



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

SITUATION UPDATE (OCTOBER –DECEMBER 2009)

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News round-up

Israel uses international NGOs to consolidate unlawful fragmentation

International humanitarian and development agencies and staff serving Palestinian communities in the oPt have been the target of Israel's latest abuse of its administrative control over the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and its residents, in contravention of its obligations under international law. On 16 December, international NGOs (INGOs) received an email from Israeli authorities announcing that staff of international aid agencies would no longer be issued B1 work permits. Instead they would receive one-year B2 visitor permits with a multiple-entry designation. The B2 visa prohibits work in Israel. Given that the Government of Israel (contrary to international law and the consensus of the international community) considers occupied East Jerusalem to be part of its own territory, this measure, like the recently introduced "Palestinian Authority Only" stamp and the 'Separation Wall,' and associated permit and checkpoint regime appears to be yet another example of Israel's numerous policies and practices designed to further entrench the unlawful fragmentation and annexation of Palestinian territory.

The Association of International Development Agencies strongly objected to the new arrangements, noting that the **new measure undermines the ability of INGOs to effectively meet their humanitarian and developmental mandates.** The proposed arrangements will impede the ability of INGOs to implement humanitarian and developmental assistance programmes serving Palestinian communities in Jerusalem and more generally jeopardise the ability of international staff to enter Israel, move freely within the oPt and between the oPt and Israel. The measure is expected to force Jerusalem-based INGO offices, programmes and staff to relocate to elsewhere in the West Bank and push already high transactional costs involved in negotiating movement and access issues with Israeli authorities to prohibitive levels. The

"It is hard to escape the conclusion that these procedures are designed to deter internationals from working in the Palestinian Territories by making it confusing, unsettling and difficult."

- visiting international professor at the Arab American University of Jenin on Israel's refusal to approve work permits for foreign nationals working in the oPt

administrative and practical implications of the new arrangements are also expected to undermine the ability of aid agencies to recruit and maintain staff of excellence since it appears that the new status will also affect a range of standard entitlements for international postings, such as the ability of staff to be accompanied by their families, reside in Jerusalem or register a car. The proposed arrangement is similar to the one Israel has used with international faculty at Palestinian universities and, more recently, a number of volunteers and teachers at several Palestinian cultural centers supported by EU countries.

PA only visas continue

The number of reports received by the Campaign on individuals receiving "Palestinian Authority only" visas fell in the last three months, following a barrage of criticism in the local and international media and from diplomatic channels. However, to the Campaign's knowledge, **Israel has yet to respond to any of the diplomatic inquiries into the matter**, despite promises to do so following an inter-ministerial meeting slated for last August and **cases of travellers, primarily of Palestinian or Arab nationalities, who have received the new stamp continued through to the end of 2009**. All instances reported occurred at the Allenby Bridge crossing. Given efforts by Israeli authorities to insist that travellers of Palestinian origin should enter through Allenby Bridge and not Ben Gurion,¹ this appears to confirm the discriminatory nature with which this permit is being issued.

Entry denials

Among those denied entry in the last quarter of 2009, was a scholar guest of the French cultural attaché, a physio-therapist, a football coach and peace activists:

- * A 17-year-old British girl of Palestinian origin arriving at Ben Gurion on 20 December to visit her mother in the West Bank was held over night before being deported to London. A family member writes: "What she went through from the moment she arrived at the airport until she was sent back to U.K was unbelievable.... No one could contact her while in custody - her mother, father, uncle, friends, lawyer, not even UK diplomats." (See side panel for details.)
- * Also in December, 23-year-old Nadia Silhi Chahin, a Chilean of Palestinian origin, was denied entry at Ben Gurion Airport. The trip was to be her first ever visit to family in the West Bank town of Beit Jala.
- * On 10 November, a Japanese acupuncturist and physiotherapist, Toshio Tarui, was denied entry at Allenby Bridge. Tarui was denied entry on two

17-year-old recounts her entry denial

SH was taken from the airport in a white van to what she presumes is the detention centre at the airport. There she was questioned by a "bulky big man who kept shouting at me and asking silly questions about my friends and family. I kept saying yes to everything he asked so that he would stop shouting."

