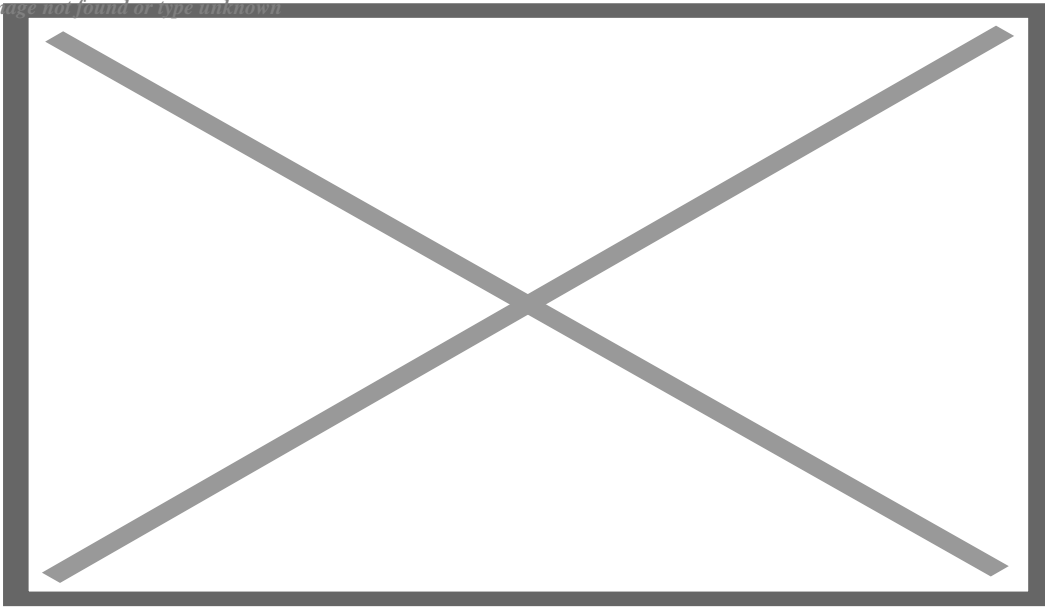


Delta Airlines changes uniform rules after Palestinian flag pin outcry

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Atlanta, July 16 (RHC)-- Delta Air Lines has changed its employee uniform policy following a controversy, involving two flight attendants who wore Palestinian flag pins, triggered by a social media post and the United States carrier's "unacceptable" response to it.

The new dress code, which took effect on Monday, prohibits employees from wearing pins representing any country besides that of the United States.

A passenger posted a photograph last week of two flight attendants – without their consent – wearing Palestine flag pins and referred to them as " Hamas badges." The post went viral on X and prompted a wave of criticism towards the airline.

Shortly after the images were published, Delta's official account on X responded: "Nothing to worry, this is being investigated already." It then added: "I hear you as I'd be terrified as well."

The airline subsequently deleted that post and issued an apology for what it described as a "hurtful post" saying, "On Wednesday, we removed a reply that was not in line with our values."

Delta's Association of Flight Attendants, in a letter to the company's chief executive Ed Bastian on July 11, said the flight attendants were subjected to "harassment after pictures taken without their consent were circulated on social media with false, inflammatory, and discriminatory allegations".

The union said Delta's social media responses "showed contempt for current employees, and the subsequent lack of public response and concern for the safety of all crew members is unacceptable", as it called for a public apology from management.

"It is deeply troubling to publicly witness Delta seemingly affirm bigoted and inflammatory comments," the union wrote.

"Targeting any individuals on the basis of their nationality violates anti-discrimination laws, is antithetical to Delta's stated commitment to inclusivity and respect, and encourages a hostile work environment."

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the country's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy group, called Delta's response the latest example of "anti-Palestinian racism".

Before the uproar, the two flight attendants wearing the Palestine flag pins aligned with Delta's dress code policy, which gave employees more flexibility with uniform accessories.

Delta's policy shift reflects the ongoing tensions surrounding Israel's war on Hamas, which has triggered protests across the US and on university campuses.

"We are proud of our diverse base of employees and customers and the foundation of our brand," the Atlanta-based airline said in a statement. "We are taking this step to help ensure a safe, comfortable and welcoming environment for all," it added, saying the "employee responsible no longer supports Delta's social channels".

Since the war began on October 7, more than 38,700 Palestinians have been killed by Israel's relentless bombardment of the enclave, according to Gaza's Ministry of Health.

Edward Ahmed Mitchell, CAIR's national deputy executive director, told The Washington Post newspaper that the group welcomed Delta's apology and the "hope is that this incident will begin to slowly, slowly move the needle in a different direction".

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