

RTE Situation Update – February 2019

In a nutshell, no significant changes can be reported since our last update in August 2018, except for the deepening and expansion of the harm caused to the Palestinian population of the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) resulting from Israel's continued obstruction of movement and access:

- **1.9 million Palestinians in Gaza remain in “lock down” for well over two decades running.**
- **The freezing of family unification applications since 2000 continues – affecting tens of thousands of Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.**
- **Foreign nationals wishing to enter the oPt or secure visa renewals for the oPt are still without a clear, consistently-applied policy and accompanying procedures that are in accordance with Israel’s relevant international obligations.¹**
- **Israel continues to control the population registry for the oPt and to use it in a political manner, causing serious harm to the Palestinian population.**

Family unity still elusive for tens of thousands of families

With the continued freeze on family unification, spouses, parents and children are threatened with separation, the elderly are left without critical care, and people of all ages are threatened with forced relocation. In October, [Ha'aretz](#) reported, for example, that Israel is seeking to deport to Brazil a young man who has lived in the Jenin refugee camp since the age of three. Brazilian-born Maen Abu Hafez, who speaks only Arabic and knows no Portuguese or anyone in Brazil but has no residency status, has been detained at an Israeli prison for illegal aliens since February 2017.

“Preventing foreign nationals — some of whom are not ‘foreign’ at all, but are descendants of West Bank residents who were prohibited from returning — from extending their stay, or barring their entry altogether, sabotages Palestine’s natural development process. It is part of an effort to isolate it from the rest of the world.”

- Attorney Yotam Ben-Hillel

According to a new [report by the Palestinian human rights organisation Al-Haq](#), the Palestinian Civil Affairs Committee, receives approximately 300-400 family unification applications each month. The Committee reports there are currently at least 30,000 applications for family unification pending, 25,000 of whom involve foreign nationals. The last time the Committee transferred applications to the Israeli authorities was in 2014, when 2,000 family unification applications were forwarded; with the exception of a few “humanitarian cases,” the Committee has not transferred applications since then as the Israeli authorities have stopped processing applications.²

¹ Israel’s administration of movement and access to and within the oPt must be exercised in conformity with [the law of occupation](#) and its other relevant international obligations. Subject to considerations of military necessary and security, it must at all times endeavor to ensure the welfare of the protected persons of the occupied territories, including through protecting their family rights, and restoring and ensuring civil life in the territory, which includes social and economic life. For more see: [“Engineering Community: Family Unification, Entry Restrictions and other Israeli Policies of Fragmenting Palestinians.”](#)

² Between 2000 and January 2005 alone, 120,000 requests for family unification were not considered by Israel. Over one-third of family unification applications coming from East Jerusalem residents were denied between 2000 and 2013 ([“Engineering Community: Family Unification, Entry Restrictions and other Israeli Policies of Fragmenting Palestinians”](#)).

Continued restrictions imposed on entry and presence

Different applicants have been informed by Israeli officials of various restrictions arbitrarily placed on their visa renewal applications although no formal written announcements have been issued publicly by Israel. These include:

- Spouses informed they are not permitted to work and refused visas on grounds of continued employment
- Retroactively applied limitation on the number of years (5) individuals on work-related visas are permitted to stay in oPt
- Applicants informed of visas denials because applications were submitted “late” although no stated policies on how and when to submit applications prior to visa expiration are available
- Continued use of the “Judea and Samaria” visa stamp
 - restricting freedom of movement including access to East Jerusalem and their consulates
 - consolidating jurisdictional and geographic fragmentation of oPt
- Retroactively applied restrictions on use of Ben Gurion airport³ and Sheikh Hussein Bridge for entry/exit
- Arbitrary conditions imposed on entry or visa renewals, including demands for financial bonds of 20,000 to 80,000 NIS, and undertaking not to pursue additional internal visa renewals.
- Arbitrary restrictions on duration of visas and issuance of single rather than multiple entry visas
- Arbitrary and discriminatory entry denials of foreign nationals wishing to visit or maintain a presence in the oPt continue
- Issuance of ten-year access bans, including at times upon exit after overstaying visas.

