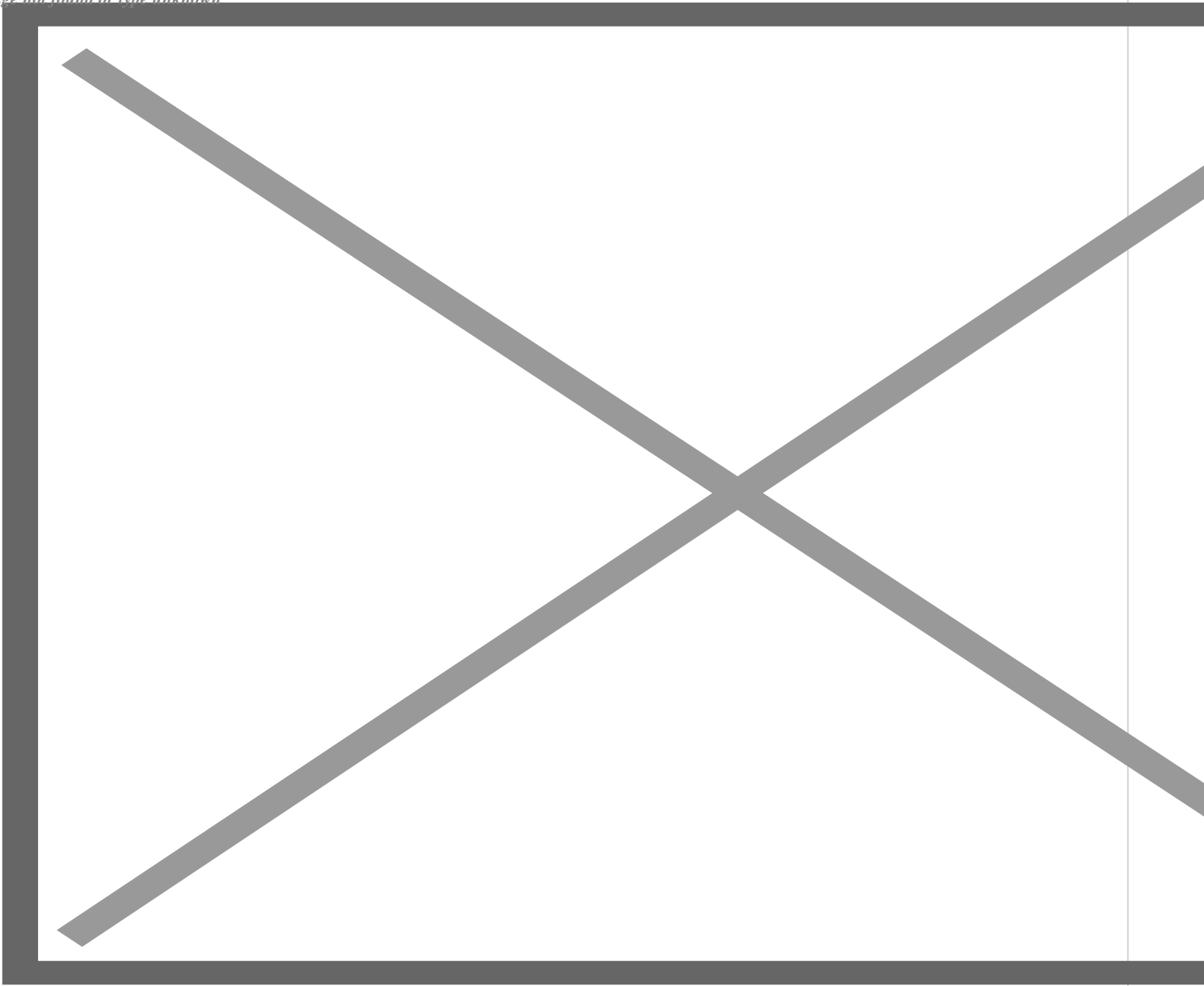


Australia denies entry visa to ex-Israeli occupation minister

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Ayelet Shaked, former Israeli occupation minister

Canberra, November 22 (RHC)-- Australia has denied a visa to Ayelet Shaked, former Israeli occupation minister, on character grounds. Australia's Home Affairs on Thursday night informed the former interior and justice minister that her application for a visitor visa had been denied because she could "vilify" Australians or "incite discord."

Shaked was scheduled to attend a security conference in Canberra next week.

The Department added that "after careful consideration ... a delegate of the minister decided to refuse to grant you a visa."

Shaked was blocked by parts of the Migration Act that empower the minister to refuse to grant a visa if he considers the applicant will "vilify a segment of the Australian community, or incite discord in the Australian community or a segment of that community."

The visa decision cannot be challenged and follows the recent shift in Australia's attitude toward the Israeli regime and its genocidal war on Gaza and Lebanon.

Shaked reportedly became livid after hearing the news and called the action "shameful." She said that it betrays the friendship and solidarity that "should bind democracies together."

Shaked has in the past boasted that she worked closely with Facebook to censor Palestinian voices, with the Silicon Valley company agreeing to remove around 95% of the information she requested.

Marking a significant shift from its previous stance, Australia last week endorsed a United Nations resolution affirming the "permanent sovereignty" of Palestinians within the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

On Thursday, Australia joined 158 countries, including the UK and New Zealand, in supporting a UN committee resolution that asserts the "permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources."

A spokesperson for Foreign Affairs Minister Penny Wong stated that the vote reflects international concern over "Israel's" actions, including its "ongoing settlement activity, land dispossession, demolitions, and settler violence against Palestinians."

"We have been clear that such acts undermine stability and prospects for a two-state solution," the spokesperson stressed.

"This resolution importantly recalls UN security council resolutions that reaffirm the importance of a two-state solution that has had bipartisan support."

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