



Campaign for the Right to Enter the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt)

A Grassroots Campaign for the Protection of Foreign Passport Holders Residing in and/or Visiting the oPt

SITUATION UPDATE (JULY – SEPTEMBER 2009)

In This Issue

- Israel's New Restrictions 1
- "Special Arrangements" Fail 2
- Entry Denials Escalating 3
- Movement to/from Gaza 4
- In the Media 6
- Take Action 7
- Summary of Entry Denials 9
- Letter from American University Professor 10

News round-up

Israel's new restrictions evoke strong criticism but little change on the ground

Since early summer Israeli border officials have begun using a new entry permit stamp with the words "Palestinian Authority only." In addition, some foreign nationals have been issued "Israel only" permits or have been required to sign a statement which commits them not to enter the Palestinian Authority (PA) controlled areas of the West Bank under penalty of legal action.



The negative consequences of Israel's most recent measures are of particular concern to businesspersons, investors and tourists. The Association for International Development Agencies (AIDA) has also expressed concern about the new measures, noting that "these measures could have serious repercussions on our ability to deliver humanitarian services and implement development projects."

The "Palestinian Authority only" permit, denies foreign nationals access to Israel, in contravention of Oslo agreement stipulations that visitors with valid passports and a valid permit into the oPt can enter Israel without any need for another permit. Moreover, the permit can clearly be used at Israel's discretion to deny access to East Jerusalem and other parts of the oPt like area C, the area between the barrier and the Green Line, and all of the Gaza Strip and thus potentially confining those with this stamp to geographically-disconnected pockets of the oPt. **The new permit thus serves to further undermine the territorial integrity of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to further entrench the unlawful unilateral annexation and settlement of other parts.** Moreover, by placing the "Palestinian Authority only" stamp on foreign passports, **Israel is seeking to obtain international recognition of its annexation and settlement policies both of which are illegal under international law.** (See XXXX for Campaign's statement on the implications of the "Palestinian Authority only" permit under international law.) The new measures have also been strongly criticised for unfairly impacting on foreign nationals of Palestinian and Arab descent.

The new measures sparked significant interest within the local and international media and the Campaign was interviewed by a wide range of journalists. The Campaign also met with over a dozen representatives of the diplomatic community to alert them of the dangerous legal implications ensuing from these measures, urging them to take appropriate action to ensure their cancellation. Representatives expressed serious concern and a number of governments made official inquiries of the Israeli government regarding the new visa. In the US, Arab-American organisations reacted swiftly to condemn the new measures,¹ prompting the US State Department to criticise the "PA only" visa as unfair and unacceptable: "We have let the Government of Israel know that **these restrictions unfairly impact Palestinian and Arab American travellers and are not acceptable.**"

For their part Israeli officials attempted to distance themselves from the new measures with representatives of the Interior, Defence and Foreign Ministries all pinning the blame on each other for their implementation. The Israeli Ministry of Tourism issued a statement saying: "**This decision taken by the interior ministry causes significant damage to Israel's image and to incoming tourism for those tourists who visit the holy sites in the Palestinian Authority.**" And the Israeli Foreign Ministry claims it does not support the new visa. "It is unclear what good it is and how it can be enforced" a Foreign Ministry official told the press. "**All it does is damage Israel's image in its foreign relations,**" the official added.

Following a barrage of criticism in the local and international media and from diplomatic channels, the Israeli Ministry of Tourism issued an internal circular on 20 August in which it tried to give the impression that the new measures do not limit tourist travel and will be issued in accordance with a tourist's indication of his or her destination. However, practice on the ground indicates otherwise. To date, **the Campaign continues to receive information from travellers, primarily of Palestinian origin, entering from Allenby Bridge who have received the new stamp.**