...After the interrogation, she was put in "a filthy small cell with a double bunk bed. The bottom mattress was filthy, the top one was rubber with many holes in it but looked cleaner than the bottom one. No bed cover apart from a very dirty looking blanket....They initially said they would leave the door open as I was under age. But I woke up at some point to find the door locked and kept that way all the time. I screamed my head off to get them to open the door but they did not. The food they gave me was a sandwich part eaten. I was given some water to drink and some tea which I held very tightly to warm my very cold hands. They took all my things away from me including my telephone and they refused to let me call anybody from my family to let them know what was happening. At 6:30 am I was taken by a police car to board a plane to UK, only to find out they managed to put me on the wrong plane which was heading to Denmark! Eventually I was on the right plane to London..."

¹ See.: <http://jerusalem.usconsulate.gov/border-crossings.html>

previous occasions in March 2009 and requested a "Palestinian Authority only" visa in hopes that he would be able to return long enough to retrieve his personal belongings. "I talked honestly, telling them that I just want to bring back all my stuff left there, withdraw all my money from a local bank account, and just needed one week. When he asked about the possibility of entering if he secured a volunteer or work permit from the Israeli Ministry of Interior, he was told he would be sent back to Jordan no matter the reason for his coming and despite any visas he might secure. "They told me: 'We will send you back again and again and again. You are not going to Palestine any more.' I lost words what to say and I was so tense."

- * Veronique Bontemps, French national married to a Palestinian from Nablus, was denied entry at the airport on 21 November. Bontemps had been invited to present at an academic conference in Jerusalem sponsored by the French Consulate. Consulate attempts to intervene were unsuccessful; airport authorities denied having been contacted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Botemps was sent back to France (via Italy) after being held in appalling conditions at the airport for 15 hours. She was informed that because she is married to a Palestinian, she is forbidden to enter the country except via Allenby Bridge.
- * On 24 October, Israeli authorities at Ben Gurion Airport denied entry to a Paraguayan football coach invited by the Askar Refugee Camp in Nablus to train young Palestinian players. When he made known his intention to go to the West Bank, he was immediately given an "Entry Denied" stamp.
- * In October, US citizen Deena Ismail, was denied entry at Allenby Bridge. Ismail had served as a counsellor for young adults involved in the Seeds of Peace camp during the summer. Writes Ismail: "Seeds of Peace is a non-profit organization that looks to empower young adults from mainly, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, Egypt, and America. It teaches them how to be leaders and peacemakers." Ismail arrived at Allenby at about 11:00 am, after intensive questioning she was informed that she was being denied entry. When asked, Israeli authorities refused to provide reasons for the denial on grounds that these were "confidential." Ismail was fingerprinted and forced to wait for over five hours before being put on a bus back to Jordan. Ms Ismail reports: "While I waited for the bus back to Jordan, the policeman advised a soldier to stand near me with a gun pointed at me, and make sure that I did not go anywhere. I waited and waited. I finally got back to Jordan at around 6 pm."
- * In November, an EU national working with an international development organisation was denied entry at Allenby Bridge. Originally from Gaza, Israeli border authorities informed her that as a Gazan she cannot enter Israel or the West Bank. Israeli authorities have held her Palestinian ID since she last departed from Gaza.

"The US Government, through Embassy Tel Aviv, has discussed visa policy and entry stamp issues with Israel's consular division at the highest levels in hopes of clarifying Israeli visa requirements. The US Government continues to monitor developments of a new, less restrictive policy and will continue to work towards removing hurdles that hinder legitimate travel and work of US citizens abroad."

