

**Right to Enter Campaign Observations on
The impact of Israel's denials & restrictions
on entry & presence of foreign nationals to the oPt:
Results of query to Palestinian higher education institutions**

April 2018

Context

Foreign nationals wishing to maintain a presence in the oPt, whether for reasons of family unity or work, are facing **an alarming escalation in the rejection of visa extension requests and in the frequency and range of arbitrary demands and conditions imposed by the Israeli authorities**. Procedures for entry and visa renewals have always been opaque at best. Without functioning procedures for realizing the right to family unification or securing work and residence permits for the oPt, family members and those working in the oPt have been obliged to rely on extending B2 visitor visas by exiting and re-entering the country or applying to COGAT, generally submitting applications via the PA. This process has been used by foreign national spouses, occasionally by parents of Palestinians registered with the Israeli-controlled Palestinian registry, and by workers affiliated with institutions based in the West Bank. Applicants have experienced varying degrees of success since about 2006. However, over the past year, even these procedures have become increasingly dysfunctional. (See *"RTE January 2018 Update"* for details.)

Results of survey regarding impact on Palestinian universities

Palestinian institutions have been hard hit by these restrictions as shown by the recent survey undertaken by the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education. **Over half of all foreign national faculty and staff working in the eight Palestinian universities responding to the survey 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).**

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.

Additional information from the RTE Campaign

Affected faculty members have full-time status, work in all the various colleges, and include senior faculty and department chairpersons. Threatened faculty teach in the BA, MA, and PhD programs, are members on university committees, and serve the larger Palestinian community through workshops and lectures they give at various educational, research, and cultural institutions. A number have been teaching in Palestinian universities for a decade or more. They play a critical role, not only in the ongoing provision of quality education in Palestinian institutions of higher education, but in the



CAMPAIGN FOR THE RIGHT TO ENTER THE
OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY (OPT)

A grassroots campaign working for the right to freedom of movement and residency in the oPt

long-term development of Palestinian higher education.

Members of staff whose visa periods have expired while awaiting a response from Israeli authorities fear that if they leave the country before their visa status is regularised, they will face increased obstacles to re-entering the country. Faculty and staff are thus forced to make difficult choices between continuing their service in Palestinian academic institutions on the one hand or seeing family and attending academic obligations and development opportunities in their home countries and elsewhere.

Given the continued absence of clear, transparent and functioning policies and procedures for foreign nationals wishing to enter or stay in the oPt, Palestinian universities fear that the number of foreign nationals at universities who will be affected is likely to rise as their currently valid visas expire. Palestinian universities thus fear that **the 2018/2019 year is likely to be even more adversely affected**, if the situation is not effectively addressed.

##END##