

Under Israeli pressure, French mayor forced to remove pro-Palestine street sign



Paris, June 15 (RHC)-- Under pressure from Tel Aviv, the mayor of a Paris suburb has removed the sign for a street newly renamed "Nakba Lane," a term used by Palestinians to refer to their forcible eviction by Israel from their homeland in 1948.

Bezons Mayor Dominique Lesparre had unveiled the "Nakba Lane" plaque on Monday in remembrance of Nakba (Catastrophe) Day, which is marked by Palestinians annually on May 15. In 1948, when Israel declared its existence, some 700,000 Palestinians were driven out of their homes and scattered across refugee camps in the occupied West Bank, the Gaza Strip and neighboring countries.

This year, Gaza saw its deadliest day since Israel's 2014 war on the eve of the 70th anniversary of the Nakba Day, with Israeli forces killing dozens of Palestinians.

The street sign read: "In memory of the expulsion of 800,000 Palestinians and the destruction of 532 villages in 1948 by the war criminal David Ben-Gurion for the creation" of Israel, referring to Israel's first prime minister. The plaque, however, was removed hours after its installation following a request by the top central government official for the Val-d'Oise region, who said it could "seriously disrupt public order."

Meanwhile, Israel's foreign ministry spokesman Emmanuel Nahshon described the renaming of the Bezons street as "a nauseating act." Israel's Ambassador to France Aliza Bin-Noun also accused the Bezons mayor of inciting hatred. The sign also sparked criticism from a number of pro-Israel groups in France.

Back in 2014, Bezons was ordered to remove a commemorative plaque for Majdi al-Rimawi, an imprisoned member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine who killed Israeli tourism minister Rehavam Ze'evi in 2001.

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