

Maldives bans entry of Israeli passport holders

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Dhaka: The Maldives' entry ban on Israeli passport holders, is now fully effective, rendering any Israeli national persona non grata in the luxury tourist archipelago.

Initially announced last year by President Mohamed Muizzu has been ratified and is now in full effect.

The ban, intended as a demonstration of 'resolute solidarity' with the Palestinians, was passed by the Maldivian parliament on April 21 and ratified the next day by Muizzu.

The amendment to the Immigration Act explicitly prohibits visitors holding Israeli passports from entering the Maldives.

A statement issued by the head of state's office read that 'the ratification reflects the government's firm stance in response to the continuing atrocities and ongoing acts of genocide committed by Israel

against the Palestinian people'.

Israel firmly denies these allegations, which are currently under review at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague. The case was brought to the ICJ in December 2023 by South Africa, accusing Israel of committing genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza.

No ruling has yet been issued, and Israel consistently rejects all accusations, asserting that it acts in accordance with international law and defends its right to protect itself following the Hamas invasion and massacres in the south of Israel in October 2023.

The Maldives, famous for its postcard-perfect pristine white sandy beaches lined with palm trees and turquoise waters, reaffirmed its 'resolute solidarity with the Palestinian cause'.

Before the latest ban, Israeli tourism to the Maldives was modest but steadily rising, growing from hundreds of visitors in the early 2000s to thousands in the 2010s, reaching over 15,000 in 2023, representing a small fraction of the 1,878,543 international tourist arrivals.

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