oct 2017); Serbian readout (Jul 2023) of support for Serbia's territorial integrity.	E
São Tomé and Príncipe	2013-01	Recognised 2012-03. Council of Ministers recognition declared invalid by presidential communication (Jan 2013).	E
Togo	2023-01-16	Recognised 2014-07-11. Foreign Minister Robert Dussey, at a joint press conference with Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić of Serbia (16 Jan 2023): withdrawal 'final'; 'We in Togo recognize only one Serbia'.	C
Trinidad and Tobago		Aggregator internally inconsistent; no act located.	E
Vanuatu	2023	Recognised 2010-04-28. Withdrawal reported (2023) in Serbian-sourced accounts; no Vanuatu act located.	E

APPENDIX E

The Source Ledger

THIS APPENDIX lists the sources recorded in the dataset, with their identifiers and tiers (Appendix F). Full references are given in the Bibliography. Sources of tier T₄, which include encyclopaedias and advocacy lists, were used to locate leads only; they support no proposition in the text and are recorded in the dataset but not listed here.

TABLE E.I. The source ledger. Source: *Recognition at the Margins* dataset v1.12, sheet Source_Ledger.

ID	Source	Tier
S0001	United Nations, 'Member States' https://www.un.org/en/about-us/member-states	T2
S0002	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China (Taiwan), 'Diplomatic Allies' https://en.mofa.gov.tw/AlliesIndex.aspx?n=1294&sms=1007	T2
S0003	Government of Belize Press Office, 'Governor General Welcomes New Ambassadors to Belize' (Belmopan, 14 August 2023) https://pressoffice.gov.bz/?p=13134	T1
S0004	Government of Belize, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, press release on Palestine (Belmopan, 9 September 2011) https://pressoffice.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Press-Release-on-Palestine.pdf	T1
S0005	Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo, 'Prime Minister Kurti met with the Prime Minister of Belize, John Briceño' (New York, 26 September 2025) https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/en/news/kryeministri-kurti-takoi-kryeministrin-e-belize-john-briceno/	T2
S0006	Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Centro de Estudos sobre o Sahara Occidental, 'RASD - Frente Polisario' https://assets.usc.gal/en/investigiar-na-usc/investigiar/institutos-centros-investigacion/cpi/ceso/rasd-frente-polisario	T3
S0008	'Haïti retire sa reconnaissance de la fantomatique RASD', Le Matin (Casablanca, 10 October 2013), reporting a communiqué of the Haitian Ministry of Foreign Affairs obtained by MAP	T3
S0009	'Ex-Minister of Haiti Discusses Withdrawal of Recognition of So-Called SADR', Morocco World News (December 2016)	T3
S0011	'Palau recalls support of Kosovo's independence', Island Times (Koror, 22 January 2019)	T3
S0012	Government of the Republic of Serbia, 'Republic of Palau suspends recognition of Kosovo' (Belgrade, 21 January 2019)	T2
S0013	'Republika e Palaut rikthen njohjen, Sabri Kicmari akreditohet si ambasador jo rezident', Gazeta Express (20 October 2023); 'Pas pesë vjetësh rikthehen marrëdhëniet diplomatike me Republikën e Palaut', Koha (20 October 2023)	T3
S0014	'Serbia claims 9 countries withdrew recognition of Kosovo', Anadolu Agency (4 January 2023)	T3
S0015	'Kosovo debunks Serbian claims about derecognitions', Prishtina Insight (13 January 2023)	T3
S0016	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, 'Minister Dacic confers with the King of Eswatini on the fringes of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum' (2 March 2024)	T2

ID	Source	Tier
S0017	Nevis Island Administration, 'Kosovo and St. Kitts and Nevis have building blocks for good relationship, says Nevis' Premier Brantley' (8 May 2018)	T1
S0018	'Tuvalu Retracts Abkhazia, S.Ossetia Recognition', Civil Georgia (31 March 2014)	T3
S0019	'Israel recognises Somaliland as independent state, Netanyahu says', BBC News (26 December 2025)	T3
S0020	Government of Saint Lucia, 'Saint Lucia, Palestine diplomatic ties' (16 September 2015)	T1
S0021	St Kitts and Nevis Information Service, 'St Kitts Nevis and the State of Palestine sign agreement to establish diplomatic relations' (30 July 2019)	T1
S0022	Delegation of Guatemala, statement at the High-Level International Conference on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine (New York, 30 July 2025) https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/guatemala_nyc_es.pdf	T1
S0023	'Paraguay reconoce Estado palestino libre e independiente', Exame (28 January 2011), reporting a communiqué of the Paraguayan Ministry of Foreign Affairs	T3
S0024	Letter dated 29 August 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, UN Doc A/65/939-S/2011/543 (29 August 2011)	T1
S0025	'Abbas wins recognition for PA from Haiti and Grenada', Jewish Press (29 September 2013)	T3
S0027	'Has Syria Withdrawn Recognition of the 'Independence' of Georgia's Occupied Territories?', Myth Detector (4 July 2025)	T3
S0028	'Sokhumi De Facto Foreign Minister Visits Syria Amid Calls to Reverse Recognition', Civil Georgia (June 2025)	T3
S0029	'Syria recognizes Kosovo, Osmani announces from Riyadh', KoSSev (October 2025)	T3
S0030	'Somaliland president arrives in US for first visit since taking office', Dawan Africa (September 2026)	T3
S0031	'Bahami i tako dalje: niko ne zna koliko država priznaje Kosovo', Vreme (Belgrade, 20 December 2025)	T3
S0032	'Is a new wave of Kosovo recognition withdrawals and new friendships with Pristina on the horizon?', Kosovo Online (11 January 2025)	T3
S0033	'28 zemalja otprižnalo tzv. Kosovo', B92 (24 September 2025), reporting Minister Nemanja Starović	T3
S0034	Radio Slobodna Evropa, weekly roundup (17 November 2019)	T3
S0035	Evan Centanni, 'Map & Analysis: Which Countries Recognize Kosovo in 2020?', Political Geography Now (23 September 2020)	T3
S0037	'Serbia vows diplomatic response to Kenya's recognition of Kosovo', Capital FM (Nairobi, March 2025)	T3
S0038	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, statement on Sudan (13 April 2025)	T2
S0039	Government of Serbia, 'Call on Bahamas authorities to return to respecting principles of international law' (19 December 2025)	T2
S0040	'The Solomon Islands annuls recognition of Kosovo', KoSSev (November 2018)	T3
S0041	'Togo: Definitive withdrawal of the recognition of Kosovo', Kosovo Online (16 January 2023)	T3
S0042	'Nauru confirms withdrawal of recognition of Abkhazia, Tskhinvali region', Georgia Today (31 July 2026)	T3
S0043	'A nation of 10,000 people just shrank the list of countries recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia to four', Meduza (29 July 2026)	T3
S0044	'Russia Formally Recognizes Abkhazia, S.Ossetia', Civil Georgia (26 August 2008)	T3
S0045	'Venezuela's Chavez Recognizes Breakaway Georgian Regions as Independent', Voice of America (10 September 2009)	T3
S0046	'Nicaragua recognizes S.Ossetia, Abkhazia', RIA Novosti (6 September 2008)	T3
S0047	'Georgia Says Vanuatu Has Withdrawn Recognition of Abkhazia', Bloomberg (20 May 2013)	T3
S0048	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia, 'Colombia congela relaciones diplomáticas con la entidad denominada como 'República Árabe Saharaui Democrática' (RASD)' (10 August 2026)	T1
S0049	'Bolivie: suspension de la reconnaissance de la RASD', APA News (24 February 2026)	T3
S0050	'Bolivia cierra relación con Sáhara Occidental para impulsarlas con Marruecos', Diario Libre (EFE, 21 January 2020)	T3
S0051	'Le Mali lâche la RASD et se rallie au plan marocain', Médias24 (10 April 2026)	T3
S0052	'Le Honduras décide de suspendre sa reconnaissance de la RASD', Médias24 (22 April 2026)	T3
S0053	'La République du Ghana suspend ses relations diplomatiques avec la pseudo RASD', Médias24 (7 January 2025)	T3