- Glenn K. Lewis, Consular Officer of the United States of America in letter responding to citizen's complaint

Family unification frozen

According to a recent statement by families in Gaza, at least 5,000 Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip still have no ID cards and continue to await approval of family reunification applications by the Israeli authorities.² New ID cards have not been issued in Gaza since the summer of 2008: in August 2008, 230 applicants were approved for family reunification permits; 5,000 were issued in July 2008.³ This past May, Minister of Civil Affairs in the Palestinian Authority Hussein Al-Sheikh promised that the PA was in contact with the Israeli authorities regarding a remaining 2,000 family reunification cases for Palestinians in Gaza and that these would soon be resolved. In early November, affected Gazans made a public appeal to Ash-Sheikh to remedy the situation.⁴

"Without an ID card Palestinians in Gaza cannot apply to Israel for a permit to leave for medical treatment in Israel or the West Bank, they cannot apply for permits to visit jailed relatives in Israeli prisons, or permission to leave the Gaza Strip through Rafah. For those with family in the West Bank, no ID card means no travel permit, so families remain fragmented with no possibility of visits.

"Israel caps the number of ID cards the Palestinian Authority can issue. The cards are effectively residency permits for Palestinians and give them rights for government services including welfare or social support. Palestinian refugees who wish to return to live in the West Bank or Gaza must obtain a permit. Without one they can be deported by Israeli officials arbitrarily from checkpoints within the West Bank. In Gaza, those without ID cards will not be deported, since travel is strictly through the Egyptian Rafah crossing, and Palestinians enter with travel documents from their former host countries."

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/viewDetails.aspx?ID=236241>

In October, Israeli Civil Affairs announced that it has "frozen until further notice" all visit permits and requests for family reunification. While the Government of Israel is apparently unwilling to give details, sources reported that "the Israelis were dragging their feet to issue identification cards to those who were allowed reunification during the last batch." According to some, the problem is linked to Israel's denial of permits to a number of those slated to attend the Fateh Conference held in Bethlehem this past summer. Some of the Fateh delegates reportedly remained in the West Bank and Israeli authorities are demanding that they leave.⁵

Movement within the oPt

Israeli authorities further tightened restrictions on access to Jerusalem during the last quarter of 2009. In December, just days before Bethlehem's busiest tourist season began, Israeli authorities banned foreign passport holders travelling between Jerusalem and Bethlehem on Palestinian buses. Tourists report being pulled off bus #21 which follows a route predominantly used by Palestinians holding Jerusalem IDs and forced tourists to enter Jerusalem via checkpoint 300 near Rachel's Tomb and Gilo settlement. A high-ranking Israeli security official confirmed that redirecting foreign-passport holders from the tunnel to checkpoint 300 is now a policy.⁶ According to Maan news agency, "the ban appears to apply only to Palestinian buses in the West Bank; foreign nationals travelling on Israel's Egged service, which connects the country's settlements throughout the occupied territories, including in Bethlehem, into Israel, reported no problems at the tunnel checkpoint. Internationals in private cars were similarly unaffected."

² <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=246936>

³ <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=246936>

⁴ <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=246936>

⁵ [http://english.pnn.ps/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=7480&Itemid#](http://english.pnn.ps/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=7480&Itemid=)

⁶ [www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=236241;](http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=236241)

[http://english.pnn.ps/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=7480&Itemid#](http://english.pnn.ps/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=7480&Itemid=)

Meanwhile, at the Hizmeh checkpoint, passengers on East Jerusalem bus lines are now being required to disembark and pass through the checkpoint on foot.

In other news, Israel's Supreme Court ruled that Bethlehem University student Berlanty Azzam, 21, who was deported by the Israeli army when stopped at a checkpoint in late October, should be able to challenge the deportation. Azzam, who holds a Gazan ID, was detained for six hours, then blindfolded and handcuffed and taken to Erez crossing to Gaza where she was forced to enter the territory without being given the chance to speak to a lawyer.