Mal-administration affecting foreign nationals

- Retroactive application of restrictions and with alleged violations constituting grounds for visa denial
- Shifting documentation requirements without prior or official notification
- Lengthy processing periods that force applicants to overstay valid visas or leave the country
- An escalation in Israeli demands for applicants to come for interviews with COGAT personnel, sometimes involving confusing and intimidating lines of questioning
- Requests to sign Hebrew-only documents as a condition for visa renewal

On 1 November 2018, HaMoked Center for the Defense of the Individual submitted a series of petitions to the Israeli High Court of Justice on behalf of Palestinian residents of the West Bank and their foreign spouses, demanding that the foreign spouses be permitted to legalize their status in the oPt through a family unification procedure. The Israeli human rights organisation noted that “the military’s total refusal to review requests of foreign citizens for family unification is contrary to international and Israeli law, and to the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement.” According to HaMoked, the military rejects family unification requests based on a sweeping policy rather than on the facts of the individual cases brought before it, and as such “does not appropriately balance relevant security needs and the right of residents of the oPt – protected persons under international humanitarian law – to family life.” HaMoked also stressed that the military “must properly document requests submitted to it in this area, as well as how they are handled.” HaMoked argues that the total freeze on family unification in the Occupied Territories should be abolished and foreign citizens who married Palestinians should be allowed to settle legally in the oPt.

³ This despite clear provisions for this in COGAT/MOFA announcements of 2006/7 regarding entry of foreign nationals to the West Bank.

Two years on: promised “new procedures” for “visas” yet to emerge

Since at least mid-2016, Israeli authorities have regularly denied entry and refused to extend visas for foreign nationals wishing to enter or maintain a presence in the oPt on grounds of “changes” in policies. However, the purported new policies and procedures have yet to emerge. Rather, and despite repeated requests from the diplomatic community for clarification, **the longstanding absence of clear, transparent, internationally lawful and consistently applied rules and procedures for foreign nationals wishing to visit, study, work or maintain a presence in the oPt persists.** Meanwhile, many if not most of those requesting visa renewals have been forced to either wait beyond the date of their last valid visa for a satisfactory resolution or leave the country with no clear avenue for returning. **Visa extension processing times, already slowed in 2017, appear to have lengthened further in 2018.** One Palestinian cultural organisation reported that the average waiting time increased from 1 ½ months in 2017 to 3-4 months in 2018. Some applicants wait as long as nine months or more.

Recent months have seen instances in which applicants have been given extensions of several weeks or months in an apparent stop-gap measure until a reported disagreement between COGAT and the Israeli Ministry of Interior on procedures is resolved. These **short-term visas, with no clear horizon for the longer-term and the various restrictions attached to them, are increasingly untenable** for many and anecdotal evidence suggests a growing number of individuals and families are leaving.

In short, Israel is pursuing a de facto policy that pushes families and individuals out of the country and discourages others from coming. Many if not most of these persons are of Palestinian descent and also regularly face **discriminatory treatment** at the hand of Israeli authorities at Israeli-controlled points of entry. This de-facto policy of hindering access to the oPt reaches well beyond those persons directly affected by denials of entry or visa renewals -- **it has broad socio-economic, political and humanitarian impacts on an entire society.** Essential services are undermined and Palestinians’ general welfare is compromised.

Israel fails to respond to mounting diplomatic concern

With citizens from the US, EU, UK, Russia, Japan, China, and various Latin American countries among those affected, the diplomatic community has raised concerns on a number of occasions. In September 2018, diplomats from some 30 countries attended a political briefing at the PLO offices in Ramallah to hear an update from the Right to Enter Campaign and discuss developments. PLO Executive Committee Member Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, who hosted the briefing, concluded:

“Current conditions are unlawful and unsustainable. Families are torn apart, institutional sustainability is undermined, and healthy social and economic development is blocked. We call on the international community to bring Israel to comply with international law and international humanitarian law and ensure its immediate articulation and implementation of clear and consistent procedures for administering entry into and removing restrictions on movement and longer-term stay in occupied Palestine.” (See full [press release](#).)

