Campaign for the Right to Enter the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt)

A Grassroots Campaign for the Protection of Foreign Passport Holders Residing in and/or Visiting the oPt

1. Actions to Protest "Palestinian Authority Only" Visa

You can take these actions whether or not you have received this stamp
Better to act now before this too is allowed to become an established, "normalised" procedure.

1. Call and write your Consulate and Embassy representatives in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv and government representatives in your home country to express your concern about the implications of this visa and other Israeli measures to restrict travel to/from and within the occupied Palestinian territory. Emphasise the need to obtain clear assurances from Israel that persons carrying foreign passports will not be arbitrarily denied safe and secure passage to the oPt and that all foreign citizens seeking entry into the oPT and Israel will be treated without discrimination and with dignity and respect. Be prepared for them to tell you they can do nothing. Insist on answers, assistance and redress. Don't accept the argument that they are powerless. (See Contacts below.)

2. Call and write US Special Envoy to the Middle East, George Mitchell and representatives of the Quartet to express your concern about the implications of this visa and other Israeli measures to restrict travel to/from and within the occupied Palestinian territory. (Contacts below.)

3. Inquire with relevant Israeli and Palestinian Authorities regarding procedures for traveling to/from and within the occupied Palestinian territory. Insist on answers, assistance and redress. (Contacts below.)

4. Write a letter to the editor or OpEd piece for your local newspaper explaining how Israeli restrictions are affecting you and the implications of Israeli restrictions on travel to/from and within the oPt.

5. Report incidents of "PA only" visa and all incidents of entry denial to the Right to Enter Campaign and contribute to the Campaign's efforts to document and defeat Israel's unlawful policy of restricting entry into the oPt. Updated and reliable information about how entry denials (whether recent or past) continue to affect individuals, families and the general welfare of the Palestinian people in the oPt is essential to effectively combat Israel's policies. Even if you wish to keep your information confidential, it helps the Campaign to have documentation and statistics to establish trends and report impact. If you've attempted / been successful in returning, let us know. If you haven't tried, let us know why and under what conditions you might try to return.

All incidents please report to your respective consulate and government representatives.
Right to Enter email: info@righttoenter.ps / Telephone: **++970-(0)59.817.3953**
The RTE on-line form for entry denial can be found on this link:
http://www.righttoenter.ps/ReportYourCase.php?mid=16&sid=18

Staff of humanitarian organisations should also report any restrictions on movement in Israel and/or the oPt to the **UN Access Cell: 054-3311850 (round-the-clock, 7 days a week).**

US citizens are also encouraged to report to the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee at: ***http://www.adc.org/index.php?id=2980&no_cache=1&sword_list[]=Entry&sword_list[]=Denial***
For questions or assistance in taking action, please also contact Fahed Al-Rawaf from ADC at 202.244.2990, Christina Zola from AAI at 202.429.9210, or Ghaith Al-Omari from ATFP at 202.887.0177.

CONTACTS

Diplomatic and government representatives

All nationals
Office of the Quartet Representative
Tel: +972 (0)2 633 3302
Mobile: +972 546773143
Email: aduaibes@quartetrep.org (Awad Duaibes, Political and press officer)

US citizens
Consul General Jake Walles
Email: JerusalemACS@state.gov; UsConGenJerusalem@state.gov
Fax: 02-627-2233 / Telephone: 02-622-7221 or 02-622-7207 (please leave a detailed message on the voicemail if there is no answer)
Congressional representatives in the US House and Senate can be found at:
www.house.gov/writerep/
http://senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

British citizens
Consul General Richard Makepeace
Email: britain.jerusalem@fco.gov.uk / Fax: +972 (0)2 5414157

Other nationals should be able to get contacts for their relevant diplomatic representatives on line. If you have any trouble send an inquiry to the myrtoe (my right to enter) yahoo group or info@righttoenter.ps