"Special arrangements" fail to address the issue

None the less, at the time of writing, **Israel has neither stopped the issuing of "PA only" permits, nor provided any clarification regarding the new measures in response to diplomatic or media inquiries.** Instead, Israeli authorities have once again attempted to dodge the issue by resolving individual cases under diplomatic pressure. As the Campaign has long argued a **random, piecemeal "alleviation" of unlawful entry and residency denials or restrictions is no substitute for their abolition.** The inadequacy of this case-by-case approach is poignantly demonstrated by the case of Canadian citizen Khaled Sabawi, an engineer specialising in green technology who heads MENA Geothermal, the only company of its kind in the region. Twice denied entry since the start of the year, Sabawi was able to return after a month-and-a-half of arduous negotiations with Israeli authorities but the duration of his subsequent visas were limited to as little as one week. Then, in June, Sabawi received a "PA only" permit. After bringing his story to the media and diplomatic representatives, Israeli authorities notified him that he and everyone in his family would be awarded six-month multiple entry visas. In a letter to Canadian government officials dated 13 September, Sabawi noted, however, that this was no more than an arbitrarily awarded short-term solution at best:

¹ See: "Join ADC in Calling on US to Reciprocate Israeli Stance against US Citizens," <http://capwiz.com/adc/issues/alert/?alertid=13977506> ; "AAI Calls on Secretary of State to Protect American Citizen Travelers," <http://www.aaiusa.org/press-room/4240/aai-calls-on-secretary-of-state-to-protect-american-citizen-travelers> ; "Fact Sheet: Why Israel Discrimination Against Americans Matter," <http://www.aaiusa.org/get-involved/4248/fact-sheet-why-israeli-discrimination-against-americans-matter> ; Dr. James J. Zogby, August 31, 2009, "Enough is Enough," <http://www.aaiusa.org/washington-watch/4235/enough-is-enough> ; <http://www.aaiusa.org/get-involved/4202/denial-of-entry-issues-spread-to-american-citizens-without-dual-citizenship> .

I would like to note that we have not been informed as to what will happen five months from now or whether the visas are a one-time deal or will be renewed. We are not sure what will happen once the visas expire or what we will do if the channels we used to get this arrangement no longer exist. No one has been able to offer any answers to these concerns. Although receiving the B2 visa is a short term solution, so long as there is no official arrangement or proper process for Canadians investing in the OPT, we remain in a very precarious and uncertain situation.

Less than a week later, on 19 September, Sabawi learned just how clearly he had gauged his situation: returning from a business trip abroad, he was held at the Allenby Bridge for three hours. His multiple entry visa was disregarded and eventually given a regular single-entry three-month tourist visa. He is again uncertain about what this means for future travels. (For full story see: <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1108553.html>)

Entry denials escalating

Meanwhile, the Campaign witnessed a rise in the number of cases of entry denials reported over the past three months both relative to previous months and to the same three months in 2008. Palestinian higher education institutions were particularly hard hit. In August **At least three professors serving in West Bank universities and at least three international students were among those denied entry** over the past three months. Hanadi Abu-Taha, administrative assistant at the Arabic-language-teaching program at Birzeit University, told The Chronicle: "Because of the visa problems we have shortened the semester from four to three months, which is the length of the Israeli tourist visa. It is causing major disruption," she said.²

The university professors in question had previously been able to obtain year-long visas through a "special arrangement" with the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories via the Palestinian Authority. These visas were single entry and, ironically, did not permit work, although issued on the basis of the submission of contract agreements between Palestinian universities and the visa applicants. Despite the "special agreement," upon attempting to return through Allenby Bridge after summer holidays, Israeli border officials accused them of working illegally, suggesting that other professors formerly operating under the same arrangement may also be targeted. (See story below.XX)

In 2008, university professors were able to negotiate a special deal allowing them to renew their visiting visas for up to one year. Several other educational institutions have reportedly secured similar arrangements for international staff. The visa provided, however, is generally not a multiple entry visa and technically does not allow the person to work in the oPt. In 2009, a handful of individuals working in the oPt have reportedly been able to secure multiple entry work permits. But even these few individuals are not protected from Israel's arbitrary practice of entry denial. The Campaign has documented cases of individuals, including UN staff, with valid work permits denied entry at Israel-controlled borders.

Two of the university professors denied entry were later able to enter following intervention by lawyers but were given "PA only" permits. An English-language instructor at American Arab University of Jenin was also issued a "PA only" permit.