“The ability of Birzeit University to engage professors from the international community, whether they are of Palestinian origin or not, is of paramount importance in our quest for collaboration, diversity and internationalization. This is the right of every university wherever it is in the world – a right fundamental to the healthy education of our students.”

– Dr Hanna Nasir, Chair of Board, Birzeit Univ.

Despite mounting pressure, inquiries to Israeli officials from third States have not secured progress thus far; formal requests from various governments for explanations regarding changes in policies or practices have reportedly gone unanswered. Similarly, media inquiries posed to the Israeli authorities over the past months seeking clarity have been met with denials regarding any policy changes and the adoption of tougher rules. (For more, click [here](#) or [here](#), for example.)

"Whatever one's position on the Israel/Palestine conflict, this seems to me a clear case of the exercise of arbitrary and discriminatory power, the violation of the academic freedom of universities (to choose their own faculties) and of faculty members (to teach in positions for which they have been hired)."

– Joan W. Scott, Guest Blogger to Academe Blog, September 12, 2018

Destroying Palestinian universities

In a survey carried out by the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education last February, over half of all foreign national faculty and staff working in the eight Palestinian universities responding to the survey were negatively affected by Israeli denials or restrictions on entry and presence in the oPt over the past two academic years (2016/17 and 2017/18). Midway through the 2018/19 academic year and with no resolution to the issue, **universities have lost long-time faculty and face difficulty in attracting new international recruits**. Among those driven out by visa difficulties are Dr. Roger Heacock, professor of history, and Laura Wick, a health researcher specialising in pediatric health, who both served Birzeit University for over 30 years, and the dean of the business faculty and a veteran English language professor of Arab American University in Jenin. (See [Foreigners linked to Palestinians face Israeli visa troubles](#) & [Destroying Palestinian Universities](#).)

The faculty who manage to remain are caught up in an anxiety-ridden, always uncertain ["Kafkaesque process"](#) in which both professional and personal plans are repeatedly suspended and teaching and other scholarly activities are disrupted. At Birzeit University alone, over a dozen faculty members have been unable to secure visas for the duration of the current academic year (this excludes those already obliged to leave).

International academics demand solution

International protest against restrictions on entry and presence of foreign nationals working at Palestinian higher education institutions grew following [an appeal by Birzeit University](#). Letters, statements and articles were issued by a range of academic institutions and networks. Several academic associations addressed their concerns directly to Israeli PM Netanyahu, including the [British Society for Middle Eastern Studies](#) which noted that "These measures appear to have been implemented in an arbitrary and opaque manner," with grave consequences for Palestinian institutions of higher education:

They have forced professors and staff to quit their jobs and even to leave the country. They stifle hiring and employment processes. They restrict research and teaching. They disrupt administration... These measures clearly violate Palestinian and foreign nationals' academic freedom and further degrade Palestinian teaching and research.

"We condemn, in general, the ongoing constraints imposed by the Israeli authorities on the higher education sector in the West Bank and Gaza. We condemn, in particular, the denial of the right to education of the hundreds of students in the West Bank who have been taught and mentored by these professors, and the imposition of capricious, ill-informed, and cruel measures on our colleagues. These measures violate principles that should be protected, and indeed cherished, in any democratic state and are in contradiction of international humanitarian law and international human rights law."

[Committee on Academic Freedom of the Middle East Studies Association](#)

In its [Academic Freedom Monitoring Report](#), the international association Scholars at Risk warned: *Restrictions on travel intended to restrict academic freedom, freedom of expression, or related rights may violate applicable international humanitarian law or human rights standards. These include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Israel is a party and which protects the "freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds,*

regardless of frontiers.” Authorities have a responsibility to protect academic freedom and not to interfere with academic activity, so long as it is undertaken peacefully and responsibly. In addition to the harm to the immediate victim, travel restrictions targeting higher education institutions have a chilling effect on academic freedom and undermine democratic society generally.