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S0054	'Ecuador deja de reconocer a la República Saharaui y respalda autonomía de Marruecos', Primicias (2 December 2024)	T3
S0055	'Panamá anuncia la suspensión de relaciones diplomáticas con la República Árabe Saharaui', Panamá América (21 November 2024)	T3
S0056	'Republic of Seychelles withdraws its recognition of Polisario's SADR', Morocco World News (22 May 2013)	T3
S0057	'Kenya backs Morocco's autonomy plan for Western Sahara, joint statement says', Arab News (Reuters, 27 May 2025)	T3
S0058	Proclamation No 10126, 'Recognizing the Sovereignty of the Kingdom of Morocco Over the Western Sahara' (signed 4 December 2020) 85 FR 81329	T1
S0059	United Nations, 'Security Council ... resolution 2797 (2025)', press release SC/16208 (October 2025)	T2
S0060	UNSC Res 541 (18 November 1983) UN Doc S/RES/541	T2
S0061	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Syrian Arab Republic, statement (Damascus, 29 October 2025)	T1
S0062	'142, 148, 149? How AFP counted the countries that recognise the state of Palestine', AFP via Macau Business (July 2025)	T3
S0063	'Which are the 150+ countries that have recognised Palestine as of 2025?', Al Jazeera (23 September 2025)	T3
S0064	Al-Quds, report on Belgian recognition process (7 July 2026)	T3
S0065	'Le gouvernement fédéral belge reste divisé sur la question de la reconnaissance officielle de la Palestine', Business AM (10 July 2026)	T3
S0066	Holy See Press Office, note on the bilateral and multilateral relations of the Holy See (Bulletin, 9 January 2026)	T1
S0067	Governatorato dello Stato della Città del Vaticano, 'Participation in International Organizations'	T1
S0068	UNGA Res 58/314 (1 July 2004), 'Participation of the Holy See in the work of the United Nations'	T2
S0069	Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta, 'Bilateral relations' (page modified 29 September 2026)	T1
S0070	UNGA Res 48/265 (24 August 1994), 'Observer status for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta in the General Assembly'	T2
S0071	Office of the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, 'Our voyage to statehood: 60 years on' (28 June 2025)	T1
S0072	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Cook Islands, Treaty Policy (September 2025)	T1
S0073	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, response to Official Information Act request OIA 28825 (25 October 2023)	T1
S0074	'New Zealand rejects Cook Islands passport plan', Islands Business (24 December 2024)	T3
S0075	'NZ pauses nearly \$20m in funding to Cook Islands after China agreements', 1News (19 June 2025)	T3
S0076	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, country page: Cook Islands	T1
S0077	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, country page: Niue	T1
S0078	High Commission of India, Wellington, 'India-Niue Bilateral Brief'	T1
S0079	'Niue's Strategic Diplomatic Expansion', The Diplomat (September 2024)	T3
S0080	Statement by President Biden on the Recognition of the Cook Islands and the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations (25 September 2023)	T1
S0081	Statement on the Recognition of Niue and the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations, Daily Comp Pres Docs 2023 No 00834 (25 September 2023)	T1
S0082	United Nations, Meetings Coverage SC/15670, 9609th meeting (18 April 2024)	T2
S0083	David A Ijalaye, 'Was 'Biafra' at Any Time a State in International Law?' (1971) 65 AJIL 551	T3
S0084	Memorandum from Henry A Kissinger to Under Secretary of State Richardson, 'Biafra' (15 April 1969), Foreign Relations of the United States 1969-1976, vol E-5, pt 1, doc 56	T1
S0085	Nduonofit Okon Isana, 'Nigeria and Taiwan: The Evolution and Dynamics of a Relationship, 1960-2020' (2023) 1(1) Awka Journal of International Relations 318	T3
S0086	UNGA Res 31/6 A (26 October 1976), 'Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa: the so-called independent Transkei and other bantustans'	T2
S0087	UNSC Res 217 (20 November 1965) UN Doc S/RES/217	T2
S0088	Note by the Secretary-General, UN Doc S/12004 (8 March 1976)	T2

