



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

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

Dear Quartet Representative Tony Blair:

Unable to set a meeting with you despite writing, phoning, faxing and emailing your office repeatedly since October 2, 2007, we are forced to pass our message to you via this public letter and request your response.

As you are undoubtedly aware, Israel continues to turn back visitors to the oPt and prohibits tens of thousands of Palestinians holding foreign citizenship, as well as internationals, from residing and working in Palestine.

The ramifications have been, and continue to be, unacceptable -- families separated, investment disrupted, health and social services undermined, religious institutions unable to minister to the spiritual needs of their congregations and educational institutions losing staff and students, just to name a few.

You publicly stated in a press conference in Jerusalem on 19th November 2007 that to create lasting peace, three things must happen:

1. "a clear political vision of a two-state solution;
2. the building of Palestinian capacity and institutions of governance, because statehood is about more than geography and territory;
3. and the facts on the ground must not contradict the process of state building, but enhance it and support it economically."

As an occupying power, Israel's policies and practices in the oPt are governed by international humanitarian law. Treating Israel's denials of entry and residency in the oPt as a legitimate exercise of Israeli sovereignty and sovereign political discretion is both spurious and unlawful. As the High Representative of the Quartet, it is your office's responsibility to make this clear and to act on it. Failing to do so only serves to undermine the foundations of the state building process you are seeking to promote.

How can your office promote "the building of Palestinian capacity and institutions of governance" while Israel continues to obstruct Palestinian efforts to tap their human resources abroad? Can a new reality honestly be built by donor money alone?

When arbitrary Israeli policies make it impossible for many thousands of Palestinians and internationals to plan, invest, visit, reside or travel to/from Palestine, in clear violation of international humanitarian law, do the words "support it economically" make sense anymore?

Ambassador Blair, you are the international community's eyes and ears on the ground. If you turn a blind eye to the most fundamental human dimensions of state-building and peace-making then your work will sadly fail.

A full and lawful resolution of the issue of residency and visitation rights for the oPt is precisely the kind of confidence building measure required to ensure a successful state-building process and real peace for the region.

Please act now!

Sincerely,
Campaign for the Right to Enter to the oPt