Israeli authorities

Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT),
Spokesperson - Guy Inber: Tel: 972-(0)50-623-4053
Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs – International and Organisational Cooperation,
Dean Liebovitz, Tel: 972-(0)50-623-4183
Ministry of Civil Administration: Tel: 972-(0)2-997-7727

Minister of Interior: Tel: 972-(0)2-670-1411
Ministry of Defense: Tel: 972-(0)2-5303111; Fax: 972-(0)2-5303367, sar@mfa.gov.il

Palestinian Authority
PA Interior Ministry, Hassan Alwi – General Director, 970-(0)599-255511
PA Ministry of Civil Affairs, Ayman Qandil, 970-(0)599-222224

Remember the power of the nuisance factor!
Together we can defeat Israel's unlawful restrictions on entry and residence in the oPt.

2. Background on "PA Only Visas" & Other New Measures

Over the past several months, Israel has introduced several new measures at its border crossings. These measures have dangerous legal implications as well as serious repercussions for those wishing to travel to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). A recent United States State Department travel advisory published on the website of the Consulate General of the United States of America in Jerusalem alerts its citizens:

> ***Israeli border officials at both the Allenby border crossing and Ben Gurion Airport have begun using a new entry visa stamp that permits travel only in Palestinian Authority-controlled areas.*** *(* http://jerusalem.usconsulate.gov/border-crossings.html)

Those who have received the stamp are mainly citizens of countries that have diplomatic relations with Israel, from Europe and the United States, and are mainly of Palestinian and Arab descent, many of whom who have family in the (oPt).

In addition, some travelers have been required to sign **a statement which commits them to not entering the Palestinian Authority controlled areas of the West Bank under penalty of legal action.** Furthermore, the Right to Enter Campaign has learned of incidents in which foreign nationals from countries without visa agreements with Israel who are required to apply for visas prior to their arrival at Israeli borders have been issued **"Israel only" visas**.

These latest measures are yet another example of Israel's numerous policies and practices that aim to further entrench the unlawful fragmentation and annexation of parts of the occupied territory, are in violation of international law and threaten to undermine the prospects for peace and a just resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Moreover, strong objections have been raised regarding the discriminatory nature of these measures.

The US State Department has criticised "PA only visa" as unfair and unacceptable, stating: "We have let the Government of Israel know that **these restrictions unfairly impact Palestinian and Arab American travellers and are not acceptable.**" The new measures have also been criticised by leaders within the Government of Israel. Israeli Ministry of Tourism issued a statement saying: **"This decision taken by the interior ministry causes significant damage to Israel's image and to incoming tourism for those tourists who visit the holy sites in the Palestinian Authority,"** the tourism ministry said in a statement. And the Israeli Foreign Ministry claims it does not support the new visa. "It is unclear what good it is and how it can be enforced" a Foreign Ministry official told the press. **"All it does is damage Israel's image in its foreign relations,"** the official added.

When enacted, these measures force visitors to **choose between entering Israel or the occupied Palestinian territory.** Millions of tourists and religious pilgrims flock to Middle East holy sites each year; these measures require them to choose between visiting Bethlehem and Nazareth, for example.. (For more on the implications of the new measures see **RTE's "Talking points on the new 'PA only' visa."**)

Since early 2006, the Right to Enter Campaign has been calling for an end to Israel's arbitrary and abusive exercise of discretion over entry in to and movement within the oPt. These new restrictions further contribute to the serious and unjustified harm to Palestinian families, education, religious and social service institutions and businesses and investments.

ACT NOW!

The successful return of individuals previously denied entry and the unhindered entry of others was made possible by organized civic action involving a broad alliance of concerned individuals and organizations within the Palestinian, Israeli and international communities. Concerted effort must be made to hold the governments of Israel, third states and the Palestinian National Authority to their respective obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

3. TALKING POINTS

In a nutshell: Israel's new measure of issuing "Palestinian Authority Only" visas[1] to foreign nationals is yet another example of Israel's numerous policies and practices that aim to further entrench the unlawful fragmentation and annexation of parts of the occupied territory, are in violation of international law and threaten to undermine the prospects for peace and a just resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

1. **Violation of international law and Oslo Agreements:** The new "PA only" visa and other Israeli measures restricting the movement of foreign nationals visiting the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and Israel violate both international law and Interim Agreements (Oslo II) concluded between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. In violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, this new measure threatens to further undermine the territorial integrity of the oPt and the Palestinian People's right to self-determination. In September 1993, as part of the Oslo process, the two parties agreed that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip will be treated "as a single territorial unit, whose integrity will be preserved during the interim period." (Declaration of Principles, Article IV: Jurisdiction.)

