

August 19, 2019

In recent years, Israel has been placing increasing restrictions on the ability of international scholars to work at Palestinian universities in the West Bank and Gaza. These restrictions have resulted in a sharp decrease in the number of international academics in Palestinian universities, and threaten to hinder Palestinian students' access to quality higher education. H-Pad has joined Palestinian, Israeli, and international organizations in condemning these restrictive measures and demanding that the Israeli government lift them.

Please join us in supporting Palestinian academic freedom by signing this [petition](#), organized by Academia for Equality.

H-PAD has sent the letter below to Israeli officials to protest Israeli attacks on Palestinians' academic freedom.

We, scholars and academics in the United States and members of Historians for Peace and Democracy (H-PAD), write to protest the continuing Israeli infringement on Palestinians' academic freedom through the restrictions imposed on faculty members at Palestinian universities in the West Bank and Gaza who are foreign nationals. Over the past three years, by placing a wide range of arbitrary demands and conditions for obtaining re-entry visas that allow their employment in Palestinian universities, Israeli authorities have further undermined the ability of international academic personnel to work at Palestinian universities. In addition, Israeli authorities have increasingly denied visas to academics scheduled for employment in Palestinian universities. These measures have significantly hindered the course of academic life in Palestinian higher education.

As a result of these measures, faculty members and universities face continuing uncertainty. Some faculty members have had to leave before the end of the academic year, while others remain in legal limbo, unable to leave given the absence of assurances that they would be allowed to return to the West Bank. Over the previous two academic years (2016/2017 and 2017/2018), Israeli authorities denied 12 entries into the country and at least 20 academics are currently facing obstacles to extending/securing visas. Under these conditions, there has been a sharp decrease in the number of international academics in Palestinian universities. At Birzeit University alone, twelve departments or affiliated institutions now face losing faculty members in the coming academic year.

As Adalah – the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel has argued, Israeli practices are contrary to international law. They are also in clear violation of academic freedom. They are unacceptable. They have devastating short- and long-term effects on Palestinian universities. They will

limit the development of the universities' teaching, research, and academic-scientific publications, and hinder Palestinian students' access to quality higher education.

We condemn the ongoing constraints imposed by the Israeli authorities on higher education in the Palestinian territories and we urge Israeli authorities to end this discriminatory policy immediately. We call upon the Israeli government to lift the restrictions preventing international academics from staying and working in the West Bank and refrain from imposing arbitrary restrictions on the duration of stay for international academics.

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