GlobalResearch
Center for Research on Globalization

ISRAELI ETHNIC PROFILING AT EUROPEAN AIRPORTS: Stockholm airport bars Israeli airline over Shin Bet security inspection methods

By Zohar Blumenkrantz
Global Research, April 19, 2012
Haaretz 18 April 2012

Region: Europe
Theme: Intelligence, Police State & Civil Rights

Arkia has to stop flying to Stockholm because the Swedish capital's international airport now refuses to allow Israeli methods of security inspections dictated by the Shin Bet security service,

Thus, Stockholm's airport joined those in Malmo, Sweden and in Copenhagen in refusing to allow Israeli security inspections, which involve ethnic and personal profiling, extensive questioning and selective inspections based on the perceived degree of risk to security.

Arkia, the only Israeli airline flying to Sweden, had to move its operations to Malmo and Stockholm this year after Denmark refused to permit Israeli security procedures at its airports last summer. Arkia elected to fly passengers to Sweden and take them by land to Denmark. Now this avenue is closed.

The foreign and transport ministries are working with the Shin Bet to resolve the dispute, especially since thousands of Israelis bought tickets to the region for summer.

"It seems from the international media that additional European countries waving the flag of civil rights and equality will refuse the Israeli security demands, which I've warned would happen," said Arkia CEO Gadi Tepper. Arkia and other Israeli airlines would face serious difficulty if much of Europe is blocked to them, he said.

"We are talking with security authorities in Sweden and other countries where problems have surfaced, to understand the meaning of the new restrictions imposed on Israeli flights," said the Transport Ministry, noting it was working with the Foreign Ministry, the embassy in Stockholm and Israeli security authorities.

"The Transport Ministry intends to continue allowing Israeli companies to fly to all destinations without restrictions, while providing for all aspects of security and safety," it said.

Seeking cheaper digs

Arkia and Israir are pressing to move their flights from the flagship Terminal 3 at Ben Gurion International Airport to Terminal 1 to save on costs. Terminal 1 serves mainly low-cost charter flights and charges lower fees. Port tax per passenger at Terminal 3 is about $25 compared with about $11 at Terminal 1.

The impetus for the airlines' demand is the Open Skies treaty Israel signed with the European Union, which the Israelis expect to heighten competition.

A source at Israir said that since Transport Minister Yisrael Katz will implement Open Skies, the company hoped his ministry would help Israeli airlines compete against foreign carriers.

Israeli carriers want the state to cover all their security costs and help them gain the Airports Authority's permission to move operations to Terminal 1. They also want more time slots at Ben-Gurion so they can double their capacity to Europe and take better advantage of their new planes.

The Airports Authority said it is talking with Israir and Arkia managers, adding that "they know well that their companies do not fit in the category of low-cost fliers, which are the only ones allowed to operate out of Terminal 1. There is no connection between the new aviation agreement and the designation of Terminal 1 for low-cost flights."

EasyJet launching Manchester-TA line

Low-cost carrier easyJet will be offering a new line between Tel Aviv and Manchester from November 1, but you can already order tickets over the company's website, starting this week.

The starting price for a one-way ticket from Tel Aviv to Manchester will be a mere 38 euros, and in the other direction, 83 euros, including taxes. EasyJet will be flying twice a week, on Monday and Thursday. Since the airline began operating in Israel in November 2009, it has flown more than 270,000 passengers.

Yes, your plane was more crowded

If you felt that the plane you took to or from Ben-Gurion International Airport last month was more crowded than usual, you may have been right.

Some 889,000 passengers used the airport in March, traveling on 6,446 flights. That represents an increase of 3% in passenger traffic, and a 5% drop in the number of planes. Ergo, there were more passengers per plane, according to data from the Airports Authority. The market share of the Israeli airlines El Al, Arkia and Israir was nearly 40% in March.

The foreign airline that handled the most passengers in and out of Ben-Gurion was Lufthansa. The German airline flew 40,000 passengers through Tel Aviv in March, an increase of nearly 7% from the same month in 2011.

The original source of this article is Haaretz
Copyright © Zohar Blumenkrantz, Haaretz, 2012

Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page

Become a Member of Global Research

Articles by: Zohar Blumenkrantz

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca