Academia Undermined:
Israeli Restrictions on Foreign National Academics
in Palestinian Higher Education Institutions

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Academia Undermined:

Israeli Restrictions on Foreign Academics in Palestinian Higher Education Institutions

1. Executive summary and recommendations

The quality of Palestinian education and higher education in particular, has been very negatively impacted by the prolonged Israeli military occupation. Schools and universities have been closed for extended periods. Students, staff and faculty have had restricted access to schools and institutions of higher education due to the pervasive and arbitrary Israeli regime of internal movement restrictions. The impacts on all levels of education have been well documented.¹

This report focuses on only one of the many problems related to movement and access restrictions that affect the quality of and access to education in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt): the implications of Israeli restrictions on entry and residency for foreign academics wishing to serve at institutes of higher education operating in the (oPt). It is important to note that the term “foreign” is something of a misnomer: Israel treats all individuals without an Israeli-issued identity card [“hawiyya”] as a foreigner even if they are of Palestinian origin and even if they and/or their parents are born in Palestine. Thus “foreign” academics refers to anyone who does not hold a Palestinian identity card and must therefore enter the oPt on a foreign passport regardless of whether or not they are of Palestinian origin. “Foreign” academics or “foreign” nationals could therefore be of Palestinian origin (as is frequently the case) or have no Palestinian roots.

The report details

➢ The impact on the quality of education provided, and
➢ The impact of the isolation of Palestinian academia from the broader academic community on the development of their academic institutions and educational development in general.

It concludes with some recommendations.

Research for this study was conducted by the Campaign for the Right to Enter the oPt (RTE), and was based on interviews with university officials, department chairs, faculty members and students at four Palestinian universities, three in the West Bank (Birzeit, Al-Quds, and Bethlehem) and one in Gaza (Islamic University of Gaza). Interviews were also undertaken with Israeli academics, and some case studies and testimonies were gathered on the actual experiences of foreign academics trying to enter the oPt and work at Palestinian universities. Additional material presented is drawn from RTE’s previous and ongoing research into issues around issues of access, movement and residency in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territory.

Major findings:

¹ www.right2edu
2. Introduction

The right to education is a fundamental human right that is basic to human freedom. This report focuses on only one of the many problems related to movement and access restrictions that affect the quality of and access to education in the oPt: the implications of Israeli restrictions on entry and residency of foreign academics wishing to serve at institutes of higher education operating in the oPt. There are a range of other Israeli policies which impact educational provision including restriction on students and faculty holding Palestinian IDs from travelling abroad; denial of education to Palestinian political prisoners; the particular issues of Jerusalem (lack of schools in East Jerusalem, high dropout rates, no recognition of Palestinian university certificates); and the internal travel restrictions between the West Bank and Jerusalem, within the West Bank itself, and between West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza,\(^3\) the destruction of schools and violence perpetrated against students and teachers at home, en route to schools and even within schools, which has led to the death, injury and psychological trauma to generations of Palestinian children over more than four decades of occupation.

This report details some of the major impacts on Palestinian universities of the Israeli entry and residency restrictions practiced against foreign academics. The report draws on a range of qualitative data in the form of interviews and from staff of a representative group of four Palestinian universities one each from the North, Centre and South of the West Bank and one from the Gaza Strip.

Restriction on entry and residency for foreign academics is contributing to the growing isolation of Palestinian academia from the wider academic community and circumscribing the scope and quality of basic undergraduate education, undermining research and faculty development of higher education institutions, and compromising the overall university experience for faculty and staff, thus harming Palestinian education and development.

3. Challenges to the scope and quality of university education

Low standards and limited scope for undergraduate education: As student bodies expand in Palestine due to natural population growth, more faculty is required to teach them. In addition, in order to maintain the competitive quality of undergraduate education, university curricula have to be continuously upgraded and developed through exposure to new ideas and research in all fields. As a result, in order just to maintain academic standards, Palestinian universities need to increase their recruitment of suitably qualified staff. The pace of recruitment, however, is extremely slow, largely because Palestinian universities are unable to look abroad to ameliorate shortages of qualified academics. This is particularly so in the absence of PhD programs in the country.

Academics who have taught and participated in curriculum development at universities outside the oPt would have much to offer in the way of enhancing and updating curricula at Palestinian universities by establishing new concentrations within a Bachelor’s degree program, offering courses in new fields of specialization, establishing collaborative research endeavors, and bringing

\(^3\) Students from Gaza cannot study at West Bank universities, professors from Gaza cannot teach at West Bank universities. In this way, Israel’s occupation has rendered higher education in Palestine unable to function as a contiguous entity, resulting in breaches not only of the right to education for Palestinian students, but also of Israel’s obligation under the Oslo Accords to recognize the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a single territorial unit.
new perspectives and approaches. In addition, some subjects by their very nature such as foreign language instruction are effectively compromised without native speaker resources.

**Dependence on a very small local pool of knowledge:** Palestinian universities’ difficulties in recruiting foreign faculty means universities have to resort to the very small pool of local Palestinian talent, despite the fact that Ministry of Education and University officials confirm that there is a significant reservoir of highly accomplished Palestinian academics working abroad ready to come as either permanent faculty or visiting professors. Heads of Palestinian university departments ranging from history to engineering, explain that oftentimes when they post department vacancies, they receive few-to-no applications from qualified individuals. This is especially the case when recruiting for highly specialized, cutting-edge, and relatively new fields with an already limited pool of experts. Difficulties in recruiting foreign faculty similarly hinder the development of foreign language programs by blocking possibilities for recruiting native speakers.

Shortages in qualified teaching staff force university departments to not only weaken existing programs and departments but can lead to the exclusion of certain areas of specialization altogether.

> "I put an ad in the newspaper three months ago ... I’m asking for a Mechatronics engineer ... Mechatronics is a relatively new engineering field, and we can’t find anybody.” (Ibrahim Hammad, Birzeit University Mechanical Engineering)

> "Very, very few academics have been able to enter Gaza for a very short time, for very short courses or to give a brief training. And they leave Gaza very shortly after that. But foreign academics who stay longer or permanently in Gaza – that is impossible.” (Waled Al Modallal, Associate Professor, of Political Science, Islamic University of Gaza)

While Palestinian universities in the West Bank are experiencing great difficulties in bringing foreign academics to work in their institutions, universities in Gaza face an even bleaker situation of extreme isolation than their counterparts in the West Bank. Israel’s long time policy of separation between the West Bank and Gaza was consolidated with the near complete siege on Gaza since 2006. As a result, additional permits have to be obtained to enter Gaza once entry to Israel has been granted. These permits are difficult to obtain; they are issued to only limited groups of people (primarily humanitarian workers associated with international organizations) and are valid for limited periods of time, days rather than weeks. As a result, foreign academics are restricted to providing days rather than weeks of service.