Other recent entry denials include:

- * In July, Terry Rempell, a Canadian national and PhD student at a UK university, was denied entry at Allenby Bridge despite efforts by the Canadian Government to coordinate his entry with Israeli officials.
- * In September, two members of the Christian Peacemaker Teams were denied entry. On 25 September, Israeli authorities at Ben Gurion airport, denied entry to Christian Peacemaker Team member Sean

²Matthew Kalman, "Israel Bars Some Foreign Academics Who Teach in the West Bank," CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION, September 3, 2009.

O'Neill. O'Neill, a U.S. citizen, was told that Israel's Ministry of Interior had ordered the denial of entry. In response to enquiries from O'Neill's lawyer, the Israeli authorities stated that the ban was due to a court appearance by O'Neill and Joe Wyse in March 2009, despite the fact that an Israeli judge had ordered them released without charges. Wyse was denied entry earlier the same month.³

Movement to/from Gaza

Movement in and out of Gaza continues to be severely restricted by the Israeli authorities.

In September, the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) announced that it would immediately cease to respond to applications from Israeli human rights organizations on behalf of Gaza residents, even in emergency humanitarian cases. New, unilateral procedures announced serve to negate Palestinians' right to representation in proceedings challenging military decisions. Israeli human rights organisations issued a joint statement condemning the move: "Gaza DCO boasts that it exists "for humanitarian reasons" and then closes the single option for representation open to those with humanitarian needs" and noting that the "decision represents another step in a systematic attempt to restrict the activities of human rights organizations in Israel." (See press release excerpts below.)

News Release, For Immediate Release,
Thursday, September 17, 2009

Human rights organizations, which assist thousands of Palestinians seeking to exit or enter the Gaza Strip for various reasons, serve in many cases as the only option of representation available to residents. Since a **Palestinian resident of the Gaza Strip cannot approach the Israeli authorities directly**, and since the Gaza DCO is the only body authorized to grant applications, the sole avenue open to such residents hoping to receive a response or to expedite the handling of their applications is via human rights organizations: **"Your refusal to respond to the appeals of human rights organizations and Israeli attorneys constitutes a grave humanitarian blow to the Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip and their right to representation – those Palestinian residents towards whom your foremost duty is to take care of their welfare, relief and humanitarian needs,"** the organizations wrote.

The organizations stress that in many cases their activities have saved lives and resolved problems and that the obstruction of their activities is likely to have very grave implications....

The organizations expressed surprise at the notice of refusal in light of the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories' declarations that part of the DCO's function is to respond to applications from Israeli human rights organizations. Recently the head of the DCO, Col. Moshe Levi, made contact with one of the organizations to propose a meeting in order to improve its work with the DCO and stated that the DCO exists **"for the humanitarian niche,"** i.e. **for the Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip who have been subject to the closure for more than two years. Now, just two months later, Col. Levi sent this letter to notify the human rights organizations of the immediate severance of contacts.**

The organizations signing the letter are: Gisha, HaMoked, Physicians for Human Rights – Israel, Association for Civil Rights in Israel, Adalah, Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, Rabbis for Human Rights, Yesh Din.

³ CPTnet, 28 September 2009, AT-TUWANI: Christian Peacemaker Team members denied entry to Israel

US Turns Blind Eye to Israel's New Separation Policy (excerpts)

Jonathan Cook, August 18, 2009

In an echo of restrictions already firmly in place in Gaza, Israel has begun barring movement between Israel and the West Bank for those holding a foreign passport, including humanitarian aid workers and thousands of Palestinian residents. The new policy is designed to force foreign citizens, mainly from North America and Europe, to choose between visiting Israel – including East Jerusalem, which Israel has annexed illegally – and the West Bank. The new regulation is in breach of Israel's commitments under the Oslo accords to Western governments that their citizens would be given continued access to the occupied territories. Israel has not suggested there are any security justifications for the new restriction.

Palestinian activists point out that the rule is being enforced selectively by Israel, which is barring foreign citizens of Palestinian origin from access to Israel and East Jerusalem while actively encouraging European and American Jews to settle in the West Bank.

