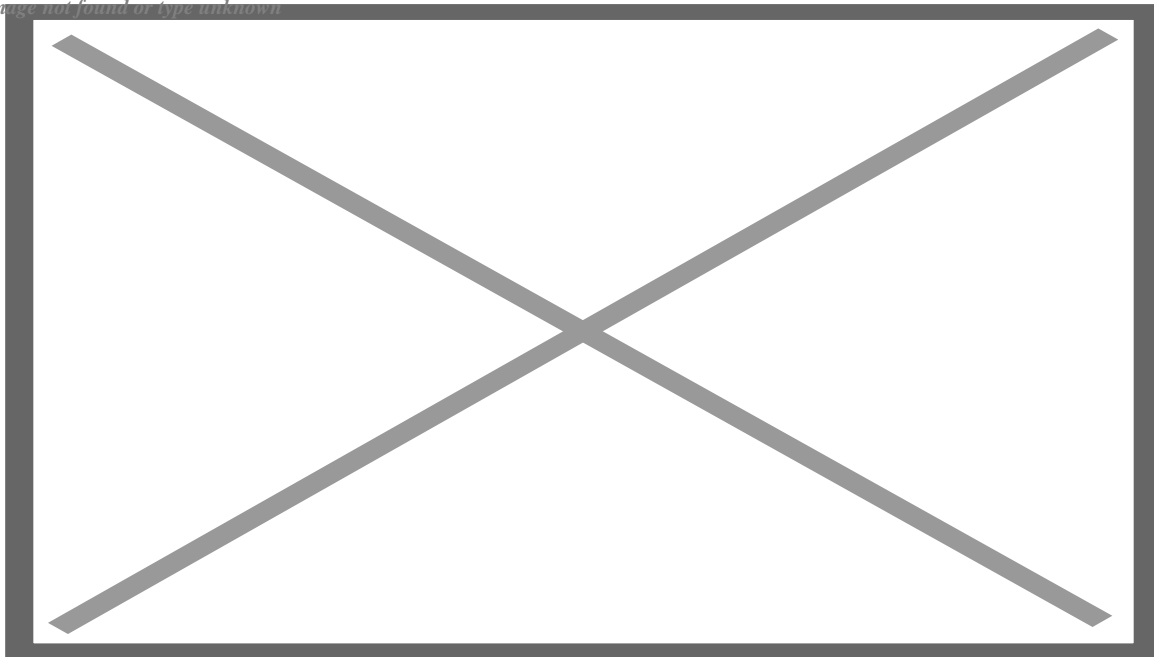


Brazil recalls ambassador to Israel in row over Lula's Gaza comments

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Minister Mauro Vieira summoned the Israeli ambassador, Daniel Zonshine, to appear at the Itamaraty Palace. | Photo: @Itamaraty_EN

Brasilia, February 19 (RHC)-- Brazil has recalled its ambassador to Israel, and Israel says Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is not welcome in the country in a diplomatic rift after Lula compared Israel's military campaign in Gaza to the Holocaust.

"What's happening in the Gaza Strip with the Palestinian people hasn't happened at any other moment in history. Actually, it has happened: when Hitler decided to kill the Jews," Lula said on Sunday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described Lula's comments as "disgraceful and grave." On Monday, Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz announced that Lula is not welcome in the Middle Eastern country until he takes back his comments.

“We will not forget nor forgive. It is a serious anti-Semitic attack. In my name and the name of the citizens of Israel, tell President Lula that he is persona non grata in Israel until he takes it back,” Katz told Brazil’s ambassador, according to a statement from Katz’s office.

In response, Brazil’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it would summon Israel’s ambassador to Brazil, Daniel Zonshine, for a meeting in Rio de Janeiro. “He [Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira] also recalled the Brazilian ambassador in Tel Aviv, Frederico Meyer, for consultations. He will depart for Brazil tomorrow,” the Foreign Ministry added on Monday.

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