**Recycling of knowledge and teaching methodologies:** As opportunities for improving faculty qualifications and curriculum development is stymied, the quality of academic instruction is inevitably undermined. Department heads in Palestinian universities frequently note that hiring their own graduates – or the graduates of other Palestinian universities – results in “recycling old knowledge”. Universities have tried to address this issue by sending students abroad for Masters and PhD programs before returning to join the faculty of their undergraduate university but have found, however, that although students with advanced degrees enjoy a greater scope of knowledge, their basic foundation of knowledge remains the same. As a result, they by and large simply continue to feed that same knowledge back into the system that provided it. Post graduate students need some years of immersion in teaching abroad at undergraduate level to absorb innovative approaches and ideas before being able to contribute to the production of knowledge and
development of stronger foundations for higher education. University staff maintains, and international academic institutions worldwide affirm, that the most effective way to interrupt this inbreeding of knowledge is to recruit academics who have obtained their Bachelor’s degree – from which one’s foundational base of knowledge is derived – abroad and Israeli restrictions on foreign academics continue to preclude doing this in any regular, systematic way.

4. Challenges to research and faculty development

Limitations to post graduate programs: A university combines both higher education and research in its vision, and it grants academic degrees in a variety of subjects and provides both undergraduate education and postgraduate education. Palestinian universities rightly aspire to this vision of becoming communities of teachers and scholars, pushing the boundaries of knowledge and creating individuals who can contribute to the development of their own community. Academics and university officials throughout the oPt consistently cite the importance of establishing connections, collaborating, and exchanging ideas and knowledge with colleagues and higher education institutions worldwide through conferences, workshops, professional development opportunities, and research.

"The average teaching load for a university professor should be twelve credit hours per semester. At Palestinian universities, the average load is fifteen to eighteen credit hours per semester, which is an additional quarter to half of the ideal load. The result of this is that quality is reduced – we are worried that quality of teaching is suffering as a result of this overload – and faculty has less time to conduct research." (Fahoum Shalabi, PA Deputy Minister of Higher Education)

Developing Masters and PhD programs at Palestinian universities is a strategy which can both help to cope with the lack of qualified staff, promote collaborative research and development projects, and grow stronger linkages with the international academic community of which they are a part. Doctoral programs abroad for Palestinian university faculty, which were well funded in the past by international donors, no longer receive the same financial support. At the same time, the restrictions on entry and stay of qualified foreign academics restrict possibilities for establishing these academic programs inside the oPt. Visiting professors and thesis supervisors are particularly needed and are willing to come but are unable to do so because of the visa issues. University and PA Ministry of Higher education officials confirm that there are significant numbers of highly qualified Palestinian academics teaching abroad who would be excellent candidates for permanent faculty or visiting professors willing to, but getting visas – even for short periods – is extremely difficult.

For example, Birzeit University is currently in the process of developing its first-ever doctoral program, but faculty members and university officials find themselves caught in catch-22: while the establishment of PhD programs is seen as part of the solution to the various problems confronting universities under occupation, restrictions on foreign academics makes it extremely difficult to develop doctoral programs that meet even basic standards. With already-existing shortage of qualified faculty – in part a result of restrictions on foreign academics – Birzeit University will not be

4 Other institutions worldwide prefer to limit hiring their own graduates to avoid circulation of the same ideas, knowledge, and teaching methods. They seek to draw in graduates of as wide a range of institutions as possible in order to expand the scope of the education they are able to provide, and facilitate the entry and intermingling of diverse perspectives and backgrounds. In the oPt, this is not possible, due to Israeli restrictions on entry.

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able to establish its planned PhD program without importing the necessary personnel, including professors and student advisors who specialize in a range of fields.

"Universities try to be cosmopolitan and it doesn't serve our students well that they are educated only by Palestinians. Like all self-respecting universities worldwide – we would like our university to be cosmopolitan both in faculty and student composition and in creating attitudes that are cosmopolitan amongst our students. I use the word cosmopolitan in the good sense of the word – in the sense of being open to other cultures, being adaptable, being willing to try and willing to listen and learn from other cultures and interact with them positively. We're thwarted in that effort of inculcating cosmopolitanism by the uniformity of our faculty. We would like to have foreign faculty – not just Palestinian academics holding foreign passports but also foreign academics – because that is part and parcel to what a university is. The word university in most languages indicates inclusiveness, universality, and we're consigned to a very narrow university experience that we provide our students in that respect, because of these difficulties." (Birzeit University President, Khalil Hindi)

5. Impact on the overall university experience

The academic isolation resulting from Israel’s restrictions on movement and access confines the experience of Palestinian students to a much narrower and more insular one than most universities worldwide, systematically limiting students' opportunities for self-realization and exploration. Interaction with international faculty who bring a multiplicity of perspectives and experiences is an invaluable contribution to an enriching education for its students, and to the creation of a true university experience, with all that the word signifies of diversity inclusiveness, and open, positive attitudes towards other cultures. The absence of foreign faculty limits the ability of Palestinian universities to broaden student’s horizons by providing firsthand experience in interacting with other cultures and ways of thinking.

6. Impact on Planning

Unpredictable disruption of courses: Each time a foreign academic is denied entry or has to travel in the course of a semester to renew a visa, the functioning of a university departments is disrupted. Departments at Palestinian universities are relatively small, and the possibility that a foreign academic could be denied entry upon any attempt to re-enter throws the department into a perpetual state of instability with the uncertainty regarding the academic’s ability to re-enter persistently looming. The department must be prepared for every contingency, restructuring the teaching load with inevitable negative consequences on all other faculty, who have to share the increased load between them. In addition, as a result of the greater teaching burden imposed on them, research work also suffers.

