



KUWAIT AIRWAYS FACES DISCRIMINATION CHARGES FROM U.S. GOVERNMENT

News / Airlines



The United States Government has ruled that Kuwait [Airways](#) unlawfully discriminated against at least one customer due to the fact that the person had an Israeli passport.

In a report from The Associated Press, Israeli citizen Eldad Gatt filed a formal complaint to the United States Department of Transportation stating that Kuwait Airways refused to sell him a ticket for a flight from New York City to London.

When Gatt attempted to use Kuwait Airways' online booking system to purchase a ticket from John F. Kennedy International Airport to Heathrow Airport in 2013, he was not allowed to select Israel as his passport-issuing country.

While an initial investigation into Gatt's complaint ruled in favor of the airline, the Israeli customer appealed the decision and the case was opened again. This time, the Department of Transportation ruled that Kuwait Airways had violated a federal law, just not the one Gatt had cited in his complaint.

The Department of Transportation's assistant general counsel Blane Workie said in a letter obtained by The AP, "We considered Mr. Gatt's claim upon an alternative ground ... which holds that an 'air carrier or foreign air carrier may not subject a person, place, port, or type of traffic in foreign air transportation to unreasonable discrimination.' We expect (Kuwait Airways) to sell tickets to and transport Israeli citizens between the U.S. and any third country where they are allowed to disembark based on the laws of that country."

In response, the airline said that doesn't do business with Israeli citizens or companies because it would be against the law in Kuwait. Despite the differing rules, the Department of Transportation made their ruling crystal clear to Kuwait Airways in the letter from Workie:

"We do not find the interest of Kuwait in the enforcement of its laws in this case to be greater than the interest of the United States in the enforcement of its laws. It is our view that the U.S. interest in providing nondiscriminatory access to air transportation to an individual traveling from the U.S. to a third country that allows that individual's entry is greater than Kuwait's interest in applying its economic boycott of Israel."

In addition to the complaint filed by Gatt, the U.S. Department of Transportation stated that is aware of at least one other similar incident. Kuwait Airways has 15 days to respond to the charges before sanctions are levied.

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SOURCE: TRAVELPULSE

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