"The decision that a person's address listed in the Population Registry constitutes an essential condition for the legality of his/her residence at that address - with no explicit legal basis and with no official notification... undermines the fundamental principles of the law," said a lawyer for Gisha, Yadin Elam, in its petition to the Supreme Court. Gisha warned that if Ms Azzam's deportation were permitted, an estimated 25,000 Palestinians living in the West Bank who had Gazan addresses on their identity cards risked being removed. The human rights group also noted in its petition that Israel had made no security allegations against Ms Azzam, and that the manner in which she was removed had violated her right to due process. Regarding the army's claim that Ms Azzam was present in the West Bank "illegally", Gisha argued that at the time she left Gaza, a special permit for Palestinians to remain "simply did not exist". Furthermore, it said, Israel did not allow people to change their addresses from Gaza to the West Bank, and had not issued a single entry permit for the purpose of travelling to study to Palestinians from Gaza despite an Israeli High Court ruling in 2007 saying they should be allowed.⁷

Letter from Pastor of an East Jerusalem Church

I would like to inform you of a new practice by Israeli authorities, which blatantly discriminates against US citizens. This time, however, the discrimination is not only against Arab Americans, but ALL Americans. The main road from Hebron to Jerusalem, through the tunnels is now apparently not only closed to Arabs, but also to all foreigners, including US citizens.

I have been using the tunnels to enter Jerusalem for many years, together with other US citizens. Now, I am told, I need to take a long diversion into the PA held areas of Bethlehem, and then go through another, and more difficult checkpoint to enter Jerusalem. As a pastor of a local Baptist church in Jerusalem, which caters mostly to foreigners, this practice will definitely impact my congregation. All those who travel south of Jerusalem now have to face this new obstacle.

In addition to the difficulties, discomfort, loss of time and harassment, there is something patently wrong and discriminatory about this practice. There can be no "security" rationale for this new arrangement, and as an American citizen, I believe our government should strongly protest this decision and practice. I fully remember when our government protested the Saudi decision to deny visas to US Jews entering Saudi Arabia, and insisted that it would not tolerate discrimination against its citizens by a supposedly friendly foreign government.

It is bad enough that this road itself was illegally built on confiscated Arab land - supposedly expropriated for a public purpose, but now clearly used for Jews and Israelis only, and denied to the inhabitants of the occupied territories as well as to tourists and foreigners. The US government has plenty of leverage over the Israeli government, and continues to be their main political, military and financial supporter. If Israelis cannot accommodate us, and totally neglect our ideals, interests and principles, maybe we should reconsider the massive support we give them.

Email December 2009

⁷ http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/2/hi/middle_east/8356103.stm

In the media

16 Dec 2009: "Israel bans tourists from key West Bank bus line."
<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=246936>

15 Dec 2009: "South Africa slams El Al for stringent security checks."
<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1135011.html>

3 Dec 2009: "Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East Position Paper: Discriminatory Israeli visa policies applied to Canadian nationals," <http://www.cjpme.org>

23 Nov 2009: "Visa Dolorosa."
<http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/jrep/access/1912803081.html?dids=1912803081:1912803081&FMT=ABS&FMTS=ABS:FT&date=Nov+23%2C+2009&author=Anonymous&pub=The+Jerusalem+Report&edition=&startpage=26&desc=Visa+Dolorosa>

12 Nov 2009: "West Bank deportation challenged: Israel's Supreme Court says a Palestinian student whom the army deported to Gaza should be able to challenge the process."
http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/2/hi/middle_east/8356103.stm

27 October: " Severing of ties between COGAT and Israeli human rights organizations: Myths and Facts,"
<http://www.phr.org.il/uploaded/Myths%20and%20Facts.pdf>

18 Oct 2009: "Israel clampdown on foreign academics."
<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20091015175202707>

Take action

Third states maintaining friendly relations with Israel command the standing to challenge the arbitrary exclusion of their nationals from the oPt. They also have **an obligation to scrutinize Israel's exercise of authority as an occupying power and to oppose arbitrary denials of entry and residency** that harm Palestinian family life, educational, religious and social service institutions, businesses and socio-economic development more broadly.