U.S. diplomats, who are aware of the policy, have raised no objections. Additionally, human rights groups complain that the rule change will further separate East Jerusalem, the planned capital of a Palestinian state, from the West Bank. It is also expected to increase the pressures on families where one member holds a foreign passport to leave the region and to disrupt the assistance aid organizations are able to give Palestinians.

According to observers, the regulation was introduced quietly three months ago at the Allenby Bridge terminal on the border with Jordan, the only international crossing point for Palestinians in the West Bank. Israeli officials, who control the border, now issue foreign visitors with a visa for the "Palestinian Authority only," preventing them from entering Israel and East Jerusalem. Interior Ministry officials say a similar policy is being adopted at Ben Gurion, Israel's international airport near Tel Aviv, to bar holders of foreign passports who arrive via this route from reaching the West Bank. Foreign citizens, especially those with Palestinian ancestry, are being turned away and told to seek entry via the Allenby Bridge. Gaza has long been off-limits to any Palestinian who is not resident there and has been effectively closed to Israelis and most foreigners since early 2006, when Israel began its blockade.

"This is a deepening and refinement of the policy of separation that began with Israel establishing checkpoints in the West Bank and building the wall," said Sam Bahour, a Palestinian-American living in Ramallah who heads a Right to Enter campaign highlighting Israeli restrictions on Palestinian movement. "Foreign governments like the U.S. ought to be up in arms because this rule violates their own citizens' rights under diplomatic agreements. So far they have remained silent." The U.S. consulate in Jerusalem is aware of the increasing restrictions on foreign passport-holders, according to its Web site, but claims to be powerless to help.

The Right to Enter campaign notes that 60 percent of all people turned back at the borders by Israeli officials are American citizens. The consulate Web site notes both the denial of entry for many Palestinian-Americans at Ben Gurion airport, forcing them instead to use the Allenby Bridge crossing into the West Bank, and the issuing at the crossing of the "Palestinian Authority only" stamp, which excludes them from East Jerusalem and Israel. "The consulate can do nothing to assist in getting this visa status changed; only Israeli liaison offices in the West Bank can assist – but they rarely will," points out the Web site. "Travellers should be alert, and pay attention to which stamp they receive upon entry."

...Bahour said the latest rule change should be understood as one measure in a web of restrictions strangling normal Palestinian life that have been imposed by Israel, which controls the population registers for both Israelis and Palestinians. In addition to the wall and checkpoints, he said, Israel regularly deported "foreigners," both humanitarian workers and those of Palestinian origin, arriving in the region; it denied family unification to prevent Palestinian couples living together; it often revoked the residency of Palestinians who study abroad for extended periods; and it confiscated Jerusalem IDs from Palestinians to push them into the West Bank. He added that the U.S. consulate appeared to have accepted Israel's right to treat American citizens differently based solely on their ethnic origin. "While Palestinian-Americans are being denied entry to the region or excluded from Israel and East Jerusalem, Israel is actively encouraging American Jews to come and settle in the West Bank."

In early 2006 Bahour, who is married with two daughters, was affected by another rule change when Israel refused to renew tourist visas to Palestinians with foreign passports, forcing them to separate from their families in the West Bank.... " (contd. on p. 8.)

In the media

6 Aug, 2009: *"Palestinian Authority Only:" New Israeli stamp limits travel for tourists."*
<http://thefastertimes.com/Palestine/2009/08/06/is-this-what-an-israeli-apartheid-stamp-looks-like/>

13 Aug, 2009: *"Israel toughens entry for foreigners with West Bank ties."*
<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1107223.html>

17 Aug, 2009: *"New "Palestinian Areas Only" Visa Enrages Visitors."*
<http://chet-justice.blogspot.com/2009/08/new-palestinian-areas-only-visa-enrages.html>

17 Aug, 2009: *"Visit Either Israel or Palestine: Israel's Visa Rules."*
<http://www.palestinechronicle.com/news.php?id=ea3170e461d8ab9bb639f5bf0b1c61dc&mode=details>