"If we get a phone call from someone saying, 'sorry, they're denying me entry,' what do we do for the last four weeks of the semester when maybe 120, 150 students have had the same teacher for three months – what do we do? Literally, it's like when someone dies, you fill in and you make do but it wreaks havoc on our planning and even the teaching process to have that kind of disruption." (Brother Robert Smith, Bethlehem University)
"We are unable to recruit because there is no guarantee they can stay after three months. Last year we received an application from a very highly qualified foreign candidate; we couldn’t even look at his application – we couldn’t even consider it. It’s a big risk. It takes a year to train somebody. So you need some sort of guarantee that they can come back because no one comes here and just starts working – we invest in them first. It’s a lot of investment. What we have is very dangerous because not only do we need [foreign academics] academically, but we desperately need that window to the outside world for our students’ sake.” (Rita Giacaman, Birzeit University, Institute of Community and Public Health)

In some cases, departments have been so badly impacted, that closure was considered as an option, rather than the significant restructuring required to accommodate new staffing realities.

Organizing international or even regional conferences is problematic as it is especially difficult for academics from surrounding Arab countries to enter the oPt. Conferences are subsequently held in regional locations to which both foreigners and Arab academics are able to access, increasing costs and logistical work for the Universities concerned.

7. **Adaptive Strategies**

Dealing with the political force of occupation: Discussions with department heads at universities across the West Bank and Gaza reveal that although all agree on the need for foreign academics, many of them are not inclined to reach out to foreign academics during the recruitment process and/or are less likely to consider applications from foreign passport holders because of the potentially insurmountable challenges regarding permission to enter and stay. Despite acknowledging the setbacks in terms of lost potential academic opportunities, the challenges of managing the recruitment of foreign academics - the deleterious impact on the students, the financial losses that their universities and the foreign academics incur, the amount of time they have to devote to dealing with the logistics, rather than teaching and research are overwhelming. Different coping strategies have been adopted to deal with the situation. While some university officials are opting for a re-focus of their recruitment efforts on Palestinian ID holders, others still continue to press for foreign academics. (For more details see Annex 1, *In their own words*)

Basma Omari, for example who has served as chair of the Birzeit French Department for the past five years, explains that she has given up entirely on recruitment of foreign academics since last year. Two instructors from France were denied entry at the border and it has proven virtually impossible to ensure the arrival of instructors from French-speaking Arab countries, or academics of identifiable Arab origin. Twice, Omari was obliged to tell highly qualified native French-speakers with Canadian passports that they might as well not bother applying for a vacancy in the department because they had Lebanese and Tunisian roots and Arabic names.

By contrast, Ibrahim Hammad, Mechanical Engineering Department as disillusioned as he may feel about the prospect of recruiting foreign staff, says that ultimately his department would not stand in the way of a qualified non-ID holder with a strong desire to teach at the university.

“We would appreciate it. Foreign academics come on a visa for three months, then they have to go to Jordan for a few days and then try to gain re-entry – it's going to be hectic for them and for us but we wouldn’t stand in their way. After all, they are making the extra effort to go around these obstacles” -- Ibrahim Hammad. Interview. Birzeit. Palestine. April 2012.
8. Impact on Foreign Academics

Foreign academics are heavily impacted by the accumulated stress and costs associated with the repetitive efforts required to enter and re-enter the oPt and maintain legal residency to honor the terms of their contracts with universities and other institutes of higher education. They have been denied entry at the beginning of their teaching contracts, denied re-entry in mid semester, or have been deported when returning to teach from conferences outside the oPt. Some are separated from their family members, who are denied entry or re-entry. We have documented cases of foreign academics who have been held for prolonged periods of time under interrogation at Israeli borders, suffering verbal and physical abuse before being deported. (See Annex 2, Case Studies of impact on Foreign Academics)

You can’t imagine the psychological destruction that comes from leaving every three months and the expense that comes with it. All the tensions, the anxiety, the uncertainty – it affects your psyche and your performance in very subtle ways. We’ve been here thirty years, my family and me, but it’s been terrible – really it’s worn us down. It creates huge stress which accumulates” (Roger Heacock, Professor of History, Ibrahim Abu Lughod Institute of International Studies, Birzeit University)

The costs incurred include legal services, extended stays in neighboring countries for themselves and family members waiting for their cases to be processed, and flights back to countries of origin for family members who are eventually denied entry. The ever-present anxiety that foreign academics experience also has an impact on their professional performance.

9. Conclusion

Israel’s continued refusal to issue a transparent, non-discriminatory and lawful policy on access into and out of the oPt for foreign nationals constitutes a serious barrier for foreign nationals wishing to join Palestinian universities – whether as faculty, staff or students, obstructing the development of Palestinian institutes of higher education and the education sector and Palestinian society more broadly. Without the ability to secure proper visas and permits to reside and work in the oPt – and to ensure free movement and access inside the oPt, universities are left in the untenable position of being unable to recruit scholars and others who can help universities fulfill their missions. Efforts to ensure quality of education are thus severely compromised. Given the widely recognized relationship between access to quality education and broader developmental goals, these restrictions are not only detrimental to the sector but unquestionably undermine broader developmental efforts and the overall welfare of the Palestinian population.

The international community should insist that the Israeli authorities, bound by international humanitarian law as an occupying power to protect the welfare of the occupied Palestinian population, provide and implement a clear, transparent and lawful policy that will allow faculty, staff and students to work or study in Palestinian universities without disruption. Issuance of proper residence permits for the entire duration of the academic year or work contract is crucial to ensuring proper functioning of universities.
Third States maintaining friendly relations with Israel command the standing to challenge the arbitrary exclusion of their nationals from the occupied Palestinian territory. They have a clear obligation to scrutinize Israel’s exercise of authority as an occupying power and to oppose arbitrary denials of entry and residency that harm Palestinian educational life and development. They are best placed to promote Israel’s compliance with international humanitarian law and to take appropriate measures based on reciprocity to ensure the correct treatment accorded to Israeli nationals seeking to enter their countries is reciprocated by correct treatment of their own nationals seeking to enter the Palestinian occupied territory via Israel-controlled borders.
Excerpt from Appendix 1

country – these things become main issues for us, which leaves us less time for real academic work.”
(Nazmi Jube, History Department, Birzeit University)

“In the ’80s, more than one-third of the Cultural Studies Department faculty were foreign – Americans, British. When foreign faculty began to be harassed and denied entry at the border, we were about to close down the department. Ultimately, university officials decided to keep the department alive, but it had to be significantly re-structured in order to accommodate the new staffing reality.” (Islah Jad, Director, Institute of Women’s Studies, member of Cultural Studies Department, Birzeit University)