Third states are urged to:

1. Ensure Israeli implementation of the rights to family unity and family reunification and the establishment of clear and transparent procedures for foreign nationals seeking to reside in the oPt, in keeping with international law.
 - obtain Israeli cancellation of the stipulation by Israel's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) that foreigners are restricted to a 27-month, single entry, maximum stay
 - demand Israel's adoption and implementation of a clear, transparent policy for issuing multiple entry residency permits to foreign nationals
2. Call for an immediate halt to Israel's arbitrary and abusive practice of denying entry to foreign nationals travelling to the oPt.
 - demand Israel's adoption and implementation of a clear, transparent policy for unhindered access to the oPt by foreign nationals
 - obtain explicit assurances that people who have previously been denied entry will be permitted to re-enter the oPt
 - demand an end to practice of issuing permits that restrict exit and re-entry
 - demand an end to practice of issuing permits of less than 3months to those travelling to the oPt

- demand that Israel cease the collective punishment of those whose relatives may have ‘overstayed’ their original visa duration
3. Apply vigorous scrutiny to cases of denied entry and denied residency in the oPt with a view to promoting Israel’s adoption and transparent application of principles consistent with the internationally accepted rights and obligations of an occupying power.
 - set up clear mechanisms for citizens to report and appeal cases of denied entry
 - set up clear mechanisms for liaising with Israeli authorities to ensure safe passage to the oPt for all citizens and ensure the prompt and proper resolution of cases where safe passage has been hindered
 - insist on receiving a formal explanation of each decision taken by Israel to bar any of their citizens from the oPt
 - object to all arbitrary denials of entry and residency that harm Palestinian family life, educational, health and social service institutions and businesses and act to resolve all such cases of exclusion.
 4. Respect the duty of all states not to acquiesce to internationally unlawful acts, bearing in mind that failing to object to *prima facie* unlawful acts or policies when notified of them implies accepting them as lawful.
 5. Promote Israel’s compliance with international humanitarian law with appropriate and effective tools of persuasion and dissuasion. Take appropriate measures based on reciprocity to ensure that the correct treatment accorded to Israel nationals seeking to enter third countries is reciprocated by correct treatment of their nationals seeking to enter Israel or the oPt.

Concerned individuals and organizations are called on to intensify their efforts 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.

1. **Send a letter to Israeli, UN, the Quartet Representative's Office and your government representatives**, documenting your case and emphasizing 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 will be treated with dignity and respect.
2. **Write your local press** protesting Israel’s unlawful policy of entry denials by telling your personal story and the impact it has had on you, your loved ones, your business, your organisation, etc.
3. **Update the Campaign on your experience**. 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.

Fill out the Campaign's denial of entry form and contribute to the Campaign's efforts to document and defeat Israel's unlawful policy of restricting entry into the oPt. The on line form can be found on this link:

<http://www.righttoenter.ps/ReportYourCase.php?mid=16&sid=18>

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\[1\]=Entry&sword_list\[1\]=Denial](http://www.adc.org/index.php?id=2980&no_cache=1&sword_list[1]=Entry&sword_list[1]=Denial)

For questions or assistance in taking action, please contact Christina Zola from AAI at 202.429.9210, Fahed Al-Rawaf from ADC at 202.244.2990 or Ghaith Al-Omari from ATFP at 202.887.0177

4. **Encourage friends and family members affected by the policy to take action.** 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.

Summary of documented cases of entry denial 2008 - 2009 by type
(1 Jan 2008 through 31 Dec 2009, updated Jan 2010)

	Jan '08	Feb '08	Mar '08	Apr '08	May '08	Jun '08	Jul '08	Aug '08	Sep '08	Oct '08	Nov '08	Dec '08	Jan '09	Feb '09	Mar '09	Apr '09	May '09	Jun '09	Jul '09	Aug '09	Sep '09	Oct '09	Nov '09	Dec '09	
Ports of entry																									
Allenby Bridge	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Ben Gurion Airport	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Sheikh Hussein Bridge	X		X					X	X					X											
Taba				X																					
Nationals																									
Europe	X	X	X	X		X		X					X	X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	
Latin American				X																X		X		X	
North America	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Other*						X									X							X		X	
Types of visitors													X												
Business persons	X																								
Development, humanitarian & HR workers			X	X												X						X	X	X	
Family	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X							X		X	X			X		X	X
Educators, health & social service workers	X								X								X			X	X	X	X	X	
Media workers & artists			X	X																			X		
Students & researchers	X	X	X					X			X		X	X											
Tourists & visitors		X		X	X		X				X					X	X	X							X
UN officials & diplomatic corps												X				X									
Other***	X			X		X							X				X			X		X	X		

* Citizens of Arab countries are particularly reluctant to report entry denials. Procedures outlined in the COGAT and MOFA notices pertain only to countries having visa agreements with Israel; no provision for visas or entry permits are made for Jordanian nationals – the vast majority of those seeking family unification – or other Arab nationals seeking to visit or reside in the oPt.