18 Aug, 2009: *"US turn blind eye to Israel's new separation policy."*
<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article23293.htm>

19 Aug, 2009: *"Why is Israel limiting movement of Palestinian-Canadian businessman?"*
<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1108553.html>

19 Aug, 2009: *"U.S. blasts Israeli restrictions on American travelers in West Bank."*
<http://haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1108644.html>

20 Aug, 2009: US rips Israel for PA visitors policy
<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1249418651675&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

21 Aug, 2009: *"Israel targets Palestinian-Canadians: U.S. criticizes Israel's travel restrictions on Americans of Palestinian origin, but Canada silent so far on similar crack down on Canadians."*
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/israel-targets-palestinian-canadians/article1259311/>

24 Aug, 2009: *"West Bank tourists can get visas if they visit Israel, too."*
<http://haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1109608.html>

27 Aug, 2009: *"West Bank's foreign businesses - keen but frustrated."*
<http://www.reuters.com/article/newsMaps/idUSTRE57Q1K420090827?sp=true>

3 Sep, 2009: *"Israel Bars Some Foreign Academics Who Teach in the West Bank."*
<http://chronicle.com/article/Israel-Bars-Foreign-Academics/48314/>

The nuisance factor: Register your opposition!

Call your elected representatives today and tell them to insist that Israel halt all discriminatory restrictions on entry/exit into Israel and the OPT or face reciprocity.

Visit Right to Enter Campaign and click on the link below for more info:

<http://www.righttoenter.ps/images/PA%20Only%20Visas%20-%20Action,%20Background%20&%20Talking%20Points.doc>

Take action

Third states maintaining friendly relations with Israel command the standing to challenge the arbitrary exclusion of their nationals from the oPt. They also have **an obligation to scrutinize Israel's exercise of authority as an occupying power and to oppose arbitrary denials of entry and residency** that harm Palestinian family life, educational, religious and social service institutions, businesses and socio-economic development more broadly.

Third states are urged to:

1. Ensure Israeli implementation of the rights to family unity and family reunification and the establishment of clear and transparent procedures for foreign nationals seeking to reside in the oPt, in keeping with international law.
 - obtain Israeli cancellation of the stipulation by Israel's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) that foreigners are restricted to a 27-month, single entry, maximum stay
 - demand Israel's adoption and implementation of a clear, transparent policy for issuing multiple entry residency permits to foreign nationals
2. Call for an immediate halt to Israel's arbitrary and abusive practice of denying entry to foreign nationals travelling to the oPt.
 - demand Israel's adoption and implementation of a clear, transparent policy for unhindered access to the oPt by foreign nationals
 - obtain explicit assurances that people who have previously been denied entry will be permitted to re-enter the oPt
 - demand an end the practice of issuing permits that restrict exit and re-entry
 - demand an end the practice of issuing permits of less than three months to those travelling to the oPt
 - demand that Israel cease the collective punishment of those whose relatives may have 'overstayed' their original visa duration
3. Apply vigorous scrutiny to cases of denied entry and denied residency in the oPt with a view to promoting Israel's adoption and transparent application of principles consistent with the internationally accepted rights and obligations of an occupying power.
 - set up clear mechanisms for citizens to report and appeal cases of denied entry
 - set up clear mechanisms for liaising with Israeli authorities to ensure safe passage to the oPt for all citizens and ensure the prompt and proper resolution of cases where safe passage has been hindered
 - insist on receiving a formal explanation of each decision taken by Israel to bar any of their citizens from the oPt
 - object to all arbitrary denials of entry and residency that harm Palestinian family life, educational, health and social service institutions and businesses and act to resolve all such cases of exclusion.
4. Respect the duty of all states not to acquiesce to internationally unlawful acts, bearing in mind that failing to object to *prima facie* unlawful acts or policies when notified of them implies accepting them as lawful.
5. Promote Israel's compliance with international humanitarian law with appropriate and effective tools of persuasion and dissuasion. Take appropriate measures based on reciprocity to ensure that the correct treatment accorded to Israel nationals seeking to enter third countries is reciprocated by correct treatment of their nationals seeking to enter Israel or the oPt.