“If we want to hold a conference or workshop and it’s worldwide, we have to do it in Jordan, not here. Even if foreigners are able to make it through Ben-Gurion Airport, academics from Arab countries will not be able to gain entry.” (Samar Alnazer, Department Chair, Architectural Engineering Department, Birzeit University)

Adaptive Strategies

“When we hire teachers of course we take into consideration their residency status. If they have a problem with residency, we don’t hire them. We cannot – because it affects students. We cannot rely on someone who we cannot guarantee can finish the semester with the students. We cannot afford that. When we were about to do the big preparation work for our annual conference, for example – which is when [their foreign research coordinator] was so much needed – she had to leave the country because of her visa. This disturbs your work; it adds lots of pressure ... I will never again even think about hiring a research coordinator who has problems with her residency here. Why? Because it’s a cumulative kind of job – you accumulate contacts, relations, experiences, knowledge – so you cannot do that every time and then people leave you at the end. We invested heavily for two or three years in this research coordinator and at the end she said ‘I cannot go on like this’ and we could not go on with her because she was never around when we needed her.” (Islah Jad, Director, Institute of Women’s Studies, Birzeit University)

“When you put an ad on the web, you receive I don’t know how many responses and you have to explain – you have to say, ‘Sorry you cannot come because you are Algerian’ or ‘because you are Tunisian.’ I cannot, in the ad for the vacancy, say ‘Everyone is welcome to apply -- except for the following nationalities’. If it’s someone with a European or American or Canadian passport, you have to explain the consequence.’ And it’s hard to tell somebody, ‘Have a try, and you might lose your ticket. You might lose everything.’ I just had to stop recruiting. I didn’t have a choice. It’s very hard to say ‘ok’ to someone who wants to come in spite of all the visa problems, and then the week before the semester begins, she gets denied entry.” (Basma Omari, Department of French, Birzeit University)

“We don’t prefer to invite anyone with a foreign passport now. It’s too difficult for us to arrange a visa for them.” (Jami Harb, Department Chair, Biology, Birzeit University)

“I would like to have more Arabs, more Arabic speakers as instructors immediate concerns were raised about the visa issue. Lebanon, for instance, is quite Catholic and Christian and there are quite a few monks and nuns. But the trouble there was raised by Palestinian clergy at this meeting – that it’s a tough sell to get Lebanese monks and nuns here because of the Israeli authorities. And then I raised questions about – what about Egypt? Or Syria? And they said it’s impossible from Syria. Then there was talk about
Jordan – might there be some nuns, monks, brothers with at least Masters if not doctorates?" (Brother Robert Smith, Faculty Member, Bethlehem University)

"The people who can join our department have to be Palestinian ID holders – otherwise it will be very difficult. So we are targeting a very small group of Palestinians – only those who have the local ID and, if abroad, are interested in coming back.” (Khaled Abaza, Department of Civil Engineering, Birzeit University)

“We prefer to recruit local staff because the obstacles to recruitment of foreigners weigh heavily in our minds – but of course we would like to have more foreigners because it’s very beneficial for research and for education.” (Abaher El-Sakka, Chair, Sociology Department, Birzeit University)

“We would appreciate it. Foreign academics come on a visa for three months, then they have to go to Jordan for a few days and then try to gain re-entry – it’s going to be hectic for them and for us but we wouldn’t stand in their way. After all, they are making the extra effort to go around these obstacles” (Ibrahim Hammad, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Birzeit University)

“You have to go for it. You have to. You have to insist: you have to come here. Their policy is that you should not come here and stay here... If the university isn’t doing enough, it should be held to account...It’s worth every moment of effort that the administration and people in different offices put into it. We fought for a year for [name omitted] to come back, and I don’t regret for a minute all the trips I took to the lawyer, all the conversations I had, going to the President, getting letters – of course. We shouldn’t have fought for [name omitted]? When she finally came back, we said ‘this woman was denied by the Israelis, she managed to come back’ – we gave her a course immediately, even though international studies is not her field, and [another department] did as well. So this mentality or ideology whereby it’s not worth the effort – it’s unfair. Because it’s a fight, it’s a struggle, but it’s worth every bit.” (Roger Heacock, Professor of History, Ibrahim Abu Lughod Institute of International Studies, Birzeit University)
ENTRY / EXIT REQUIREMENTS FOR U.S. CITIZENS: The general entry and exit requirements for U.S. citizens traveling to Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza are listed below. The U.S. government seeks equal treatment and freedom to travel for all U.S. citizens regardless of national origin or ethnicity. U.S. citizens who encounter difficulties are encouraged to contact the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv or the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem by e-mail or at the numbers above. However, Israeli-American nationals are treated as Israelis at the port of entry and U.S. citizens who may be Palestinian Authority (PA) dual nationals are treated as PA nationals at the port of entry.

Security Screening: U.S. citizens are advised that all persons entering or departing Israel, the West Bank, or Gaza are subject to security screening and may be denied entry or exit without explanation. U.S. citizen visitors have been subjected to prolonged questioning and physical searches and have been denied access to consular officers, lawyers, and family members.

Anyone indicating at a port of entry that he or she has connections to the West Bank or plans to travel to the West Bank may be given an entry stamp that permits travel only in the West Bank. This stamp does not permit such travelers to enter Jerusalem or Israel. Travelers who have received such a stamp may file an appeal with the Israeli military’s district coordination offices in the West Bank, but appeals are rarely approved.

Those with extensive travel to Muslim countries or U.S. citizens whom Israeli authorities suspect of being of Arab, Middle Eastern, or Muslim origin may also face additional questioning by immigration and border authorities, particularly if they ask that Israeli stamps not be entered into their passport.

Palestinian-Americans: PA ID holders, as well as persons believed to have claim to a PA ID by virtue of ancestry, will be treated for immigration purposes as residents of the West Bank and Gaza, regardless of whether they also hold U.S. citizenship. Israeli authorities consider anyone who was born in the West Bank or Gaza or who has parents or grandparents who were born or lived in the West Bank or Gaza as having a claim to a PA ID.
Statement on the Importance of Unrestricted Travel for Scholarly Exchange

The Executive Council approved the following statement at its February 2013 meeting.