ID	Source	Tier
S0089	'Syria regime officially recognises Luhansk, Donetsk republics: state media', The New Arab (29 June 2022)	T3
S0090	'North Korea Recognizes Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics', Sputnik (13 July 2022)	T3
S0091	'Ukraine: UN General Assembly demands Russia reverse course on attempted illegal annexation', UN News (12 October 2022)	T2
S0092	'Putin signs decree on 'Recognition of Crimea'', Voice of Russia (17 March 2014)	T3
S0093	'Independence is here. Now it's freedom's turn', Kosovo 2.0	T3
S0094	'Antigua & Barbuda establishes relations with Joseon Cybernation', Antigua Observer (8 July 2023)	T3
S0095	'The digital dynasty: Joseon PM speaks about benefits to country', Antigua Observer (13 July 2023)	T3
S0096	'Experimenting with all forms of our sovereignty': Hurst likens Joseon deal to CIP', Antigua Observer (14 July 2023)	T3
S0097	Embassy of the Sovereign Order of Malta to Antigua and Barbuda, 'Relations with Antigua and Barbuda'	T1
S0098	Agreements and Exchanges of Letters between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Somaliland in connexion with the Attainment of Independence by Somaliland (Hargeisa, 26 June 1960) UKTS 44 (1960) Cmnd 1101	T1
S0099	Presidency of the Republic of Somaliland, submission to the Danish Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee (Udenrigsudvalget, Bilag 116)	T2
S0100	Avi Shlaim, 'The Rise and Fall of the All-Palestine Government in Gaza' (1990) 20(1) Journal of Palestine Studies 37	T3
S0101	German Historical Institute, German History in Documents and Images, 'The Hallstein Doctrine' (June 28, 1956)	T2
S0102	Thái Văn Thor, 'The International Relations of the Revolutionary Government in South Vietnam (1960-1976)' (2020) 17(10) HCMUE Journal of Science 1878	T3
S0103	'Russia becomes first country to recognise Taliban govt', RTHK (4 July 2025)	T3
S0104	'Yemen Denounces Iran's Recognition of Houthis' Envoy', Asharq Al-Awsat (20 November 2019)	T3
S0105	'General Assembly defers decision on Afghanistan and Myanmar seats', UN News (December 2021)	T2
S0106	'AU condemns parallel regime in Sudan', The Star (30 July 2025)	T3
S0107	'The Sikkim Anniversary', The Diplomat (December 2015)	T3
S0108	Joachim Naumann and others, 'The GDR's Struggle for International Recognition' in Bock, Muth and Schwiesau (eds), DDR-Außenpolitik im Rückspiegel (LIT 2004) 82, via German History in Documents and Images	T3
S0109	German History in Documents and Images, 'The GDR and the Federal Republic Join the United Nations (September 18, 1973)'	T3
S0110	'The Holy See's widespread diplomatic relations in 2026', Aleteia (10 January 2026)	T3
S0113	'Croatian police are preventing the settlement of the micronation of Liberland', Vice (14 July 2015), quoting the Office of the Spokesperson of the Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs	T3
S0114	Marissa Wood, 'Egypt-Sudan Land Boundary', Sovereign Limits (31 July 2019, modified 14 December 2024)	T3
S0115	The Antarctic Treaty (signed 1 December 1959, entered into force 23 June 1961) 402 UNTS 71, art IV	T1
S0116	Antarctic Treaty Secretariat, 'Parties'	T1
S0117	Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (opened for signature 27 January 1967, entered into force 10 October 1967) 610 UNTS 205, art II	T1
S0118	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (adopted 10 December 1982, entered into force 16 November 1994) 1833 UNTS 3, arts 60(8), 87(1)(d), 89	T1
S0119	Western Sahara (Advisory Opinion) [1975] ICJ Rep 12, paras 79-80	T2
S0120	Martina Calabrese, 'La Repubblica esperantista dell'Isola delle Rose. Storia di una micronazione', CRIO Papers No 74 (University of Catania 2024)	T3
S0122	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, country pages (dates of establishment of diplomatic relations)	T1

ID	Source	Tier
S0123	United Nations Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, 'Regional groups of Member States'	T2
S0124	Island of Palmas (Netherlands v United States) (1928) 2 RIAA 829	T2
S0125	'Putin signs 'independence' decrees for Zaporizhia, Kherson', Al Jazeera (30 September 2022)	T3
S0126	E Ivanov, 'The nature of the international legal personality of the Order of Malta' (2022) 66(4) <i>Pravovedenie</i> 371	T3
S0127	Robert John Araujo SJ, 'The Nature and Role of the Catholic Church and the Holy See in the International Order', <i>E-International Relations</i> (24 September 2013)	T3
S0128	Identical letters dated 2 April 2024 from the Permanent Representatives of Mauritania, Saudi Arabia and Uganda (Chairs of the Arab Group, the OIC Group and the NAM Coordinating Bureau) to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council, UN Doc A/78/846-S/2024/283, annex 'Recognition of the State of Palestine (1988–2023)'	T2
S0129	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, '中华人民共和国与各国建立外交关系日期简表' (Table of dates of establishment of diplomatic relations), updated 13 December 2021	T1
S0130	'Jamaica rejects Kosovo claim it recognised its sovereignty', Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (February 2020)	T3
S0131	Government of Serbia, 'Kingdom of Lesotho withdrew recognition of Kosovo's independence' (October 2018)	T2
S0132	Government of Serbia, 'Central African Republic does not recognise independence of Kosovo' (2019)	T2
S0133	Government of Serbia, 'Nauru withdraws Kosovo recognition' (November 2019)	T2
S0134	Government of Serbia, 'Comoros withdraws recognition of Kosovo' (November 2018)	T2
S0135	Government of Serbia, 'Sierra Leone withdraws Kosovo's recognition' (March 2020)	T2
S0136	Government of Serbia, 'Grenada ninth country that withdrew its decision to recognise Kosovo's independence' (November 2018)	T2
S0138	'Mos Def was arrested in South Africa for using a World Passport. Yes, that's a real thing', <i>Foreign Policy</i> (15 January 2016)	T3
S0139	'Brazil recognises Palestine', Al Jazeera (5 December 2010)	T3
S0140	Office of the Prime Minister (Malta), 'Prime Minister Robert Abela officially confirms Malta's recognition of Palestinian Statehood', press release PR251629 (23 September 2025)	T1
S0141	'Belgium to recognise Palestine in due course', VRT News (2 September 2025)	T3
S0142	'Calls for Belgium to start recognition of Palestine process', <i>The Brussels Times</i> (15 January 2026)	T3
S0143	Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí ČR, 'Postoj ČR (dříve ČSFR a ČSSR) k uznání Palestiny', response to a request for information of 27 February 2020	T1
S0144	'PNG's Marape makes foreign policy gaffes over Israel, West Papua', <i>Asia Pacific Report</i> (14 September 2023)	T3
S0145	UNGA Res 43/177 (15 December 1988), text via UNISPAL	T2
S0146	UNGA Res 67/19 (29 November 2012), text via UNISPAL	T2
S0147	UNGA Res ES-10/23 (10 May 2024), text via UNISPAL	T2
S0148	United Nations, General Assembly, Meetings Coverage GA/12599 (10 May 2024)	T2
S0149	United Nations, UNifed, 'UN / GA Palestine resolution' (12 September 2025), adoption of A/80/L.1/Rev.1	T2
S0150	Prime Minister's Office, 'PM statement on the recognition of Palestine: 21 September 2025'	T1
S0151	Letter dated 18 November 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan, UN Doc A/43/827-S/20278 (Declaration of Independence)	T2
S0152	Security Council Report, 'Meeting on the Palestinian application for UN membership', <i>What's In Blue</i> (April 2024)	T3
S0153	Kosovo Declaration of Independence (17 February 2008), text via Refworld	T2
S0154	European External Action Service, 'Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue: Agreement on the path to normalisation between Kosovo and Serbia' (27 February 2023)	T2
S0155	Robert Muharremi, 'The 'Washington Agreement' Between Kosovo and Serbia' (2021) 25(4) <i>ASIL Insights</i>	T3
S0156	'Pacific island nation Nauru officially changes name to Naoero', Al Jazeera (31 July 2026)	T3
S0157	United Nations, 'Member States' (listing 'Naoero')	T2
S0158	United Nations, Security Council, 10084th meeting (29 December 2025), Meetings Coverage SC/16270	T2