*** Other types of visitors/travelers include individuals affiliated with the church and/or other religious institutions and diplomatic missions.

From: Simon Amphlett
Sent: 18 October 2009 17:30
To: British Consulate General Jerusalem (Protect)
Subject: Complaint and enquiry re receiving a 'Palestinian Authority only' visa stamp

Dear Sir / Madam

I am writing to inform you of the difficulty and subsequent concerns surrounding my recent entry into the Occupied Palestinian Territories. I entered via the Allenby Bridge in Jordan on Tuesday September 29 2009. I am a British Citizen and have recently registered with your consulate. You may well be aware that in recent months Israeli customs authorities have taken to selectively stamping some entrants passports with 'Palestinian Authority only,' and unfortunately this happened to me also. It is my understanding that this is illegal and in breach of the 1995 Interim Agreement (Oslo 2) regarding travel around Israel and the occupied territories. ...

I have recently begun a year long contract with the Arab American University in Jenin as an English language teacher, and have entered on this basis. ... On Sept 29 I arrived at the Allenby Bridge customs area after a very long wait both for and in buses that crawled along the bridge. After a confusing and worrying 'free-for-all' with luggage and passports being handed over (no explanations were offered in Arabic, English or Hebrew) I made it inside and was directed to the VIP queue for arrivals. I explained to the woman at the passports desk that I had a contract for employment at the Arab American University. She looked dubious at the idea that I could be working in the West Bank but I showed her my contract and explained in some detail my position and intent to stay for nine months (the effective time of my contract). I was then directed to wait in a unspecified area and fill in a form indicating who I knew in Israel / the West Bank, what my Fathers name was and my contact details, amongst others.

After waiting for approximately forty five minutes a plain clothes security officer came and took me to the side of the baggage queue hall (not a private area) and asked me many questions about why I was going, who I knew there, if I was interested in Islam or not and so forth. She searched through my hand luggage, my private notebooks as well as all of the numbers on my mobile phone. I had to explain all of the Islamic and Eastern sounding names and their numbers were taken.

I was then asked to sit again in the waiting room, which I did for another thirty minutes or so. Then the same plain clothes official took me to the baggage area where the entire contents of my luggage were examined. Of particular interest was a copy of the Koran that I have but have not yet read. The official pointed out that it was a well worn book, but I explained I had had it for some time but barely looked at it. They also found a note book dating from my last visit with my notes about the Israel / Palestine situation.. Despite containing almost entirely factual, historical notes taken from a history book this notebook seemed of particular interest. It was taken away and I was taken to a corridor where I waited for approximately an hour. The same official then returned my notebook, told me it was now a police matter and they would be speaking to me shortly.

By now I was quite worried but re-assured myself by realizing that I hadn't done anything. Fortunately this time I didn't have to wait long before a solider came out and simply asked me where I was going, why and then left again. Shortly after this I received my passport back with the stamp 'Palestinian Authority only.' By this time I was very keen to get on my way so I did not want to risk further questioning by asking about the stamp.

My understanding of this stamp is that my movements are effectively restricted to zones A and B of the West Bank (C being under full Israeli administration) and am not permitted to enter any part of Israel. This makes any movement through the West Bank for business or pleasure effectively impossible.

Furthermore I understand that such a stamp is entirely illegal and as a citizen of a country that has diplomatic ties with Israel I should be permitted to enter and travel freely, especially to my own embassy. I pose no threat to Israel nor the Palestinian territories, I have committed no crime nor do I intend to. As such I am very interested to know the British Consulates position on these unjust and illegal travel restrictions, as well as clarity as to where I am permitted to travel. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours faithfully
Simon Amphlett