The freedom to travel across international borders is enshrined in Article 13(2) of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states, "everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country." That principle is especially important for scholars, researchers, artists, and teachers, whose right to freedom of intellectual exchange may well rest on their ability to travel internationally. Indeed, the freedom to travel is a critical measure of the degree to which a state honors or traduces the principles of an open society; regrettably, it is not uncommon that totalitarian states restrict the movements of their intellectuals precisely to thwart the flow of ideas across national borders.

Even more regrettably, the United States has enforced restrictions on the travel of scholars, researchers, artists, and teachers ever since the passage of the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, which provided grounds for the "ideological exclusion" of people espousing beliefs allegedly inimical to the national security of the United States. Those grounds for exclusion persist today in Act 212 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and have provided the basis for the denial of visas to the Swiss theologian Tariq Ramadan in 2004 and the South African scholar Adam Habib in 2006. Those denials were reversed by the State Department in 2010, when it was acknowledged that neither scholar posed a credible security threat to the United States.

The MLA recognizes that there may be legitimate legal, medical, or security grounds on which to deny a person entrance to the United States. We note that in the past the Immigration and Nationality Act has been misused to bar entry to the United States to artists and intellectuals with Communist sympathies even though their beliefs pose no serious threat to American freedoms and even though their exclusion erodes the principles of intellectual freedom the United States should always seek to promote. Thus the United States repeatedly denied an entry visa to the Italian playwright Dario Fo, who was not a member of the Italian Communist Party but a severe critic of Soviet censorship of his work. In 1986, the MLA was directly involved in an instance of ideological exclusion, when the State Department refused to grant an entry visa to the Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka after the MLA invited him to accept an honorary membership at its convention in New York. The MLA did not revoke its invitation, as the State Department demanded, because we did not and do not believe that Soyinka could represent a credible threat to the security of the United States, and we extend that principle to Fo, Ramadan, Habib, and all foreign scholars as well.

We believe that as a scholarly society, we have a positive obligation to defend the freedom of scholars and artists to travel across national borders. The MLA will always support the free exchange of ideas among peoples and will always oppose the arbitrary and capricious use of the Immigration and Nationality Act to restrict the exchange of ideas between Americans and artists and intellectuals from outside the United States.
The Electronic Intifada
الانتفاضة الإلكترونية

Diaries: Live from Palestine
De-developing Palestine, one "visit permit" at a time
Rima Merriman
Jenin,
West Bank
22 September 2009
I am an American citizen of Palestinian descent and have been employed by the Arab American University-Jenin (AAUJ) in the occupied West Bank as an assistant professor of American literature for the past two and a half years. This month, while attempting to re-enter the West Bank through the land border with Jordan to start the academic year, I was denied re-entry by the Israeli authorities and questioned at length about my Palestinian heritage. The stated reason for the denial was that I had broken the law.

Through the office of a lawyer in Jerusalem that AAUJ had to hire at great cost and the support of the Israeli Committee for Residency Rights and the Palestinian Campaign for the Right of Entry/Re-Entry to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as efforts initiated by the US consulate and AMIDEAST, I am now back in Jenin.

I have managed to avoid the fate of Dr. Stacy Krainz, also an American citizen and the former chair of the English Department at AAUJ, who left on vacation in 2006-2007 only to be denied re-entry and disappear forever and, in the process, incapacitate teaching and learning at the fledgling department for some time to come. She too was told that she had broken the law.

Despite my re-entry, my problems and the problems of my international colleagues employed by Palestinian universities are far from over. Internationals employed by Palestinian universities are deliberately issued the kind of visa that puts us in a de facto illegal status; it’s even stamped with “not permitted to work”. Alternatively, we are denied entry at the border on the basis that we do not have a work permit, but at the same time, in a Kafkaesque twist, there is no mechanism by which we can get a work permit.

AAUJ expects to renew my restricted “visit permit” when it expires in three months through an Israeli administrative office at the Bet El settlement near Ramallah. I will be issued, as in the past, a tourist visa stamped with “not permitted to work” or one that implies, by its very nature, that paid
employment on my part is illegal.

Additional difficulties involve the kind of “visit permit” I have been issued, which is now stamped with “Palestinian Authority only,” referring to those discontinuous islands of land in the West Bank determined by the Oslo accords to be under Palestinian semi-autonomy. The trouble is that Israel keeps these violations of my rights as an American citizen and of the rights of Palestinian institutions to build their capacity within the “the forms of law.” Such gross violations ought not to be tolerated.

Within the forms of Israeli law, I and all of my international colleagues at AAUJ and at other Palestinian universities are now illegally employed and subject to whatever penalties Israel wishes to apply, such as abrupt denial of re-entry. What’s more, my “PA only visa” restricts me to stay and travel but not to work in 40 percent of the West Bank. Within the forms of Israeli law, I and my colleagues could be subject to a penalty at any time.

International academics at Palestinian universities are entitled to know what the mechanism is by which we can enter. Why is there no procedure for me and my colleagues to get work permits for the West Bank through the university at which we work? How can I, as an American citizen with a permit to PA areas only, visit the relatives I have in Haifa, inside Israel?

So far this semester, my American colleagues who entered through Tel Aviv have been given visit permits not limited to PA areas only, even though they have shown their contract with AAUJ at the border and honestly declared the purpose of their stay. My case, and the case of another American academic who teaches at Birzeit University near Ramallah and who was also denied re-entry to resume his post, has another layer of complication. We are Americans of Palestinian descent. This apparently gives Israeli authority the right to belittle our nationality.

I have been writing Consul General Daniel Rubenstein at the US consulate in Jerusalem and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, asking them to safeguard the integrity of my American nationality and all that it entails. My American and other international colleagues and I are waiting for answers from our respective consulates regarding our current legal dilemmas as professionals in the occupied West Bank. We need a mechanism by which Palestinian universities (and by extension all Palestinian development institutions) can apply for work permits for the international staff they hire.

*Rima Merriman is assistant professor in the Modern Languages Department at the Arab American University – Jenin.*
OUR STORIES

AMERICAN TEACHER AT BIRZEIT DENIED ACADEMIC FREEDOM
R2E CAMPAIGN, BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY, 5 MAY 2009

Julie Dylan*, an American teacher, has been a lecturer in the English Literature and Language Department and a student of Arabic with the Palestinian and Arabic Studies Program at Birzeit University since September 2008. She is one of the founding members of Campus Action Network, set up in April 2008 as a resource and network for student groups who work for justice in Palestine across campuses in the U.S.