ID	Source	Tier
S0159	'African Union and Somalia denounce Israel's recognition of Somaliland', France 24 (26 December 2025)	T3
S0160	'Somaliland: AU Mission to Somaliland Says Recognition Overdue', The East African (1 March 2006)	T3
S0161	'Factbox: Ethiopia-Somalia dispute, what to know', Anadolu Agency	T3
S0162	Statement on Georgia by G7 Foreign Ministers (27 August 2008)	T1
S0163	'EU-Funded Report on August War', Civil Georgia (30 September 2009)	T3
S0164	Statement by the President of the Russian Federation (26 August 2008), text via Hürriyet	T3
S0165	United Nations, Security Council, 6143rd meeting (15 June 2009), Meetings Coverage SC/9681	T2
S0166	'Von der Leyen to raise Syria's withdrawal of recognition of Georgia's occupied regions', Georgia Today (17 September 2026)	T3
S0167	UNSC Res 541 (18 November 1983), text via Refworld	T2
S0168	United Nations, Security Council, Meetings Coverage SC/8074 (28 April 2004)	T2
S0169	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the TRNC, 'Relations with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)'	T2
S0170	Organization of Turkic States, 'Ninth Summit of the Organization of Turkic States was held in Samarkand' (November 2022)	T2
S0171	'Tufan Erhürman: Who Is the New Turkish Cypriot Leader', Fast Forward (October 2025)	T3
S0172	Balaji Srinivasan, 'The Network State in One Sentence'	T3
S0173	Peter Radan, 'Post-Secession International Borders: A Critical Analysis of the Opinions of the Badinter Arbitration Commission' (2000) 24 MULR 50	T3
S0174	Joint Communiqué of the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China (29 September 1972)	T1
S0175	US-PRC Joint Communiqué (1 January 1979), FRUS 1977-1980 vol XIII doc 171	T1
S0176	Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the PRC and Honduras (26 March 2023), copy via GlobalSecurity	T2
S0177	Susanne Tarkowski Tempelhof, 'Bitnation Year 1 Summary' (Medium, July 2015)	T3
S0178	'Asgardia: the world's first space nation takes flight', CNN (November 2017)	T3
S0179	' Próspera critica fallo de la CSJ sobre inconstitucionalidad de las ZEDE', El Heraldo (20 September 2024)	T3
S0180	'Bir Tawil: the stateless land of many and no rulers', Egyptian Streets (20 July 2023)	T3
S0181	'A fictional country is reigniting real territorial fears', Foreign Policy (25 September 2019)	T3
S0182	Frank Jacobs, 'Westarctica: the micronation with a real-world purpose', Big Think (16 February 2024)	T3
S0183	'Trends', Reason (1 October 1972)	T3
S0184	'Phuket cops hunting down Thai-American seasteaders', Khaosod English (18 April 2019)	T3
S0185	Harry Hobbs and George Williams, Micronations and the Search for Sovereignty (CUP 2022)	T3
S0186	'Prospects for Judicial Settlement of the Danube Border Dispute Between Croatia and Serbia', Opinio Juris (26 November 2021)	T3
S0187	Gabriel Rossman, 'Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close (But Still So Far): Assessing Liberland's Claim of Statehood' (2016) 17 Chicago Journal of International Law	T3
S0188	AidData, Chinese development finance dataset, project record 39825 (Dominica)	T2
S0189	'Nauru severs diplomatic ties with Taiwan, to seek full relations with China', Radio Free Asia (15 January 2024)	T3
S0190	Joint Communiqué on the Resumption of Diplomatic Relations between the PRC and Nicaragua (Tianjin, 10 December 2021), via GlobalSecurity	T2
S0191	OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, AHG/Res 16(I), 'Border Disputes among African States' (Cairo, July 1964)	T2
S0192	German History in Documents and Images, 'The Hallstein Doctrine (June 28, 1956)' (statement of the Federal Government)	T2
S0193	UNGA Res 48/265 (24 August 1994), record	T2
S0194	Statement on United States Recognition of the Cook Islands, Daily Comp Pres Docs 2023 No 00833 (25 September 2023)	T1
S0195	UN Votes project, 'A/RES/ES-10/23' (votes by member)	T3
S0196	Human Rights Voices, 'U.N. General Assembly Resolution: Endorsement of the New York Declaration ... A/80/L.1/Rev.1' (votes against and abstentions)	T3
S0197	United Nations, Meetings Coverage GA/12707 (12 September 2025)	T2
S0198	UNGA Res ES-10/23 (10 May 2024), text	T2

