

*French leader decries
unprecedented diplomatic scandal
after Israel bars European MPs*



European Parliament lawmaker Rima Hassan, who was denied entry into the occupied

Palestinian territories by the Israeli regime on February 23, 2025. (Photo by AFP)

Paris, February 26 (RHC)-- A recent decision by the Israeli regime to deny entry to two European Union lawmakers has prompted French far-left leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon to denounce the move as an “unprecedented diplomatic scandal.”

“Israel is dismissive of elected representatives of the European Union and is seriously damaging diplomatic relations with Europe,” Mélenchon, leader of the France Unbowed (La France Insoumise) party, said in a televised statement, which was reported on Wednesday.

On Monday, the regime had expelled Rima Hassan, a French member of the European Parliament (MEP), from the Ben Gurion airport in the city of Tel Aviv.

‘Israel has something to hide’

Mélenchon added that “Israel's conduct once again proves its contempt for international law and democratic values,” warning that by “preventing a visit by elected representatives whose purpose is to examine the humanitarian situation, it (the regime) admits that it has something to hide.”

The French politician went on to condemn Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's regime for attempting to silence international scrutiny over its actions in the Gaza Strip, where more than 15 months of a genocidal Israeli war has claimed the lives of more than 48,300 Palestinians, mostly women and children.

“Netanyahu...fears European eyes that would see the crimes being committed in Gaza. Hassan's removal is a transparent attempt to prevent international oversight,” Mélenchon stated.

The expulsion of Hassan, also a member of Mélenchon's far-left party, came while a European Union delegation's visit to the occupied Palestinian territories had been approved by the Israeli regime's foreign ministry months beforehand.

She had been scheduled to meet Palestinian Authority officials and civil society representatives to discuss the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza and other Palestinian territories.

Israeli interior minister Moshe Arbel, however, tried to defend the move, citing Hassan's past support for boycotts against Tel Aviv, saying she had “consistently worked to promote” such punitive measures against the regime and had made numerous statements supporting such actions in the past.

Hassan refuted these claims, insisting that the delegation's visit had been approved by Israeli authorities long before her arrival.

The regime “is so disorganized that the Israeli foreign ministry approved the composition of the delegation and its program back in January until the interior ministry canceled our entry the moment we arrived at the airport,” she wrote on social media.

Hassan also decried pro-Israeli supporters for spreading misinformation, calling them “trolls who lie exactly like the murderous” regime “they defend.”

‘A rogue regime’

Alongside Hassan, Lynn Boylan, an Irish MEP and chair of the European Parliament's EU-Palestine delegation, was also denied entry into the occupied territories too.

Boylan, who had similarly planned to meet with Palestinian officials and civil society leaders, condemned Tel Aviv's actions as part of a broader disregard for the international law.

"This utter contempt from Israel is the result of the international community failing to hold them to account," she said in a statement. "Israel is a rogue" regime "and this disgraceful move shows the level of utter disregard they have for international law. Europe must now hold Israel to account."

Boylan is also a member of Ireland's Sinn Féin party, which has condemned the regime's treatment of Palestinians in the past.

The actions came amid a wider trend in the Israeli regime's legislation processes aimed at curbing criticism of its policies.

A new law, passed earlier this month, prohibited entry into the occupied territories to individuals who support international prosecution of Israeli forces for crimes committed in Gaza.

The law also targeted those who support the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, a nonviolent campaign calling for economic pressure on the regime due to its violations across the Palestinian territories. BDS supporters draw parallels between their movement and the international campaign against apartheid in South Africa, though Tel Aviv accuses some organizers of "anti-Semitism," a routine allegation thrown by the regime against those critiquing or divulging its acts of aggression.

Countries like Spain and Ireland have, meanwhile, called for suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement, which lays the framework for political dialogue and economic cooperation between the bloc and Tel Aviv.

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