



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

حملة الدفاع عن حق الدخول والإقامة لَحَمَلَة الجوازات الأجنبيّة إلى الأراضي الفلسطينية المحتلة

A Grassroots Campaign for the Protection of Residency Rights and Foreign Passport Holders Residing in and/or Visiting the oPt  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Town Hall meeting on March 10, 2018 from 5 PM to 7 PM at the Al Bireh Municipality**

### **Town Hall meeting to Discuss the Status of Thousands of Pending Family Unification Applications**

*The Right to Enter campaign has announced a town hall meeting to discuss the status of lem shemil (family unification) applications*

**RAMALLAH, PALESTINE (06/03/2018)** – Thousands of Palestinian families in the West Bank live in fear of being forced to separate or emigrate as they await the processing of their foreign family members' lem shemil (family unification) application.

Mothers, fathers, children and spouses have waited for years as Israel, who controls the population registry and borders, has unilaterally stopped the family unification process, approving only the most dire humanitarian cases in very rare instances. Additionally, Israel has only made it harder for such family members to obtain long-term visas to stay in the West Bank, forcing many to leave or live in Palestine in fear of deportation.

In an effort to bring public awareness to this issue, and to support those that are struggling in this situation, the Right to Enter campaign has organized a town hall meeting to discuss the process of lem shemil applications, the status of the thousands of applications pending, and how applicants can check the status of their applications. During the meeting, we will also discuss the broader issues foreigners face in obtaining visas for long-term residency in Palestine, which is affecting hundreds of teachers, academics, volunteers, and other professionals.

“We are organizing this town hall meeting because we are aware that the lem shemil process is confusing and difficult. We know that there are thousands of people waiting for their applications to be processed. This is an effort to help applicants obtain information about their individual applications and for the community to learn about the lem shemil process,” said Abla Aranki, a volunteer organizer with Right to Enter.

Right to Enter, a grassroots campaign of volunteers, has invited officials from the Civil Affairs Authority, the government body tasked with processing lem shemil, to speak during the town hall meeting and provide information to the community.

Additionally, Al Haq, a Palestinian human rights organization, will be present to collect authorizations in order for them to check the status of individual lem shemil applications.

“Without the residency status resulting from the lem shemil process, thousands of Palestinian families are in limbo, never knowing whether their family will be split apart. As visas for those waiting for lem shemil become more difficult to obtain, it has become urgent that the lem shemil process be restarted,” said Kaate Hamad, a volunteer organizer with Right to Enter.

This Town Hall meeting is one of Right to Enter’s many efforts to support the processing of lem shemil applications, including media, diplomatic, and academic outreach.

**The Town Hall meeting will be held on March 10, 2018 from 5 PM to 7 PM at the Al Bireh Municipality Building.**

For more information about the Town Hall, please follow the Right to Enter Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/RightToEnter](http://www.facebook.com/RightToEnter).

### **About Right to Enter**

The Right to Enter Campaign emerged in response to escalation of entry denials and restrictions in 2006. As a grassroots campaign we have concentrated our efforts on monitoring developments on these issues; documenting their impact on directly affected persons, families, service institutions and businesses; clarifying their broader impacts on Palestinian social and economic rights; and assessing their lawfulness within international law.

For over ten years we have called for the implementation of the right to family unity and family reunification and the establishment of clear and transparent procedures for foreign nationals seeking to maintain a presence in the oPt, in keeping with international law. We have emphasized that Israel’s restrictions on movement and access to and within the oPt, in fact and law, must be distinguished from Israel’s restrictions on foreign nationals’ entry into Israel.

We have also raised repeated concerns about the treatment to which those trying to enter or reside in the oPt have been subjected, asking third States to ensure that Israel grant safe and secure passage into the oPt to its citizens and that its citizens be treated with dignity and respect and without discrimination. Most of the foreign nationals affected by access restrictions are of Palestinian or Arab origin and have close family and historical ties to the country.

For more information visit [www.righttoenter.ps](http://www.righttoenter.ps).

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