

## Opinions

# If Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib can boycott Israel, why can't Israel boycott them?

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By [Marc A. Thiessen](#)

During a news conference on Monday, Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) accused Israel of denying her and fellow congresswoman Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.) entry because they are “the first two Muslim American women elected to Congress.” On Twitter, Omar was [even more pointed](#), accusing Israel of implementing “Trump’s Muslim ban” — a calumny echoed by supposedly responsible Democrats such as Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.), who [tweeted](#) “PM Netanyahu — Drop your Muslim ban.”

Sorry, it’s not a Muslim ban; it’s an anti-Semite ban.

Israel’s decision to bar the two U.S. lawmakers was a mistake, because it has given them a much bigger platform from which to attack Israel. But let’s be clear: There is nothing outrageous about Israel’s decision to bar entry to politicians who advocate its destruction. If Omar and Tlaib can boycott Israel, why can’t Israel boycott them?

Omar says Israel’s decision [interferes with her ability](#) to do her work “as a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.” Maybe so. But the problem is not that Israel barred entry to a member of that committee, but rather that there is an anti-Semite sitting on that committee. Omar has said that when she hears people call Israel a democracy, “[I almost chuckle](#).” She has said “Israel has [hypnotized the world](#)”; has declared her hope that Allah will “awaken the people and help them see the evil doings of Israel”; supports a boycott of Israel, a country she has compared to Nazi Germany; accused her House colleagues who support Israel of pushing “for allegiance to a foreign country”; and declared that support for Israel is “all about the Benjamins.” ([She later apologized](#) for the last comment, but not all the others, before or since that one.)

How is it that she continues to sit on the congressional committee that helps set U.S. policy toward Israel? When Rep. Steve King [defended white-supremacist views](#), the GOP leadership in the House stripped him of his committee assignments and [voted](#) 424 to 1 on a resolution condemning the Iowa Republican. Yet, after Omar made virulently anti-Semitic comments, Democratic leaders in the House could not bring themselves to do the same. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) [actually defended](#) Omar’s “allegiance to a foreign country” remark, saying “I don’t believe it was intended in an anti-Semitic way.” I’m sorry, what other way could she

have intended it? Can you imagine if Republicans had defended King, saying “I don’t believe it was intended in a white-supremacist way?”

Like Omar, Tlaib has accused her colleagues of dual loyalty — a classic anti-Semitic trope — [declaring](#) “they forgot what country they represent.” She advocates a one-state solution, which means she opposes the very existence of the state of Israel. She [wrote](#) for Louis Farrakhan’s publication, the Final Call, which regularly publishes anti-Semitic screeds. And, according to the Anti-Defamation League, she [invited](#) a Palestinian activist to her swearing-in who has praised Hamas and Hezbollah and has equated Zionists with Nazis.

The two showed their true colors when they chose not to join a bipartisan congressional delegation to Israel earlier this month in favor of a trip organized by [Miftah](#), a rabidly anti-Semitic group that has accused Jews of using “the blood of Christians in the Jewish Passover,” has published neo-Nazi [propaganda](#) questioning “the Jewish ‘Holocaust’ tale” in quotes and has [celebrated terrorists](#) who murder Israeli children. And, as though to prove Israel’s point, after being denied entry, the two lawmakers shared a cartoon on Instagram by an anti-Semitic cartoonist who placed second in an Iranian newspaper’s [2006 Holocaust cartoon contest](#).

The fact that Democrats tolerate, and even embrace, Omar and Tlaib is appalling. And it points to a larger problem. There is anti-Semitism on both the right and the left. On the right, anti-Semitism manifests itself in skinheads [marching in Charlottesville](#) chanting “Jews will not replace us!” On the left, anti-Semitism manifests itself in Democratic members of Congress who [compare Israel to Nazi Germany](#). But while right-wing anti-Semites remain on the political fringes, where they belong, on the left, anti-Semites have found their way into the halls of power and are being defended by the party’s leaders.

Many of the same Democrats correctly criticized President Trump for his weak response to Charlottesville are now openly defending Omar and Tlaib. Pelosi called the decision to bar them “beneath the dignity of the great State of Israel.” Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) warned that “it will only hurt the U.S.-Israel relationship and support for Israel in America.” Sen. Elizabeth Warren (Mass.), a Democratic presidential candidate, called it “a shameful, unprecedented move.” Warren’s fellow candidate, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), went so far as to defend the pair’s views, declaring that “opposing Netanyahu’s policies is not ‘hating the Jewish people.’ ”

But Omar and Tlaib don’t just oppose Netanyahu’s policies; they oppose the state of Israel. How sad that so many prominent Democrats are condemning Israel’s decision to bar these anti-Semites more vigorously than

they have condemned their anti-Semitism.

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