In November, the faculty of [Pitzer College in Southern California](#) voted to suspend the school’s study abroad program at Haifa University in Israel “until (a) the Israeli state ends its restrictions on entry to Israel based on ancestry and/or political speech and (b) the Israeli state adopts policies granting visas for exchanges to Palestinian universities on a fully equal basis as it does to Israeli universities.”

Entry denials to restrict political freedoms

Israeli authorities continue to arbitrarily deny entry to foreign nationals seeking to enter the oPt. **Incidents of foreign nationals being questioned and sometimes banned from both the oPt and Israel for their political views has garnered increasing media attention over the past year.** 2019 began with the denial of [UK activist Gary Spedding](#) for a second time since 2014. Foreign nationals report discriminatory treatment, intimidation and instances of invasion of privacy at Israeli-controlled border crossings. A number of prominent Israeli leftist activists and journalists have also been subjected to questioning upon entry into the country. (See [here](#) for more.)

In October, the high profile case of US student Lara Alqasem, who was held at Ben Gurion airport for over two weeks while she appealed a ban on her entry, provoked extensive international outcry. A protest letter published in [The Guardian](#) and signed by over 300 Israeli and international academics demanded that Israel lift the bar on Alqasem: *“Denying entry to foreign students based on political beliefs or ethnic heritage is an attack on academic freedom. As professors who are committed to academic freedom, and as humans who reject all forms of racial profiling, we are calling on the Israeli authorities to permit Lara Alqasem to enter Israel and pursue her studies.”*

Alqasem, who arrived with a student visa to pursue her MA at Hebrew University was eventually permitted entry by court order ruling that:

“Since the appellant’s actions do not raise satisfactory cause to bar her to entry to Israel, the inevitable impression is that invalidating the visa given to her was due to the political opinions she holds... If this is truly the case, then we are talking about an extreme and dangerous step, which could lead to the crumbling of the pillars upon which democracy in Israel stands” ([Israel’s Supreme Court grants Lara Alqasem her appeal](#)).

Civil society organisations hard hit

While the negative impact on the education sector has been perhaps most visible, other civil society organisations are also significantly affected. According to the UN OCHA, a [2018 survey](#) conducted by the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO) filled by 25 Palestinian NGOs operating in East Jerusalem, 20% of organizations had travel bans for work abroad on their staff, and 12% had a temporary ban or deportation from Jerusalem order. Due to Israel’s denial of visas to foreign nationals, 48% of organizations had difficulty recruiting/keeping international staff and 24% were forced to cancel activities with visitors from abroad.

Artists, writers, musicians and other cultural workers are among those who have been denied entry, including prominent [Palestinian American writer Susan Abulhawa, who was denied entry in November](#) when she intended to attend a literary festival. Others have faced difficulties renewing their visas causing disruption in cultural and art education in the oPt in addition to cultural exchanges. Al Kamandjati, an NGO that teaches music to hundreds of Palestinian children across the West Bank, especially those in marginalized areas, reports that all 4 of the foreign nationals teaching at the cultural centre were refused visa extensions in 2018; while an extension for one was

eventually secured, the 3 others were obliged to leave the country and were denied entry when they tried to return. (By comparison, in 2017, none of Al Kamandjati's 4 international teachers were refused entry or visa extensions.) Likewise, the [Edward Said National Conservatory of Music](#), serving some 2,000 students, reports that 2 of its teachers were denied entry in 2018 and 5 were refused visa extensions.