2. **Third state responsibility:** Once an unlawful practice has been brought to their attention, third states are obliged to object. This is true both in relation to Israel's violations of the law of occupation, which clearly defines the rights of the Palestinian people as the protected population, and in relation to the violation of the rights of a state's own nationals. Third state failure to object when facts are brought to their attention implies acceptance of these policies and violates their own obligations under international law. (Under international law, your country is obligated to respond to this issue once it has been made aware of it.)

[1] Two other restrictions have also been introduced: Foreigners entering the country may be required to sign a statement declaring they will not enter "areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority" on penalty of "relevant legal action, including deportation and refusal of entry into Israel for a period of up to ten years." "Israel only" visas have also been reported by foreign nationals from countries without visa agreements with Israel who are required to apply for visas from their home countries.

3. **Ongoing movement restrictions:** The newest movement restrictions, are part of a long line of measures restricting movement to/from and within the oPt which cause serious harm to Palestinian family life and the functioning of educational, religious and social service institutions and businesses and socio-economic development more broadly. Closure has been the permanent state of affairs in the occupied territories since January 1991, when Israel forbade Palestinians to enter its territory without a permit from the Israeli Civil Administration, restricting movement not only between the West Bank and Gaza Strip but contiguous areas within the West Bank, most notably East Jerusalem. Israel has kept the number of foreign nationals it allows into Gaza to a minimum since the August 2005 disengagement.

4. **Discrimination:** Most of the foreign nationals affected by the latest measures are of Palestinian origin and have close family and historical ties to Palestine. States have an obligation to defend the interests of their own nationals when they are subjected to arbitrary or discriminatory treatment by a friendly state and to protect them against violations of human rights. Your state must object to Israel's discrimination between its nationals on grounds of national origin, race, religion and/or ethnicity in admitting them to Israel or the oPt.

   The US State Department has strongly criticised the new policy targeting Arab-American travelers and restricting their access to the West Bank as unfair and unacceptable. In a statement issued on August 19, the State Department asserted: ***"We have repeatedly told the Government of Israel that the United States expects that all American citizens to be treated equally, regardless of their national origin or other citizenship."*** The statement continued: ***"We have let the Government of Israel know that these restrictions unfairly impact Palestinian and Arab American travellers and are not acceptable."*** (http://haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1108644.html)

   Moreover, foreign nationals of Palestinian or Arab descent as well as other visitors with ties to the Palestinian community regularly face discriminatory treatment at Israeli-controlled borders. Incidents of humiliating and degrading treatment of foreign nationals at the hands of Israeli officials are common. Indeed, the US State Department warns its own citizens of Palestinian descent that they will be treated differently. (See http://jerusalem.usconsulate.gov/border-crossings.html).

5. **Segregation and isolation:** The web of movement restrictions implemented by the Israeli authorities serves to minimise contact between Palestinians and Jewish Israelis, segregating the population into different geographic areas and under different legal regimes. This separation of the population along 'racial' lines is a fundamental feature of the legislation which underpinned the South African apartheid regime.

   The latest measures also further restrict contact between foreign nationals and the Palestinian community in the oPt, thus contributing to the further isolation of the latter from the international community more generally. The application of these new measures requires that visitors choose between visiting PA-controlled areas of the oPt and Israel. A Christian pilgrim, for example, could not visit both Bethlehem and Nazareth. Meanwhile, foreign nationals wishing to visit illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank do not face the same restrictions.

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