



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Israeli Knesset Mulls 'anti-boycott' Bill

On Wednesday June 9, 2010, 25 Israeli Parliament (Knesset) members submitted a bill that seeks to outlaw "initiating a boycott against the state of Israel, encouraging participation in a boycott, or providing assistance or information with the intention of promoting a boycott." The bill specifically defines a "boycott against Israel" as making any "demand on others not maintain relations" with any person, commercial entity or organisation "because of its relation to the State of Israel or to an area that is under control of the State of Israel."

The problem is that any activity carried out in accordance with Israel's law by persons under Israel's jurisdiction, *including activities involving them in international crimes and violations human rights*, is considered attributable to their "relation to the State of Israel or to an area that is under control of the State of Israel." According to the logic of this bill, any person acting against such internationally wrongful acts, or attempting to distance others from involvement in them, is acting against, and attempting to isolate, the State of Israel itself. The bill would make it a punishable offense for any person or organization anywhere in the world to advocate on any level against buying or dealing in settlement products, investing in settlements, maintaining relationships with persons or organizations involved in Israel's annexation of occupied territory, constructing the 'Separation Wall,' or committing other international crimes.

The bill specifically targets Israeli citizens and residents, foreign passport holders, and organizations and 'foreign political entities', including the Palestinian Authority and all foreign governments, subjecting them to steep fines, seizure of property, and freezes on bank accounts and other property transactions in Israel. The bill mandates the expulsion of non-resident foreign nationals from Israel and from the occupied Palestinian territory, banning their entry for at least ten years. It imposes sanctions on foreign governments who discourage or prohibit dealings with persons, businesses or organizations because of their involvements with Israeli state-sponsored international crimes, and punishes individuals and organizations that call on their governments to take such action in accordance with their obligations under international law. It punishes shareholders for calling on their corporations to divest from companies involved in Israeli state-sponsored international crimes. It even punishes whistleblowers.

The bill was proposed after the Palestinian Authority acted to end all commercial relations with Israeli settlement enterprises and to exclude settlement products from Palestinian markets under its



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jurisdiction. If it becomes law, it will lead to the imposition of heavy financial and property-related sanctions on the Palestinian Authority and on individual Palestinians.

This attempt to restrict public speech *and private communications* in Israel, the Israeli-occupied territories and abroad, is of a character, scope and severity rarely encountered even under the world's most repressive and undemocratic regimes.

The Campaign considers this bill to be part of a broad initiative by the most radical elements of the Israeli political spectrum to silence anyone who does not accept their vision and Israel's implementation of it.

As the world witnessed last month when renowned US academic Noam Chomsky was denied entry by Israel, the Israeli government has long used its control over entry into Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory to exclude anyone whose views it does not like.

The Campaign has long called attention to the harm wrongfully caused by Israel's arbitrary practices restricting entry into the oPt and movement and residency within the oPt. We remain concerned by Israel's recent attempts to introduce a new restrictive visa regime aimed at further entrenching the fragmentation and annexation of parts of the oPt, and join the calls made by law-abiding states, international organizations and civil society actors throughout the world demanding an end to Israel's use of closure measures to inflict collective punishment on the civilian population of Gaza. We are now seriously concerned by the prospective imposition of permanent entry denials on foreign nationals associated with legitimate efforts to investigate and document the involvements of persons, commercial entities and organizations with Israeli war crimes, and with legitimate efforts to persuade others to end relationships that are compromised by such involvements.

Most of all, we are concerned by the persistent inadequacy of the response at the Israeli, Palestinian and international levels to the escalation of internationally unlawful restrictive measures by Israel. We consider that the continued pattern of inaction bordering on acquiescence by the community of States is, like the unlawful restrictive measures themselves, destroying the prospects for peace and a just resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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