Gaza permit regime increasingly draconian

In Gaza, the processing times for permits for the very few of the 1.9 million Palestinians eligible for exit permits has extended to "grossly unreasonable" time frames according to a petition by a group of Israeli human rights organisations submitted to the Israeli High Court. The petition requested a principled review of "a draconian directive" stipulating that an application submitted to Israel by a medical patient must be processed within 23 business days, regardless of when the patient has an appointment scheduled. An application to visit a relative who is severely ill, or to attend a first-degree relative's wedding in the West Bank or Israel, must be processed within 50 business days, while travel for study abroad must be processed within 70 business days. On 30 January, the Israeli High Court refused to conduct a principled discussion preferring instead to discuss individual cases or, at most, to discuss each of Israel's criteria for movement separately. "In practice," concludes Gisha, one of the petitioners, "the court's decision is to continue to allow Israel to evade its legal obligations towards the residents of the Gaza Strip." Despite these long processing times, Israeli authorities frequently fail to answer permit applications within the times stipulated in the directive, and often do not respond to applications at all. (For more, read [here](#).) Gazans needing medical treatment are also regularly subjected to a punitive prohibition on essential medical care exit permits if, for example, they have a relative who has moved out of Gaza to live and work in the West Bank without Israel's permission. In response to an inquiry from Physicians for Human Rights, Israeli authorities reported that in 2017 379 people were turned down on these grounds; before the end of 2018 this figure had reached 433. "Israel is constantly improving its means of control. Each time it crosses a new red line in its cruelty," writes Israeli journalist Amira Hass. She concludes: "Cutting off the Strip from the West Bank (what Israel calls segregation) is important to Israel as a key part of its policy. **Who remembers that Israel signed a declaration recognizing that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are a single territorial unit?**" (["Weaponizing medical treatment to keep Palestinians divided."](#))

Impossible choices

Quit work or your visa will not be renewed: In December 2017, Lana Khalaf, principal of the Pioneer School in Nablus, was told that if she wanted her visa extended she must first resign from her job. Khalaf, a US citizen, has been married for 22 years to a Nablus resident and has two sons who have Palestinian IDs. Khalaf, who studied at Birzeit University and spent some of her school years in Ramallah, has always maintained ties with her close family in Al-Bireh and has lived in the West Bank for some 29 years in total, but has only been granted tourist visas. In March 2018, Khalaf submitted a detailed request for a multiple-entry visa to the West Bank and Israel via her lawyer, who explained in the application that Khalaf cannot resign and that the demand that she do so "ignores the humanitarian need for the continuation of her employment, and moreover, is contrary to Israeli and international law, and in particular to the 1995 Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement." Two days later Khalaf received a short, handwritten rejection in Hebrew: "Illegal work in the region. Non-declaration of work in the region since 2007. Request denied."

Divorce or go back where you came from:

Morgan Cooper, a California-native came to Ramallah in 2004. Five years later, she met her Palestinian husband, Saleh Totah, in his restaurant. She, like an estimated 35,000 others, is waiting for family unification. Meanwhile, the fate of her family – the couple has a 2-year-old son – hangs precarious. Cooper has had repeated difficulties in securing extensions and re-entering the country after visiting her family in the US over the past two years. Twice, Cooper said, Israeli authorities told her to take her family to the US or divorce her husband. "You shouldn't have married an Arab," an Israeli official in charge of issuing visas once told her. (Click [here](#) for more on Morgan's story.)

Academic Networks Speak Out – Selected Links

- [Resolution regarding attack on academic freedom at Birzeit University](#). (Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York - PSC-CUNY, November 2018)
- [Letter from UK education unions calling on the UK government to stand up for Palestinian universities](#). (Representatives of major education unions including UCU, NEU, NASUWT, EIS and UNISON and others, October 2018)
- [Letter from BRISMES protesting against Israeli violations of Palestinian academic freedom](#). (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies, October 2018)
- [Letter to Major General Kamil Abu Rukon about systematic interference by Israeli authorities in Palestinian education, academic freedom, freedom to travel and to teach, study and research.](#) (California Scholars for Academic Freedom, August 2018)
- [USACBI condemns Israeli violations of Palestinian academic freedom](#). (US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, August 2018)
- [Arbitrary demands on foreign national academics working in Palestinian universities](#). (Middle East Studies Association, August 2018)
- [Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project](#). (Scholars at Risk, June 2018.)

