

Israel Bans Entry of Muslim, Pro-BDS Congresswomen Omar, Tlaib

Israel has decided to bar two Muslim pro-boycott, divest and sanction (BDS) movement members of Congress from entering Israel over fears of provocation that they would cause and their unwillingness to coordinate with Israeli authorities, according to multiple reports.

Officials had reportedly been examining the official wording of the decision with legal authorities. Interior Minister Aryeh Deri announced the decision late Thursday afternoon.

According to a press statement, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Foreign Minister Israel Katz and Minister of Strategic Affairs Gilad Erdan explained that “the state of Israel respects the U.S. Congress, as part of the close alliance, but it is inconceivable that anyone who wishes to harm the state of Israel will be allowed” to visit.

“Israel has decided. We won’t enable the members of Congress to enter the country,” Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely told *Kan News*. “We won’t allow those who deny our right to exist in this world to enter Israel. In principle, this is a very justified decision.”

Rep. Ilhan Omar, D-Minnesota, and Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Michigan, were expected to arrive in Israel at the end of the week. Reportedly, they have been coordinating their visit with Palestinian figures.

Israeli law bars entry into the country of those who support a boycott of the Jewish state. However, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appeared inclined to allow Omar and Tlaib to visit following pressure from leading figures in the U.S. Democratic

Party.

The decision to bar reflects Israel's concern over potential incitement on the part of the two congresswomen while they are in Israel or the Palestinian-administered territories.

Omar and Tlaib have made statements that included anti-Semitic tropes, have supported anti-Israel groups and have questioned Israel's right to its land.

In July, Omar introduced a House resolution in support of BDS, which Tlaib co-sponsored. Tlaib compared the BDS movement to boycotts against Nazi Germany.

Omar has insinuated that the AIPAC pro-Israel lobby group in Washington pays off members of Congress to support Israel.

She and Tlaib have close ties with CAIR, the Council of American-Islamic Relations, which is believed to be linked with Hamas. {eo}

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