

Israel Declares Swedish Foreign Minister Persona Non-Grata



Tel Aviv, January 14 (RHC)-- Israel says Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom is not welcome in Israel after she called for an investigation into the large number of Palestinians being killed by Israeli forces.

"Given the incendiary and aggressive nature" of Wallstrom's comments, "we have made it clear that she is not welcome in Israel," said Israeli foreign ministry spokesman Emmanuel Nahshon on Wednesday. Nahshon noted that the foreign ministry was only referring to Wallstrom and not other Swedish officials.

The announcement was made after Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely referred to Wallstrom's remarks as "a mix of blindness and political stupidity," adding that "Israel has decided to close its doors to official Swedish visits."

During a speech on Tuesday, Wallstrom called for a probe into the large number of Palestinians being killed by Israeli forces on a daily basis. "It is vital that there are thorough, credible investigations into these deaths in order to clarify and bring about possible accountability."

Around 150 Palestinians have been killed and hundreds more injured since Israel began its latest crackdown in the occupied West Bank and the besieged Gaza Strip in October last year.

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