ID	Source	Tier
S0199	EL Kaplan and P Meier, 'Nonparametric Estimation from Incomplete Observations' (1958) 53 Journal of the American Statistical Association 457	T3
S0200	Decrees of the President of the Russian Federation No 147 of 17 March 2014 (Crimea) and Nos 71 and 72 of 21 February 2022 (Donetsk, Luhansk)	T1
S0201	Decrees of the President of the Russian Federation Nos 685 and 686 of 29 September 2022 (Zaporizhzhia and Kherson)	T3
S0202	Reports of the joint communiqué of 26 May 2018 (Sputnik via GlobalSecurity, 26 May 2018)	T3
S0203	'Chad cuts diplomatic ties with Taiwan', China Daily (6 August 2006)	T3
S0204	'China, Grenada resume diplomatic relations', People's Daily (21 January 2005)	T3
S0205	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, country pages (bilateral relations): North Macedonia, Liberia, Senegal	T1
S0206	Xinhua report of the joint communiqué of 26 December 2016 (via GlobalSecurity)	T3
S0207	'China, Gambia resume diplomatic ties', People's Daily Online (Xinhua, 17 March 2016)	T3
S0208	Melody Chen, 'Vanuatu switches allegiance back to China', Taipei Times (16 December 2004)	T3
S0209	'Newsmakers', Asiaweek (30 July 1999)	T3
S0210	'China, Panama establish diplomatic relations', People's Daily Online (13 June 2017)	T3
S0211	Czesław Tubilewicz, 'Taiwan's Balkan Option' (2001) 12(1) Diplomacy and Statecraft 161	T3
S0212	James Ker-Lindsay, 'Engagement without recognition' (2015) 91 International Affairs 267	T3
S0213	Bridget Coggins, 'Friends in High Places' (2011) 65 International Organization 433	T3
S0214	Summary of Practice of the Secretary-General as Depositary of Multilateral Treaties, UN Doc ST/LEG/7/Rev.1 (1999) para 86	T2
S0215	Independent Diplomat, 'Past projects'	T2
S0216	Joint Declaration following the First European Union–Central Asia Summit (Samarkand, 4 April 2025) para 4	T1
S0217	'Georgia's South Ossetia cancels referendum on joining Russia', Al Jazeera (31 May 2022)	T3
S0218	ICJ, Kosovo advisory proceedings, verbatim record of 7 December 2009 (list of participants)	T2
S0219	Letter dated 6 December 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, UN Doc A/79/704	T1
S0220	Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958–1960, vol XIV, Africa, doc 62 (editorial note on Somaliland)	T1
S0221	Iva Gajić, 'Liberlend pojačava diplomatske aktivnosti za priznanje', Radio Slobodna Evropa (19 July 2022), quoting the Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs	T3
S0222	Christopher Hitchens, 'Uncorking the Genie', MERIP Reports No 122 (March 1984)	T3
S0223	UN Security Council, 2503rd meeting (15 December 1983), UN Doc S/PV.2503	T2
S0224	UNSC Res 402 (22 December 1976)	T2
S0225	OAU Council of Ministers, Resolution on Non-recognition of South African Bantustans (Port Louis, 1976)	T2
S0226	UNSC Res 216 (12 November 1965); UNSC Res 662 (9 August 1990)	T2
S0227	Foreign Relations of the United States, 1934, vol III, doc 156 (El Salvador and Manchukuo)	T1
S0228	Office of the President (ROC) news release 15 March 2013 (Tuvalu); Jamaica Gleaner 13 August 2026 (Saint Vincent); La Nación 12 July 2024 (Paraguay); Taiwan Politics Database (others)	T2
S0229	Gabriel Rossman, 'Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close (But Still So Far)' (2016) 17(1) Chicago Journal of International Law 306	T3
S0230	'Moscow, Sokhumi Sign Treaty on "Alliance and Strategic Partnership"', Civil Georgia (24 November 2014)	T3
S0231	Maciej Falkowski, 'Russia is absorbing South Ossetia', OSW Analyses (25 March 2015)	T3
S0232	Peace Treaty between Estonia and Russia (Tartu, 2 February 1920) art II, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, 'Tartu Peace, 2 February 1920'	T1
S0233	Press Release Issued by the Department of State (23 July 1940), FRUS 1940, vol I, doc 412	T1
S0234	Simon Kofe and Jess Marinaccio, 'Tuvalu Constitution updated: culture, climate change and decolonisation', Devpolicy Blog (21 September 2023)	T3
S0235	Falepili Union Treaty between Australia and Tuvalu (signed 9 November 2023, in force 28 August 2024)	T1
S0236	New Zealand MFAT, 'Pacific Islands Forum Declaration on Statehood and Sea-Level Rise' (5 December 2023)	T1
S0237	Riigikogu, 'The Riigikogu approved establishing of Luxembourg data embassy'	T1
S0238	'Estonia becomes first country in world to offer e-residency', The Baltic Times (1 December 2014)	T3

