



Campaign for the Right of Entry/Re-Entry to the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt)

Fact

An undeclared Israeli policy is currently in effect. It denies entry and/or re-entry at Israeli borders to nationals of foreign countries, even those seeking to enter for a short period of time, but especially if they live with their Palestinian spouses and families or are Palestinian expatriate nationals or are working in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt). Israel is arbitrarily turning away scores of such people on a daily basis at the Israeli unilaterally declared and controlled international border crossings to the oPt, separating families, causing unjustified hardships, and impeding development.

Fact

Since 1967, Israel has maintained complete control over the registration of Palestinians in the population registry of the oPt, and over the granting of permits to visit the occupied territories. This control continued to extend to the Rafah border crossing on the Gaza Strip even after Israel's "disengagement".

Fact

Israel considers over 60,000 Palestinians residing in the occupied territories as illegal residents according to Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center (JLAC). Many such people are detained and deported if they are caught at Israeli checkpoints.

Fact

In the past few months Israel has, without prior warning, denied re-entry to people who have been legally residing in the oPt on their own or with their spouses and children for years on the basis of tourist or other kinds of visas that had been renewed at frequent intervals through their leaving and re-entering the country, as had been required by Israel. These people are now stranded in Jordan or back in their countries of citizenship, separated from families, work and property. Others are afraid to leave for fear of facing the same fate.

Fact

Representatives at consular services of countries, whose citizens are now being arbitrarily and selectively denied entry visas, though sympathetic, seem unwilling or unable to confront and overturn this policy.

Fact

Contrary to a 1951 Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation between Israel and the United States to permit nationals of either Party to enter the territories of the other Party, to travel therein freely, to reside at places of their choice, etc., Israel, targets Americans of Palestinian origin for special treatment and restricts their travel into and within the Israeli occupied territories. "American citizens of Palestinian origin may be considered by Israeli authorities to be residents of the West Bank or Gaza, especially if they were issued a Palestinian ID number or if, as minors, they were registered in either of their parents' Palestinian IDs." These people are required to obtain a valid Palestinian passport before being permitted to enter. (US Consular Information Sheet)

Fact

Thousands of Jordanian citizens have been systematically denied visas since the year 2000 by the Israeli embassy to visit the occupied territories, while Israeli tourists continue to be granted visitors' visas to Jordan.

Fact

Israel suspended family unification procedures for Palestinian residents of the oPt married to citizens of other countries shortly after the outbreak of the Al Aqsa Intifada at the end of 2000. These unification procedures had been restricted and intermittent at best. There are now over 60,000 formal applications of family unification on the official "waiting list" of the Palestinian Ministry of Civil Affairs.

Fact

Large numbers of Palestinians in the oPt marry people with nationalities from other countries because of continuing ties with the Palestinian Diaspora, and because so many of them are forced to find work and to study or build families outside the oPt.

Fact

The vast majority of applications for family unifications are submitted by Palestinian men who marry Jordanian nationals of Palestinian origin. (HaMoked)

Fact

Israeli ministers and officials behind policies restricting the number of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories consistently use "security" as a cover-up for policies and laws that deny family unification. In reality, they seek to reduce what they perceive as the "demographic threat" in the occupied territories including occupied East Jerusalem.

Fact

A declared 1983 Israeli policy regarding family unification is as follows: "to reduce, as much as possible, the approval of requests for family unification, "because they are "a means of immigration into the area." (As cited by B'Tselem, and Israeli Human Rights NGO)

Fact

A recent Israeli law (July 2003) denies citizenship, permanent residency, and/or temporary residency status in Israel and occupied East Jerusalem to oPt spouses of Israelis (and Jerusalemites) and to their children if these were born in the occupied territories. The law, called the Nationality and Entry into Israel Law, affects tens of thousands of Palestinians in Israel and the occupied territories.

Fact

In 1995, the Israeli Ministry of Interior changed its interpretation of the Law of Return concerning the rights of an Israeli "new immigrant", which also extend to the spouse of a Jew, to the child and grandchild of a Jew and to their spouses (section 4A of the Law of Return), so that it is no longer applicable to non-Jewish spouses of Israeli nationals. (Adalah).