Julie is one of the many international teachers working at universities throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt) who are reliant on three-month tourist visas in order to continue teaching here. At the end of November 2008 Julie was denied an extension to her tourist visa and was then forced to leave by the state of Israel. In order to get a single month extension, she was forced to spend nearly three full days procuring additional documents, including a new plane ticket for a specific date determined by the State and to sign a statement that she would not seek another tourist visa extension and promised to leave the country on the date the State determined. She was therefore unable to complete her semester of teaching at the University. As a result of Julie’s deportation 75 students were denied their right to complete their writing courses that semester and therefore denied their right to education.

Israel has controlled the borders and population register of the oPt since the start of the military occupation in 1967. This ongoing policy means that Israel has de facto control over who has access to teach, study or work at Birzeit University. Cases of deportations, denials of entry and denials of visa renewals for international passport holders who want to visit, work or study in the oPt have increased dramatically since 2006.

In November 2008, Julie was forced to return back to the States and continue teaching her classes via video conference so that her students could complete the semester. This proved to be an expensive procedure, particularly in terms of logistics, for a university, which is already suffering financially. Ultimately, the video conferencing failed and Morgan had to prepare full, detailed lecture notes and use a department teaching assistant and student aides.
In February 2009, Julie managed to return to the West Bank on a three month tourist visa, to resume her teaching duties at Birzeit University. Although she was allowed back into the country, she lives every day at risk of not being able to continue her teaching post at the university, because she may not be given a renewal of her current tourist visa, which expires in May 2009.

Recent events have proved that Julie is almost definitely not going to be given a visa renewal by the Israelis, who seem determined to prove to her that she is being watched. Before leaving the States to return to Palestine, Julie had posted her MA thesis to herself at an address in Ramallah, in order to avoid the possibility of being searched and interrogated by the Israeli immigration controls at the airport, and therefore putting her at further risk of being denied entry into the country (she would already have been at risk due to her previous deportation).

The thesis, which explores the topic of "Occupation power structures and the complicity of the international activist" arrived at the end of December to the Ramallah address Julie had sent it to. She was not able to take the package until she returned in February and only opened it recently. The friend who received the packaged envelope informed her that he found it opened when it arrived. When she looked inside, Julie was shocked to find that every single one of her Professor's handwritten comments or corrections on her thesis had been erased with white-out! This was a clear sign to let Julie know that her thesis had been read and once again her academic freedom was being infringed upon by the Israeli military occupation.

Read Julie's blog here: [http://promiseofpeace.blogspot.com/](http://promiseofpeace.blogspot.com/)

*Name has been changed*

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**Activism News:** Shortage of classrooms lead to a sharp increase in dropout rate among Palestinian students in Jerusalem (21 September 2010)

**Closure of Educational Institutions:** Children in Gaza attend school in shipping containers (21 September 2010)

**Activism News:** Over 500 Academics Have Endorsed the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (20 September 2010)

**Closure of Educational Institutions:** Due to Gaza closure, 40,000 students refused from UNRWA schools (15 September 2010)
"They wanted me to list every young Palestinian that I knew," says Palestinian-American deported by Israel

Submitted by Maureen Clare Murphy on Wed, 02/27/2013 - 19:28
"They wanted me to list every young Palestinian that I knew," says Palestinian-American deported by Israel | The Electronic Intifada

Israel's intelligence agency prevented Nour Joudah from entering West Bank. (Photo courtesy of Nour Joudah)

On Christmas day last year, Nour Joudah, a young Palestinian American teaching English to high schoolers at the Quaker-affiliated Friends school Ramallah, left the occupied West Bank to Jordan for a ten-day holiday. What was meant to be a short visit turned into a two-month stay after Israel denied Joudah entry at Allenby crossing on 5 January, even though she has a multiple-entry work visa approved by Israel's interior ministry.

Joudah attempted to return to the West Bank again via Ben Gurion airport near Tel Aviv on Monday, upon the advice of the Israeli embassy after inquiries were made by members of US Congress on her behalf. But Joudah was once again denied entry and sent back to Jordan on Tuesday.

Joudah, who occasionally blogs for The Electronic Intifada, talked to me about her ordeal today via Skype.

Maureen Clare Murphy: On Monday you were detained at Ben Gurion airport and eventually deported. Can you explain what happened?
Nour Joudah: About a few days before I flew, my congresswoman’s office, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, along with Congressman Keith Ellison's office, received a response from the Israeli embassy in Washington, DC, which they had been corresponding with for a couple of weeks, requesting the reason for my initial denial [of entry] at Allenby on January 5.

The Israeli embassy in DC responded that, according to whoever they spoke to at COGAT [the Israeli office for civil administration of the occupied West Bank], at the border I supposedly refused to answer certain questions. [The embassy advised] that I can and should try to re-enter, and the that Israel embassy would help me when I did so. They said I could choose which border to go to; I decided I would fly to Tel Aviv instead of going to Allenby again because Fouad, the USAID [the US development agency] representative who works on visas with the Friends school, has security clearance to meet me at my gate at Tel Aviv, while he doesn’t have that clearance to meet me at Allenby. So he met me at my gate and was with me all day as I was waiting and being questioned.

MCM: So you were first denied entry in January?

NJ: I was denied entry on January 5. I left on Christmas Day, December 25, to go and spend some time with friends for Christmas and New Years, and I tried to re-enter on January 5 and was denied for the first time.

MCM: It seems pretty arbitrary why they denied you entry. You still haven’t gotten a really clear answer as to why.

NJ: No, we still haven’t gotten an answer. They responded to [the Israeli daily] Haaretz that my reason for my second denial was the same, that I refused to cooperate with security questions, which is just a complete lie.

I answered every single question that they had the first time, and I answered every single question that they had the second time. In fact, the second time, knowing what the [stated] reason [for denying me entry] was the first time, I even asked my interrogator specifically, “Have I answered all your questions,” and he said, “Yes.” I [asked], “Do you have anything else you want to ask?” and he said, “If I have a follow-up I’ll come and find you.” He came and found me later with a follow-up, and I answered his follow-ups. The idea that there wasn’t cooperation is just silly.

