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British
Consulate-General
Jerusalem

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We understand that many British nationals have been affected by the Israeli Ministry of Interior's change of policy on issuing visas to foreign nationals working or resident in the Occupied Territories. Cases have been reported to us of British nationals being denied entry or having 'last permit' stamped in their passports.

With the EU, we have been pressing the Israeli authorities for action for some time now. The EU Presidency met with the head of COGAT (Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories), Maj Gen Mishalv on 13 December to discuss the issue.

Maj. Gen. Mishlav has informed us that the main responsibility on issues of entry to the Palestinian Territories has moved from the Ministry of Interior to COGAT and that the systems introduced by the Ministry of Interior three months ago have been cancelled.

We, along with all EU member states, have now been informed of the following:

- The implementation of the new rules has already started.
- People can now move freely even if they have 'last permit' stamped in their passports
- People can again apply for the three month tourist visa. For the time being EU spouses of Palestinians should apply for 3 month visas but COGAT is currently considering alternatives.
- A contact person is now in place at Allenby Bridge crossing and a contact person will be in place at Ben Gurion within weeks. This should prevent problems at crossing points.

I am sure this will be welcome news to those of you who are experiencing problems and hope that you see improvements immediately. We will be monitoring the implementation of these new procedures closely. Please let the Consulate know if you continue to experience difficulties as this will enable us to take action with the Israeli authorities. You can contact our consular section on (02) 541 4141.

The Consulate General, with the EU will continue to ensure that the issue of entry to the Occupied Territories for foreign nationals is raised at the highest levels. We will inform you of any further developments.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Grey

Catherine Grey
Vice Consul (Consular)