ID	Source	Tier
S0239	ICJ, 'Mexico institutes proceedings against Ecuador and requests the Court to indicate provisional measures', Press Release No 2024/30 (11 April 2024)	T2
S0240	UN Security Council, 9609th meeting (18 April 2024), Meetings Coverage SC/15670	T2
S0241	UN General Assembly, ES-10, 49th meeting (10 May 2024), Meetings Coverage GA/12599	T2
S0242	IMF, 'Kosovo Becomes the International Monetary Fund's 186th Member', Press Release No 09/240 (29 June 2009)	T2
S0243	Legal Status of Eastern Greenland (Denmark v Norway) (1933) PCIJ Rep Series A/B No 53	T2
S0244	Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, 22 USC §§ 611–621	T1
S0245	Antigua News Room, 'Antigua and Barbuda Establishes Diplomatic Relations with Cyberstate' (8 July 2023)	T3
S0246	Jeff Yang, 'How Andrew Lee Became the 'Crown Prince of Korea' and Made a Digital Kingdom', The Daily Beast (2 February 2024)	T3
S0247	'Antigua and Barbuda is already benefitting from its relationship with the Joseon Cybernation', Pointe Xpress (10 July 2023)	T3
S0248	OAS, 'Convention on Rights and Duties of States (A-40): Signatories and Ratifications'	T2
S0249	Charter of the Organization of American States (1948) arts 13-14	T1
S0250	Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933) art 6	T1
S0251	Organic Law of the ZEDES (Decree No 120-2013) art 1, unofficial English translation	T1
S0252	Próspera, 'Myths vs Facts'	T2
S0253	'Honduras Próspera Seeks Talks on Charter City Rules as Fuel Blockades Hit the North', The Rio Times (29 September 2026)	T3
S0254	'Honduran Critics Call Próspera's New Officials a 'Modern Coup'', The Rio Times (19 September 2026)	T3
S0255	'\$100 millones invertirán en la zede de Choloma', La Prensa (5 October 2020)	T3
S0256	Martin de La Garanderie, 'Transnistria, the thorn in Moldova's side' (28 April 2026)	T3
S0257	Pleşca and Kingston-Cox, 'Transnistria: Pain-Free Reintegration?' (11 March 2026)	T3
S0258	Vladimir Solovyov, 'Moldova Floats a New Approach to Its Transnistria Conundrum' (31 March 2026)	T3
S0259	Emanuele Bonini, 'Moldova wants to join the EU by 2029; Kallas says Transnistria is not a problem', Euneews (5 October 2026)	T3
S0260	'Pashinyan says Armenia always recognized NK as part of Azerbaijan', Armenpress (2026)	T3
S0261	'Karabakh leader dissolves all state institutions: Artsakh Republic ceases to exist', ARKA (28 September 2023)	T3
S0262	'Nearly 100K ethnic Armenians fled to Armenia', Meduza (29 September 2023)	T3
S0263	Joint Declaration of Azerbaijan, Armenia and the United States (Washington, 8 August 2025)	T1
S0264	ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 'Tokelau Referendum on Self-Government (2007)'	T3
S0265	UN Press Release GA/COL/3166 (24 October 2007)	T2
S0266	'New Caledonia rejects independence from France in third vote', Al Jazeera (12 December 2021)	T3
S0267	Valentin Châtelet, 'Azerbaijani operation spread anti-France content amid 2024 New Caledonia unrest' (7 February 2025)	T3
S0268	Emanuel Xhindi, 'France accuses Azerbaijan of interfering in New Caledonia riots', JURIST (18 May 2024)	T3
S0269	Nic Maclellan, 'After Bougival: New Caledonia's failed constitutional reform' (4 May 2026)	T3
S0270	Paco Milhiet, 'New Caledonia's election settles little' (17 July 2026)	T3
S0271	'China's shadow looms as New Caledonia decides whether to leave France', SCMP (October 2020)	T3
S0272	I Constantin, 'The Birth of a Nation, on Paper' (3 September 2026)	T3
S0273	'Bougainville presses for self-government by 2027, independence by 2030', Islands Business (26 June 2026)	T3
S0274	Anna-Karina Hermkens, 'Bougainville wants independence...', The Conversation / Asia Pacific Report (7 June 2025)	T3
S0275	Act No 473 of 12 June 2009 on Greenland Self-Government, s 21	T1
S0276	'NATO and Denmark agree to boost Arctic security after Trump walks back on Greenland threats', Euronews (23 January 2026)	T3
S0277	John Curtis, 'The new US--Denmark--Greenland agreement' (29 September 2026)	T2
S0278	'Agreement between Greenland, Denmark and the United States' (22 September 2026)	T1
S0279	CIVICUS Monitor, 'Anti-government protest turns violent in Solomons' (1 December 2021)	T3
S0280	'Tonga suffers massive job and business losses', Matangi Tonga (30 November 2006)	T3

APPENDIX F

The Codebook

THIS APPENDIX reproduces the definitions that govern the dataset. The dataset itself, with every record and its sources, is published with this book.

MATRIX STATUS CODES (SHEET MATRIX)

Code	Label	Definition
A	Current formal recognition verified	An act of recognition by the UN member state is documented and no later withdrawal, freeze or qualification is documented at the cut-off date. The only status counted in current recognition totals.
B	No formal recognition identified	A documented search found no act of recognition. Not a claim that recognition is legally impossible or that no contact has occurred.
C	Former recognition withdrawn	Recognition is documented and a later official act withdrawing it is documented. Termination of diplomatic relations alone does not qualify; see code D.
D	Suspended, frozen, qualified or requiring legal assessment	Includes announced freezes (common in SADR practice), suspension of relations, and acts whose effect on recognition is legally contested.
E	Conflicting or insufficient evidence	Sources conflict, or the only evidence is a claim by the entity, by a rival state, or by an aggregator, without a verifiable act of the recognising state.

ACT-TYPE CODES (SHEET EVENT_REGISTER)

Code	Label	Definition
RS-EXP	Express recognition of a state	Formal statement, note, communiqué or instrument expressly recognising the entity as a state.
RS-IMP	Recognition implied by conduct	Conduct from which recognition is inferred (for example, a bilateral treaty concluded as between states). The basis for the inference must be stated.
RG	Recognition of a government	Recognition of an authority as the government of a state. Primary code for most acts concerning the Republic of China; see note 6.
DR	Establishment of diplomatic relations	Agreement to establish diplomatic relations. Recorded separately from recognition even where announced together.
CR	Consular relations or official representation	Consular posts, trade or representative offices, liaison offices.
TR	Treaty or other official dealing	Agreement or official dealing whose bearing on recognition requires assessment.
NLM	Liberation movement, belligerent or provisional authority	Recognition of a movement or authority short of statehood (for example, recognition of the Polisario Front as a representative).
OB	Admission or observer status	Admission to, or observer status at, an international organisation.
FZ	Freeze or suspension of recognition	Announced freeze, suspension or 'reconsideration' of recognition.
QL	Qualification	Statement narrowing or conditioning an earlier act without withdrawing it.
WR	Withdrawal of recognition	Official act withdrawing recognition. Distinct from SV.
SV	Severance of diplomatic relations	Termination of diplomatic relations, which does not by itself withdraw recognition.
RE	Resumption	Restoration of recognition or of relations after an FZ, WR or SV event.
SW	Switch of recognition (Chinese representation)	Transfer of recognition between the ROC and the PRC as the government of China.
DS	Dissolution or change of status of the entity	The entity ceases to exist or merges, ending recognition by operation of fact.

CONFIDENCE LEVELS

Code	Label	Definition
H	High	Primary act of the recognising state located (gazette, foreign ministry statement, joint communiqué, treaty, note verbale) and accessible or archived.
M	Medium	Primary act not located, but the event is corroborated by an international organisation document, by the entity's official record and an independent reputable source, or by peer-reviewed scholarship citing the act.
L	Low	Single secondary source, or entity or rival-state claim only. Low-confidence rows cannot support status A.

