

The impact of Israel's denials & restrictions on entry & presence of foreign nationals to the occupied Palestinian territory:

Results of query to Palestinian higher education institutions

(April 2018)

In February 2018, the Palestinian National Authority's Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOHE) distributed a query to all universities of the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) to assess the impact of Israel's denials of, and restrictions on, entry and presence of foreign nationals employed by the universities. The following eight universities responded:

- 1) Al-Istiqlal University, Jericho
- 2) Al-Quds Open University, Jerusalem
- 3) An-Najah National University, Nablus
- 4) Birzeit University, Birzeit
- 5) Hebron University, Hebron
- 6) Kadoorie Palestine Technical University, Tulkarm
- 7) The Arab American University, Jenin
- 8) University of Palestine, Gaza

Below is an overview of the results, having redacted personal data as well as the names of specific universities.

I. Type of difficulties encountered and numbers affected

Over half of all foreign national faculty and staff working in the Palestinian universities reporting have been negatively affected by Israeli denials or restrictions on entry and presence in the oPt over the past two academic years (2016/2017 and 2017/2018).

Out of the 64 foreign nationals reported as employed by the universities that responded, **at least 32 faculty and staff have experienced difficulty in entering or maintaining their presence in the oPt over the past two academic years (2016/2017 and 2017/2018).**

Foreign nationals reported as currently facing difficulties include **US, British, Dutch, French, German, Indian and Jordanian citizens**. The majority are US and EU citizens.

Twelve were denied entry into the country and at least 20 are currently facing obstacles in extending/securing visas.

The latter group includes university members whose visa extension applications have been refused and others who because of lengthy visa extension processing periods have been obliged to overstay valid visas while they await a response from the Israeli authorities or leave the country.

The table below contains the detailed responses by universities regarding the number of foreign nationals employed at the listed universities throughout the oPt, an overview of the number of the members of staff who have been denied entry to the oPt or experienced difficulty maintaining their presence in the oPt due to visa restrictions. The universities were asked to report on the 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 academic years.

University	Number of foreign nationals employed at university					
	Faculty (Teaching Staff)	Admin Staff	Other Employees	Total	Denied entry	Affected by visa restrictions
A.	2	0	0	2		
B.	1	0	1	2	1	1
C.	6	2	0	8		4
D.	22	4	0	26		15*
E.	5	0	0	5	3	**
F.	0	0	0	0		
G.	20	1	0	21	8	***
H.	0	0	0	0		

* "This includes 8 emergency cases; 3 refused renewal; the rest are awaiting renewal (with expired visas) or have appealed the denial of renewal; can't leave for fear they will be refused entry."

**All foreign national faculty reported as having difficulty securing visas; no numbers specified.

***An average of 4 faculty members/year reported as having difficulty securing visas; no total number specified for two-year period included in survey.

II. Impact of restrictions on Palestinian higher education

Universities reported that restrictions on entry and presence of foreign nationals serving Palestinian universities cause serious disruption to their academic programs and administrative work, undermine their ability to attract external expertise, reduce overall opportunities to develop the quality of teaching and research programs, and negatively impact the overall quality and efficacy of higher education in the oPt.

Six universities participating in the survey gave the following specific responses regarding the impact of restrictions:

- "Non-approval of recruitment of employees bearing other citizenships negatively impacts attracting members of the faculty and augmenting our external expertise."

- “[The restrictions] cause disruption of academic programs and obstruction of administrative work.”
- “The restrictions imposed by Israel on the entry and residency of foreign academics have extensively reduced the opportunities to develop education, courses, and research programs in Palestinian higher education institutions, in general, and in our University, in particular.

Also, severe restrictions on entry and residency cause foreign academics to be less inclined to accept teaching and research positions at our institution, due to the random, and unpredictable, restrictions they may be subject to.

The lack of any guarantees for academics bearing foreign passports, who wish to visit and work in the occupied Palestinian territories, and their being subject to random denial[s] of entry, or even denial[s] of extension of residency in the middle of the semesters, and sometimes the refusal of return [to the institutions], all impede the educational process, not only for our University as a pioneering academic institution in the Palestinian society, but also any progress in Palestinian higher education in general.

The policy of isolating the Palestinian academic community from the international academic community impacts the quality and efficacy of education that the students are receiving, which contributes to the overall development of higher education.”

- “These restrictions directly impact the teaching process due to the disruption of attracting qualified and specialized staff in various fields.”
- “These restrictions have a negative impact on the work of the university; especially the faculties, centers, and departments [the foreign academics] had arrived to work in. These restrictions impede the implementation of academic, administrative, laboratory, research, and other activities they are responsible for. At other times, they lead to the cessation of their assigned activities.”

##END##