Concerned individuals and organizations are called on to intensify their efforts to hold the governments of Israel, third states and the Palestinian National Authority to their respective obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

1. **Send a letter to Israeli, UN, the Quartet Representative's Office and your government representatives**, documenting your case and emphasizing the need to obtain clear assurances from

Israel that persons carrying foreign passports will not be arbitrarily denied safe and secure passage to the oPt and that all foreign citizens seeking entry will be treated with dignity and respect.

2. **Write your local press** protesting Israel's unlawful policy of entry denials by telling your personal story and the impact it has had on you, your loved ones, your business, your organisation, etc.
3. **Update the Campaign on your experience.** Updated and reliable information about how entry denials (whether recent or past) continue to affect individuals, families and the general welfare of the Palestinian people in the oPt is essential to effectively combat Israel's policies. Even if you wish to keep your information confidential, it helps the Campaign to have documentation and statistics to establish trends and report impact. If you've attempted / been successful in returning, let us know. If you haven't tried, let us know why and under what conditions you might try to return.

Fill out the Campaign's denial of entry form and contribute to the Campaign's efforts to document and defeat Israel's unlawful policy of restricting entry into the oPt. The on line form can be found on this link:

<http://www.righttoenter.ps/ReportYourCase.php?mid=16&sid=18>

US citizens are also encouraged to report to the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee at:
[http://www.adc.org/index.php?id=2980&no_cache=1&sword_list\[\]=Entry&sword_list\[\]=Denial](http://www.adc.org/index.php?id=2980&no_cache=1&sword_list[]=Entry&sword_list[]=Denial)

For questions or assistance in taking action, please contact Christina Zola from AAI at 202.429.9210, Fahed Al-Rawaf from ADC at 202.244.2990 or Ghaith Al-Omari from AAFP at 202.887.0177

4. **Encourage friends and family members affected by the policy to take action.** The successful return of individuals previously denied entry and the unhindered entry of others was made possible by **organized civic action involving a broad alliance of concerned individuals and organizations** within the Palestinian, Israeli and international communities.

Contd. from p. 5: Jonathan Cook, "US Turns Blind Eye to Israel's New Separation Policy"

This latest rule, like the earlier one, fits into Israel's general goal of ethnic cleansing," he said. "Israel makes life ever more difficult to encourage any Palestinians who can, such as those with foreign passports, to leave." Bahour said the new restrictions would further sever the West Bank from Jerusalem, the center of Palestinian commercial and cultural life.....

Sari Bashi, a lawyer with Gisha, an Israeli organization that challenges restrictions on Palestinian movement, said the new policy was placing a severe obstacle in the way of humanitarian organizations, as well as foreigners working in Palestinian welfare organizations and academic institutions. "Many of the aid organizations working in the West Bank have offices and staff in East Jerusalem and even in Israel, and it's difficult to see how they are going to cope with this new restriction." She said staff of major international organizations such as the United Nations refugee agency, UNRWA, and its humanitarian division, OCHA, had been denied entry at Ben Gurion airport after declaring that they were working in the West Bank. "When Israel prevents access to an area, it raises the question of what is happening there," she said. "What are we being prevented from seeing?" Human rights groups are also concerned by the wording of the new restriction, confining foreign citizens to the "Palestinian Authority." The PA rules over only about 40 percent of the West Bank. The groups fear that in the future Israel may seek to prevent foreigners from moving between the PA-controlled enclaves of the West Bank and the 60 percent under Israeli control. Guy Imbar, a spokesman for Israel's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, said the phrase referred to the entire West Bank. But Jeff Halper of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions warned: "Given Israel's track record, it is right to be suspicious that the restriction may be reinterpreted at a later date."

<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article23293.htm>

A version of this article originally appeared in The National, published in Abu Dhabi.