SOURCE TIERS (SHEET SOURCE_LEDGER)

Code	Label	Definition
T1	Act of the recognising state	Official gazette, foreign ministry or presidency statement, joint communiqué, treaty text, parliamentary record.
T2	International organisation or counterpart official record	UN, AU, OAS, Council of Europe documents; official record of the entity concerned.
T3	Scholarship and reputable press	Peer-reviewed literature, university press monographs, wire services and established national press.
T4	Aggregators and advocacy lists	Lists compiled by advocacy groups, encyclopaedias, unsourced compilations. Used only to locate leads, never as the sole basis for a row.

REGISTER DEFINITIONS

Code	Label	Definition
1	Matrix; Event_Register	Core entities: non-member entities claiming statehood with recognition by at least one UN member state at some point.
2	Register_2	Comparative international legal persons outside UN membership or with special status: Cook Islands, Holy See, Niue, Sovereign Military Order of Malta, Vatican City State.
3	Register_3	Exceptional, historical, short-lived and non-territorial cases (for example, Biafra, the South African homelands, Joseon, the Federation of the Autonomous Priories).
4	Register_4	Candidates investigated and excluded, with the documented reason.

Code	Label	Definition
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CONVENTIONS

Code	Label	Definition
1	Name forms	UN member names follow the UN Member States page (accessed 10 October 2026), including 'Naoero' for Nauru. A short name column is provided for prose and sorting. From v1.6 the short name is also 'Naoero', following the constitutional amendment of May 2026 and the Government's announcement of July 2026; prose gives 'Naoero (Nauru)' on first mention in each chapter. Source titles that use 'Nauru' are left as published.
2	Dates	Dates in ISO 8601 (YYYY-MM-DD). Announcement and effective dates are recorded separately; publication dates of sources are recorded in Source_Ledger only.
3	Predecessor states	Acts by predecessor states (for example, the USSR, Yugoslavia, the German Democratic Republic) are recorded in Event_Register with a note on succession; they do not populate the 193-row Matrix.
4	Non-member recognisers	Recognition by non-members (for example, the Holy See of the Republic of China, or mutual recognition among Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria) is recorded in Event_Register under 'Recogniser type' and excluded from Matrix totals.
5	Neutral naming	Entities are named by their official names with a neutral descriptor; no row implies a view on the legal status of any entity.
6	Republic of China	Matrix code A for the ROC column records current formal diplomatic relations with the Republic of China. The legal character of each act (RG, RS-EXP or ambiguous) is recorded per event. The ROC column is sui generis and is reported separately in all comparative totals.

ADDITIONAL ACT CODES

Code	Label	Definition
WR-CLAIM	Claimed withdrawal	A withdrawal asserted by a third party (usually a rival state) without a located act of the recognising state.
D-SEQ	Contested sequence	A run of events whose legal character (freeze, severance or withdrawal) cannot yet be resolved.
(blank)	No act identified	Row documenting a negative search result.

CORROBORATION RULE

Admission against interest: where the state opposing an entity's recognition officially acknowledges that a third state has recognised it (for example, Serbian statements on Sudan and the Bahamas), the acknowledgement is treated as strong corroboration and supports confidence M even where the recognising state's own instrument has not been located. Conversely, a rival state's claim of withdrawal, without an act of the recognising

state, supports only status E.

Version 1.6 (12 October 2026): short name ‘Naoero’ adopted (S0156, S0157); Brazil’s recognition of Palestine re-dated to 3 December 2010 and the Palestine timeline for 2010 adjusted from 113 to 114; Iran’s annex date flagged; Malta’s 2025 confirmation and Belgium’s conditional announcement recorded; Czech MFA source added for Czechia; Syria’s recognition of Kosovo dated 29 October 2025 from the Syrian statement and the duplicate record E0217 corrected; sources S0139 to S0157 added.

Version 1.7 (16 October 2026): sources S0195 to S0201 added (votes, ES-10/23 text, Kaplan–Meier method, Kremlin decrees); Durability sheet added (Kaplan–Meier inputs); no change to any status code.

Version 1.8 (17 October 2026): dates of nine switches from Taipei to Beijing verified against communiqués and official records (E1310, E1314, E1326, E1329, E1342, E1354, E1361, E1363) and the Vanuatu (2004) and Papua New Guinea (1999) episodes corrected; sources S0202 to S0218 added; no status code changed.

Version 1.9 (17 October 2026): duplicate events E0042 and E0043 (Syria) removed; sources S0219 to S0229 added (Ecuador letter to the United Nations; United States position on Somaliland in 1960; Croatian statement on Liberland; contemporaneous evidence on Pakistan and Northern Cyprus, 1983; resolutions on non-recognition; dates of Taipei partners); no status code changed.

Glossary

This glossary defines terms as they are used in this book. Where a term has a wider or contested meaning in the literature, the definition given is the one the book applies.

Act of recognition A unilateral act by which a state declares or shows by its conduct that it treats an entity as a state, or an authority as the government of a state. It may be express or implied.

Admission against interest An acknowledgement by the state that opposes an entity that a third state has recognised that entity. The dataset treats such an acknowledgement as strong corroboration of the recognition.

Advisory opinion An opinion given by the International Court of Justice at the request of an organ or agency authorised to ask for one under article 96 of the Charter. It is not binding on states, though its statements of the law carry authority.

Belligerency, recognition of Recognition that an insurgent movement controls territory and conducts hostilities on a scale that brings the law of armed conflict into play between it and the recognising state. It does not amount to recognition of a state.

Claimed withdrawal A withdrawal of recognition asserted by a third party, usually the state that opposes the entity, without a located act of the state said to have withdrawn. Coded WR-CLAIM in the dataset.

Collective non-recognition A call by an organ of the United Nations, or by a group of states, on all states not to recognise a situation or an entity, as in Security Council resolutions 217 (1965) and 541 (1983).

Collective recognition The view that admission of an entity to the United Nations, which requires a recommendation of the Security Council and a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly, amounts to recognition of its statehood by the Organization. Admission does not oblige any member to recognise the new member in its bilateral relations.

Constitutive theory The view that an entity becomes a state, as a person in international law, only through recognition by other states.