Haaretz mentioned the question [posed by the interrogator regarding] acquaintances that I had between August and December and I [told the interrogator that] I hang out with the other American teachers and my roommates, the names of which they already knew, and that wasn’t satisfactory. [The interrogator] was sarcastic and snide and said, “But you’re so friendly, surely you know more people than that.” Basically they wanted me to give him a list of every young Palestinian that I knew so that he could create a file of phone numbers to tap. And I wasn’t going to give him that, that’s just silly.
MCM: So how long were you questioned both on Monday and previously at Allenby?

NJ: At Allenby [in January] I arrived on the Israeli-controlled side at about 11:30 am and was put back on a bus to Jordan at 6 pm and wasn’t told I was being denied entry until that very moment. And [on Monday] I landed in Tel Aviv at around 12:30 and was denied at 7:30 and wasn’t told until the last minute that I was being denied entry.

MCM: Did they put you in immigration detention at Ben Gurion airport?

NJ: Yeah. So what happened is that after they told me that I was denied, we went and got my luggage from baggage claim. They scanned all of my luggage inside out multiple times, took everything out, checked it. They did a body search and then they processed me in an office, took a picture, did some paperwork that I wasn’t allowed to see, and then I was escorted to an armored van. I was placed in the van and taken to an immigration detention center where I spent the night.

MCM: Why do you think Israel denied you entry, like they have to so many Palestinian Americans in particular?

NJ: I think in regards to the particular sort of decision making that happened, my personal opinion is that someone made a mistake at Allenby and they know it and that the Shabak [also known as the Shin Bet], the security apparatus, is annoyed that the diplomatic corps and the political corps are questioning their decision or helping me challenge their decision. I think in some ways they were looking for a way to let me in [on Monday] but they didn’t know how to let me in and save face; they didn’t know how to let me in without saying they had made a mistake at Allenby. This is a very much a case of cognitive dissonance and institutional infighting.

MCM: They routinely deny entry to Palestinian Americans. Do you have any thoughts about why there is this pattern?

NJ: I think it is very clear that they want as few people with Palestinian origin in what they consider Israel and the occupied territories because they don’t even want the [Palestinians] that are there. So why in God’s name would they want us returning in any form or fashion, even if it’s for a limited period or for a visit? ... They consider no one’s citizenship valuable if you have an Arab name, end of story; your citizenship is completely irrelevant to them and they are [indifferent] to any sort of law or alliances with any other countries. They do what they want arbitrarily and the US embassy and State Department know it.

MCM: Do you have any further recourse to try to return to your life in Ramallah or is it too soon to tell?
NJ: It’s a little bit too soon to tell.

MCM: You’re still trying to figure out your options?

NJ: Yeah, I’m still looking at options right now.

MCM: What kind of reactions have you gotten to the news about your deportation, and have your students been following your case?

Yeah, the reactions from friends, family and other organizations that have been following the case are that of surprise and shock. A few individuals from Human Rights Watch have been following, the press and that kind of thing, and everyone has been surprised and shocked. The USAID representative was very surprised by the way that it’s been handled. The arbitrariness of it is very clear. Had I simply not gone on vacation for ten days, I would still be teaching. There is absolutely nothing that they would have had reason to come and find me in Ramallah and deport me from there. They absolutely wouldn’t have done that. It just happens to be that I took a vacation, I put myself in their crosshairs, so to speak, and they completely took advantage of an opportunity to make sure I couldn’t go back to the work that they had already pre-approved for me to do.

As far as my students, they’ve been following everything, every minute, and and they are totally devastated. I’ve been trying my best to try and talk them through it and tell them that these are things that happen and they need to focus on their studies and I’ll always be in touch with them and anything that they need, I’m still around for — and that I don’t regret going to teach them and I don’t regret fighting to get back, regardless of what the result is.

MCM: Tell me a little bit about your time in Ramallah — how long were you there and what was it like teaching 9th graders at the Friends school?

NJ: I arrived in Ramallah at the end of August; my visa was granted to me in early September.

Teaching at the school has been great. Teaching high school is always a challenge and teaching high school in the Arab world is an even bigger challenge; the kids are rambunctious. It’s also a private school, so there’s a sense of entitlement that is around [like] any other private school in the world. But it was an absolute joy to teach there. I had a lot of fun with the kids, and developed a special bond with the students. I tried my best to make the class about more than grammar and short stories, and really pushed ideas of critical thinking and how to develop essays.

The kids have been writing to me, and I think the hardest part is how much they’ve told me: yours is the only class we looked forward to going to every day, English isn’t the same without you. And I can only hope that they can get excited again about that part of their studies, because there are a lot of
"They wanted me to list every young Palestinian that I knew," says Palestinian-American deported by Israel | The Electronic Intifada

My hope is that they will get litigated about that part of their charges, because these are kids with a lot of potential in that class and I would hate for them to slip because they've had a teacher switch in the middle of the year.

MCM: I'm really sorry that this happened to you and I'm sorry that your students lost their teacher. Is there anything else that you'd like to tell El's readers about your experience?

NJ: I think it's important for people to know that while this an unjust and outrageous thing that has happened — that I had all of the proper paperwork, that there was no reason for my denial, that I've been stranded in a foreign country for two months for no particular reason, having to live on my own resources, hire a lawyer and all of these kinds of things — at the end of the day, my situation is extremely more privileged than many others.

At the end of the day, the worst-case scenario is that I go home to my parents and my family in the United States. I have the right to these appeals and to hire this lawyer because I'm an American citizen. Other Palestinians don't have this right and they don't have always the resources that I've had and the support system that I've had. And I think that's really something that needs to be emphasized.

[Israel is] doing this to American citizens while lobbying the US Congress to let Israeli citizens into the United States without visas, they're trying to pass the Israeli visa waiver act in Congress, so that's an interesting hypocritical contradiction there. So while that's an important point to be discussed, it's also an important point that these arbitrary denials also happen to Palestinian ID-holders, they happen to Jerusalem ID-holders, and these are not people who have the same sources and diplomatic pressure that can be put on [Israel] like an American can. I think that's an important part to remember.