Summary of documented cases of entry denial 2008 - 2009 by type

(1 Jan 2008 through 31 Dec 2008, updated 30 September 2009)

	Jan '08	Feb '08	Mar '08	Apr '08	May '08	Jun '08	Jul '08	Aug '08	Sep '08	Oct '08	Nov '08	Dec '08	Jan '09	Feb '09	Mar '09	Apr '09	May '09	Jun '09	Jul '09	Aug '09	Sep '09
Ports of entry																					
Allenby Bridge	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Ben Gurion Airport	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Sheikh Hussein Bridge	X		X					X	X						X						
Taba				X																	
Nationals																					
Europe	X	X	X	X		X		X					X	X		X	X			X	X
Latin American				X																X	
North America	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Other*						X									X						X
Types of visitors																					
Business persons	X											X									
Development, humanitarian & HR workers			X	X											X						X
Family	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X						X		X	X			X
Educators, health & social service workers	X								X							X			X	X	X
Media workers & artists			X	X																	
Students & researchers	X	X	X					X			X		X	X							
Tourists & visitors		X		X	X		X					X				X	X	X			
UN officials & diplomatic corps												X				X					
Other***	X			X		X							X				X			X	X

* Citizens of Arab countries are particularly reluctant to report entry denials. Procedures outlined in the COGAT and MOFA notices pertain only to countries having visa agreements with Israel; no provision for visas or entry permits are made for Jordanian nationals – the vast majority of those seeking family unification – or other Arab nationals seeking to visit or reside in the oPt.

*** Other types of visitors/travelers include individuals affiliated with the church and/or other religious institutions and diplomatic missions.

Excerpts from a letter to the US Consul-General from a US Citizen

Dear Consul General Daniel Rubenstein and Special Envoy George John Mitchell:

My name is Rima Merriman, American citizen.. I have been employed by the Arab American University - Jenin (AAU) in the occupied West Bank as an Assistant Professor of American literature for the past two and the half years. This is to let you know that I have been denied entry into the West Bank at Allenby today on the basis that I have been working in Israel illegally on a tourist visa stamped "not permitted to work". Please bear with me as I explain the catch 22 nature of this bizarre situation.

At no time had I lied about the reason for my entries into the West Bank each academic year. The various three-month tourist visas in my passport have been issued by officials at Allenby with full knowledge of my employment by AAU. The tourist visa was then extended by Beit Eel (for me and for other international employees at AAU and other Palestinian universities) through the PA Ministry of Interior and Beit Eel. In order to extend our tourist visas, Beit Eel routinely requested work contracts to verify our employment at a Palestinian institution. This has been going on for two years now, and, in fact, five of my international colleagues who teach in the English Department at AAU have successfully entered the West Bank in the past couple of weeks, having put their faith in the only procedure open to us to enter the West Bank to teach. The only change, I was told, has been the stamping of the tourist visa with "PA areas only", thus making it impossible for international academics to travel to Jerusalem or Israel for conferences or any other academic activity or, for that matter, tourist activities.

Because of the dissonance between the sort of visa international academics are given (a tourist visa) and our announced raison d'être for our presence in the West Bank, I tried in the past to investigate, at the behest of AAU, a procedure by which international staff would be issued work permits. I asked officials at COGAT through the Israeli Committee for Residency Rights (<http://groups.google.com/group/icrr>) to facilitate such permits, but COGAT was told by Beit Eel that work permits were "not possible" at that time. However, Beit Eel agreed to extend the tourist visas (stamped with "not permitted to work") of international academics in the occupied West Bank through the PA Ministry of Interior. That's the only procedure open to international academics to enter and reside in the Occupied West Bank for the duration of their contracts. We are given a three-month tourist visa on entry (Ben Gurion or Allenby) and then the PA/Beit Eel extend this tourist visa as needed during the academic year after verifying our employment contracts.

... The fall semester at AAU will start in a few days and I am anguished about what will happen to my students and courses, as we are understaffed. There is also the anxiety that my international colleagues will also be denied re-entry sooner or later and pretty much bring scholarship in the English department at AAU to a halt as had happened three years ago.

As an American citizen, I am reporting this incident in the hope that my government will be able to redress this unfair and untenable situation as soon as possible....

Sincerely,
Rima Najjar Merriman, Ph.D.
Modern Languages Department
Arab American University - Jenin