



Campaign for the Right of Entry/Re-Entry to the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt)

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

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International investors warned about accessing foreign investment in occupied Palestinian territory

As hundreds of international investors begin arriving in Bethlehem for the Palestine Investment Conference scheduled for May 21-23, the threat of being barred from entering the occupied West Bank by Israeli officials is likely to be foremost on everyone's mind. Those hoping to actually invest in Palestine will be looking for answers regarding who will guarantee unhindered access in the future for themselves, their staff and the suppliers needed for investments to succeed in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt).

Along with movement and access restrictions for Palestinians, Israel's denial of entry practices against foreigners trying to reach the oPt continues to pose severe obstacles on investment efforts to revive Palestinian economic life. The conference attempt to promote international investment in the occupation-strangled Palestinian territory is being undertaken despite the fact that Israel has not demonstrated any serious intention to reduce the restrictions it is placing on the Palestinian economy.

For this conference, though, some lucky participants will be passing Israeli-controlled crossings thanks to Israel's pre-authorization of limited 14-day permits. Investors expecting future access to their investments are unlikely to have the U.S. Administration, the Quartet, and Quartet Special Representative Tony Blair regularly available to negotiate entry visas for themselves or for their staff. For investors, Israel's refusal to establish a transparent, internationally lawful policy on which foreign nationals wishing to enter or maintain their presence in the oPt can rely is clear evidence that third states are not doing enough to create the necessary environment for investments to succeed.



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Campaign members recently met with Mr. Blair, stressing the need for a comprehensive solution to foreign nationals' vulnerability to arbitrary exclusion or expulsion by Israel and pointing out the futility of attempting to realize investments in the oPt while the ability of Palestinian institutions and businesses to recruit and retain the human resources needed for development remains uncertain and subject to Israel's political discretion.

The Campaign urges the Quartet and other third state actors to send clear signals that the arbitrary exclusion and expulsion of foreign passport holders from the oPt, like Israel's other abusive restrictions on movement and access, violates Israel's treaty obligations to those states, is contrary to the UN Charter and directly concerns the States themselves.

Contrary to international law, Israel continues to exercise its control over entry and residency in the oPt in an arbitrary, capricious and political manner that seriously harms Palestinian economic, social and cultural life. Since the Campaign began in 2006, thousands of Palestinians with foreign passports as well as other foreign nationals were denied entry into the oPt, refused permits to stay, and/or have been deported. Israel's refusal to act on the overwhelming majority of family unification applications since 2000 directly affects at least half a million people whose families remain separated or are threatened with separation. Vital health, educational, religious and social services are handicapped and disrupted. The results of Israeli practices includes business investment is deterred or thwarted and families being forced to relocate just to stay together.

Campaign member and businessman Sam Bahour observes that "real investment in Palestine starts with real access to all of the occupied Palestinian territory – the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip."

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