# First Minister John Swinney Urges UK Recognition of Palestine and Nationalization of Network Rail



**First Minister John Swinney Urges UK's Recognition of Palestine**

John Swinney, the First Minister of Scotland, has called on the UK to recognize Palestine as a country to help bring stability to the Middle East. In letters to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Labour leader Keir Starmer, Swinney pressed for the UK to follow the example of Ireland, Spain, and Norway in recognizing Palestine.

Swinney's call aligns with the Scottish National Party's (SNP) ongoing position, advocating for a ceasefire in Gaza amidst ongoing Israel-Palestine tensions. The First Minister emphasized the need for steps like halting arms sales to Israel and ensuring the return of hostages to address the humanitarian issues in Gaza.

Labour's response indicated support for a two-state solution but did not commit to immediate recognition of Palestine. Swinney also hinted at SNP MPs pushing a binding vote in the House of Commons if the UK government does not act.

**Swinney Calls for Nationalization of Network Rail in England**

In a related political development, John Swinney has called for Labour to nationalize Network Rail in England. This follows the Scottish Government's move to bring ScotRail into public ownership and other rail infrastructure investments in Scotland.

During his visit to the Levenmouth rail link project in Fife, Swinney urged Labour to mirror Scotland's approach, emphasizing the importance of investing in infrastructure to counter austerity. Shadow Scottish Secretary Ian Murray criticized Swinney's call, noting Labour's plans to nationalize and modernize UK rail services through a new publicly-owned entity working alongside ScotRail.