

Israel Reverses Course, Will Allow Pro-BDS Congresswoman to Enter

After Israel announced its decision on Thursday to bar two U.S. Muslim pro-BDS congresswomen, Ilhan Omar, D-Minnesota, and Rashida Tlaib, D-Michigan, from entering the Jewish state, Interior Minister Aryeh Deri approved the latter's request to pay a visit on humanitarian grounds to see her grandmother.

Tlaib then decided not to go because it would "kill a piece of me."

On Friday, Tlaib's Twitter message said that "silencing me & treating me like a criminal is not what she wants for me. It would kill a piece of me. I have decided that visiting my grandmother under these oppressive conditions stands against everything I believe in—fighting against racism, oppression & injustice."

Israeli Interior Minister Aryeh Deri reacted by saying that "apparently her hate for Israel overcomes her love for her grandmother."

In explaining the decision to bar the pro-BDS congresswomen, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu charged that their trip was aimed at promoting a boycott of Israel and delegitimizing its existence.

He added, however, that "if Congresswoman Tlaib submits a humanitarian request to visit her relatives, the minister of interior has announced that he will consider her request on the condition that she pledges not to act to promote boycotts against Israel during her visit."

News then emerged that Tlaib had sent a letter to the Israeli

interior minister, dated Thursday, writing: "I would like to request admittance to Israel in order to visit my relatives, and specifically my grandmother, who is in her 90s and lives in Beit Ur al-Fouqa," a village located in the Ramallah area.

She added that "this could be my last opportunity to see her" and pledged to "respect any restrictions," saying that she "will not promote boycotts against Israel during my visit."

In accepting the request, Deri voiced the hope that Tlaib would, in fact, stand by her commitment and maintain the humanitarian character of her visit.

In an interview on *Kan* public radio on Friday morning, Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan voiced support for accepting Tlaib's humanitarian request.

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