Tags: Nour Joudah Ramallah allenby crossing Ben Gurion airport denial of entry Sheila Jackson Lee Keith Ellison Shin Bet US Congress

Comments

What happened to Nour happens
Permalink Submitted by Mariam (not verified) on Wed, 02/27/2013 - 23:24
What happened to Nour happens EVERY day at Ben Gurion, Allenby, and the other border crossings. People crossing into 'Israel' is one of the best opportunities for them to do some spying on Palestinians. Thank you Nour for not selling out, which might have gained you entrance into the country. Unfortunately, many people don't have the courage that Nour had and will just hand over information (in the form of their iPhone or email account) so they can be allowed in. This is a huge phenomenon at Israeli crossings and needs much more media coverage.
Ground to a Halt

Denial of Palestinians’ Freedom of Movement in the West Bank

August 2007

B’Tselem - The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories

www.btselem.org/publications/
summaries/200708_ground_to_a_halt (full pdf also available)
Chapter 3

Harm to the Palestinian Fabric of Life

The geographic division of the West Bank into primary and secondary sections, separated and sometimes completely detached from each other, greatly affects every aspect of the lives of the Palestinians. The consequences of this division are felt every day, every hour. This chapter discusses some of these repercussions, concentrating on the central social institutions and systems, which affect the residents’ ability to exercise many of their human rights, in matters of health, the economy, the extended family, and local government. The chapter also examines some of the consequences accompanying the building of the “fabric of life” roads.

The movement restrictions also have harsh consequences on freedom of religion, inasmuch as they prevent the resident from visiting their main religious sites, which are located in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. They also deny Palestinians exercise of their right to education, especially university studies, because of the difficulty in reaching the universities and other educational institutions. This report, being limited in scope, does not discuss these ramifications.

In addition to the direct hardship caused to the Palestinians in these and other aspects of life, some of the harm will likely be felt only in the long run.

Health

Exercise of the right to health depends on numerous factors. Access to medical facilities, both of the service providers and the service recipients, is one of the main factors. Therefore, the restrictions on movement impede the ability of many to fully exercise this right: Ill persons needing treatment have difficulty reaching the medical centers; the quality of service provided at these centers suffers greatly as a result of the lack, or delay in arrival, of physicians and staff; first-aid crews have trouble reaching the ill and the injured quickly. Even when these phenomena do not immediately endanger the life of the patient, they are liable to result in increased morbidity and a shorter life span.
ments. Augusta Victoria Hospital, too, registered a one-third drop in its patient load once tightened Israeli controls over Palestinian access to East Jerusalem went into effect. More than two-thirds of the hospital's staff are West Bank residents; they must now apply for permits from the Israelis in order to get to work, and since the number of permits that Israel issues varies randomly from month to month, key staff are sometimes unable to get to the hospital at all.

Meanwhile, thousands of Palestinian college students living in East Jerusalem attend classes at the main campus of al-Quds University, which now lies on the other side of the wall in the suburb of Abu Dis. Every morning, these Palestinians (and countless others like them) face an unpleasant choice: they can try to find ways over, under, or around the as-yet-incomplete wall separating Abu Dis from Jerusalem—or they can risk the traffic jams, roadblocks, and checkpoints studding the long roundabout route that would take them all the way around Jerusalem and halfway to Jericho before snaking its way back to Abu Dis, a stone's throw from where they live in East Jerusalem. The wall has also shattered the normal pursuit of family life, separating cousins, nephews, uncles, aunts, grandparents, and—in one family out of five living east of the wall—one parent or another from the rest of the family. All in all, according to the U.N., a quarter of Jerusalem's Palestinians will find themselves on the east side of the wall when it is finally completed.

Not only are residents of the West Bank unable to enter Jerusalem: Palestinians from Jerusalem are unable to enter the West Bank without a whole new plethora of permits, including having to prove that their presence in Ramallah or Nablus or Hebron or Bethlehem is "essential." The Qalandia checkpoint, which used merely to mark the northern edge of Jerusalem and the entry to Ramallah, has become the equivalent of a border terminal, even though it is miles away from the 1967 border. Jerusalem Palestinians who want to visit Ramallah (which is as far from Jerusalem as Santa Monica is from Los Angeles, or Brooklyn from Manhattan, or Bethesda from Washington) will have to ask for a permit to do so. "Experience shows that 'asking for an entry permit' is not as simple as it sounds," the Israeli journalist Amira Hass points out. "Asking means the Shin Bet [Israel's domestic security service] will try to enlist collaborators in exchange for a permit, asking means waiting..."
days and weeks for an answer, wasting days in lines and on the telephone, and then hearing that you don't have the right to go to Ramallah because you did not prove that your presence there is vital." This, she adds, is not to mention "the humiliation involved in the very need to ask for an Israeli permit in order to do the most natural things in the world: visiting a sister and friends, going to work or the doctor, buying cheaper produce in the market, finding a book in the bookstore, or hearing poet Mahmoud Darwish give a poetry reading in the theater."

Israel's policies regarding Jerusalem were incorporated in the set of agreements entered into during the Oslo peace process beginning in 1993, which was, in turn, based on the formula originally established by Israel to maintain its control over the occupied territories in 1967. That formula was first articulated in the weeks immediately following Israel's capture of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. In July of that year, Israel's deputy prime minister, Yigal Allon, proposed to the government that the country should retain permanent control over the Jordan Valley and grant limited autonomy to isolated Palestinian enclaves in the West Bank. The result, he argued, would be "the Whole Land [of Israel] strategically, and a Jewish state demographically." In other words, Allon aimed to permanently safeguard Israel's physical control over all of the occupied territories, while also preserving Israel's claim to Jewishness. This requires the continuous denial or restriction of Palestinian political and human rights, for the simple reason that granting citizenship to all Palestinians who live in the area under Israeli control—and who are politically subject to Israel—would result in the state having a population that is, at most, half Jewish (as it is, one in five citizens of Israel within its pre-1967 borders is a Palestinian Muslim or Christian). Allon resolved the conundrum facing Israel: it wanted the land, but it did not want the people. The Allon Plan would allow Israel to accomplish both ends: controlling, and ultimately settling, Palestinian land without granting citizenship to Palestinians living under Israeli control after 1967.

Allon's territorial vision complemented Israel's longstanding claim that

For statistics on checkpoints and roadblocks, see B’Tselem Web site: (http://www.btselem.org/english/Freedom_of_Movement/Statistics.asp); for further details on checkpoints, roadblocks, earth mounds, flying checkpoints, see weekly briefings and humanitarian updates published by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and available on the UN-OCHA Web site (www.ochaopt.org).


Story of Yasser Alian: testimony given to B’Tselem and published on B’Tselem Web