Core register The eight entities studied in Part II: the State of Palestine, Kosovo, the Sahrawi Republic, the Republic of China (Taiwan), Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Somaliland and Northern Cyprus. Register 1 in the dataset.

Cut-off date 10 October 2026, the date at which every count in this book is stated.

De facto recognition Recognition, often provisional, that an entity or authority exercises effective control, without acceptance of its full legal status. The term is used in older practice; it is not a code in the dataset.

De jure recognition Recognition of an entity as a state, or of an authority as a government, with full legal effect.

Declaratory theory The view that statehood is a matter of fact, determined by criteria such as those of the Montevideo Convention, and that recognition declares an existing status without creating it.

Depositary The state, organisation or official, often the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to whom a multilateral treaty entrusts its original text and the instruments of ratification and accession. Participation depends on the treaty's final clauses, not on membership of the United Nations.

Digital polity A community that claims some attributes of a state without claiming territory, such as the Joseon Cybernation or Bitnation. Distinct in this book from a network state.

Diplomatic relations Relations between states conducted through permanent missions, established by mutual consent under article 2 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Their establishment implies recognition; their severance does not withdraw it.

Engagement without recognition Contact between a state and an entity it does not recognise, through liaison offices, trade missions, technical agreements or meetings of officials, designed to stop short of an act of recognition. The term is associated with the work of James Ker-Lindsay.

Estrada doctrine The position, stated by the Mexican foreign minister Genaro Estrada in 1930, that a state should not pronounce on the legitimacy of foreign governments but should continue or withdraw its diplomatic representatives as it sees fit.

Express recognition Recognition by a statement, note, communiqué or instrument that names the entity and recognises it as a state. Coded RS-EXP.

Free association A relationship in which a self-governing territory conducts its own affairs, including in most cases its external relations, while a former administering state retains defined responsibilities with its consent. The Cook Islands and Niue stand in free association with New Zealand.

Freeze An announced suspension of recognition, or of the relations that rest on it, that stops short of withdrawal. Coded FZ. A freeze leaves the earlier act in place and can be reversed by resumption.

- Hallstein doctrine* The policy of the Federal Republic of Germany, from 1955 until about 1969, of treating the recognition of the German Democratic Republic by a third state as an unfriendly act, to which it might respond by ending relations.
- Implied recognition* Recognition inferred from conduct that admits no other interpretation, such as the conclusion of a bilateral treaty as between states or the establishment of diplomatic relations. Coded RS-IMP.
- Joint communiqué* A statement issued by two governments on the establishment, restoration or change of their relations. In the practice of the People's Republic of China, the instrument by which a state transfers relations from Taipei to Beijing.
- Kaplan–Meier estimate* A method of estimating the share of cases that survive beyond each point in time when some cases are still running at the end of the observation period. Used in chapter 15 to estimate the durability of recognition.
- Micronation* A self-proclaimed entity, usually small, that claims to be a state and is recognised by no member of the United Nations.
- Montevideo criteria* The qualifications of a state as a person of international law listed in article 1 of the Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933): a permanent population, a defined territory, government, and capacity to enter into relations with other states.
- Network state* In the model of Balaji Srinivasan, a highly aligned online community with a capacity for collective action that crowdfunds territory around the world and seeks, in time, diplomatic recognition from existing states. The term 'network state theory of statehood' is the author's.
- Non-member observer state* The status in the General Assembly held by the Holy See and, since resolution 67/19 (2012), by the State of Palestine.
- Non-recognition, duty of* The obligation of states not to recognise as lawful a situation created by a serious breach of an obligation arising under a peremptory norm of general international law, as stated in article 41(2) of the Articles on State Responsibility.
- Opposing state* In this book, the state from whose territory or claim an entity seeks to separate, or which otherwise contests its status: for example Serbia in relation to Kosovo, Morocco in relation to the Sahrawi Republic and the People's Republic of China in relation to the Republic of China.
- Qualification* A statement that narrows or conditions an earlier act of recognition without withdrawing it. Coded QL.
- Recognition of governments* Recognition of an authority as the government of an existing state. Distinct from recognition of a state. The relations of states with the Republic of China are recorded as recognition of a government in most cases.
- Regional group* One of the five groups into which the members of the United Nations are organised for elections and the distribution of seats: the African, Asia-Pacific,

Eastern European, Latin American and Caribbean, and Western European and Others groups. The United States takes part in the Western European and Others Group as an observer, and Türkiye in both that group and the Asia-Pacific Group; this book counts both with the Western group.

Registration of treaties The obligation of members of the United Nations under article 102 of the Charter to register their treaties with the Secretariat, which publishes them. Treaties to which only non-members are party may be filed and recorded.

Remedial secession The contested view that a people subjected to grave and persistent denial of internal self-determination may, as a last resort, separate from the state.

Resumption The restoration of recognition, or of relations, after a freeze, withdrawal or severance. Coded RE.

Severance of relations The termination of diplomatic relations. It does not by itself withdraw recognition. Coded SV.

Status codes The five codes used in the matrix of the dataset: A, recognition documented and in force; B, no act of recognition identified; C, recognition withdrawn; D, recognition frozen, suspended or qualified; E, conflicting or insufficient evidence.

Stimson doctrine The position, stated by the United States Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson in 1932, that the United States would not recognise any situation, treaty or agreement brought about by means contrary to the Pact of Paris.

Switch The transfer of a state's diplomatic relations from the Republic of China to the People's Republic of China, or the reverse. Coded SW.

Terra nullius Territory that belongs to no state and may be acquired by occupation. The International Court of Justice held in *Western Sahara* that territory inhabited by tribes or peoples having a social and political organisation was not terra nullius.

Uti possidetis juris The principle that a new state inherits the administrative or colonial boundaries in force at the date of its independence, applied in Africa by the Cairo resolution of 1964 and in the former Yugoslavia by the Arbitration Commission.

Withdrawal of recognition An official act by which a state revokes an earlier recognition. Coded WR. The dataset distinguishes it from a freeze, a severance of relations and a claimed withdrawal.

Bibliography

The bibliography lists the works and documents cited in the notes, arranged in the manner of OSCOLA. Press reports and the records of the dataset are cited in full in the notes and are listed here only where they are the principal source for a proposition of the text. Encyclopaedias, consulted to locate leads, are not listed.

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