Selections from the Media (July – December 2018)

- December 2018, [“Meet Bettina,”](#) The Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy, <https://www.facebook.com/ThePIPD/videos/220857742171698/>
- 21 January 2019, Amira Hass, [“Weaponizing medical treatment to keep Palestinians divided.”](#) Haaretz.
- November 2018, Morgan Cooper, [“Family Issues.”](#) *This Week in Palestine*.
- 29 November 2018, Alison Abbot, [“In the Palestinian territories, science struggles against all odds.”](#) *Nature*.
- 18 November 2018, Judy Maltz, [“Saved from deportation, Jewish-American activist approved for Israeli citizenship.”](#) Haaretz.
- 2 November 2018, Yotam Berger, [“Israel bars entry to Palestinian-American writer because she didn't coordinate her arrival.”](#) Haaretz.
- 13 October 2018, Amira Hass, [“Israel seeks to deport to Brazil man who has lived almost entire life in West Bank.”](#) Haaretz.
- 10 October, 2018, Letter to the Editor, [“Israel must lift its bar on US student Lara Alqasem.”](#) *The Guardian*.
- 13 September 2018, Raja Shehadeh, [“Israeli restrictions on overseas academics are holding Palestinian universities back.”](#) *Times Higher Education*.
- 12 September 2018, Joan W. Scott, [“Foreign Scholars Prevented from Teaching at West Bank Universities.”](#) *Academe Blog*.
- 3 August 2018, [“Israel's denial of visas for foreign academics hurting Palestinian education.”](#) *The Middle East Monitor*.
- 17 August 2018, Yotam Ben-Hillel, [“Israel is making it impossible for foreign nationals to live in the West Bank.”](#) *972 Magazine*.
- 26 July 2018, Daphna Golan, [“Destroying Palestinian Universities.”](#) Haaretz.
- 13 July 2018, Rania Zabaneh, [“Foreign residents in Palestinian territories denied visa renewals.”](#) *Al-Jazeera*.

RTE statements and reports - 2018

- [RTE update – August 2018](#) (August 2018)
- [RTE call to action by academic networks, global civil society & individuals](#) (August 2018)
- [Academia undermined: Israeli restrictions on foreign national academics in Palestinian higher education institutions](#) (July 2018)
- [RTE Press Release: “Palestinian University professors threatened with expulsion from West Bank”](#) (June 2018)
- [RTE observations on impact of Israel's denials & restrictions on entry & presence of foreign nationals to oPt: Results of query to Palestinian HE institutions](#) (April 2018)
- [The impact of Israel's denials & restrictions on entry & presence of foreign nationals to the occupied Palestinian territory: Results of query to Palestinian higher education institutions](#) (April 2018)

For more on educational impact click [here](#).

Who Are We? - The Right to Enter Campaign

The Right to Enter Campaign emerged in response to an escalation of entry denials and restrictions in 2006. As a grassroots campaign we have concentrated our efforts on monitoring developments on these issues; documenting their impact on directly affected persons, families, service institutions and businesses; clarifying their broader impacts on Palestinian social and economic rights; and assessing their lawfulness within international law.

For over ten years we have called for the implementation of the right to family unity and family reunification and the establishment of clear and transparent procedures for foreign nationals seeking to maintain a presence in the oPt, in keeping with international law. We have emphasized that Israel's restrictions on movement and access to and within the oPt, in fact and law, must be distinguished from Israel's restrictions on foreign nationals' entry into Israel. We have also raised repeated concerns about the treatment to which those trying to enter or reside in the oPt have been subjected, asking third States to ensure that Israel grant safe and secure passage into the oPt to its citizens and that its citizens be treated with dignity and respect and without discrimination. Most of the foreign nationals affected by access restrictions are of Palestinian or Arab origin and have close family and historical ties to the country.

Over the years, concerted efforts by concerned individuals and organizations, as well as diplomatic interventions by various third States, have occasionally prompted Israel's authorities to make partial and temporary adjustments to particular egregiously unlawful elements of the policies and procedures they apply to govern the entry and presence of foreign nationals in the oPt. Nevertheless, almost a decade later, those policies and procedures remain substantively unlawful and opaque and continue to be erratically and non-transparently implemented.

Foreign nationals who want to visit, live, or work in the oPt continue to be arbitrarily turned away at Israeli ports of entry, which are the only way to reach the oPt, or arbitrarily refused visa renewal applications. Families are being separated; investors are exiting the country; educators are unable to reach their schools and universities; students' education is being disrupted; and the elderly are being left without caretakers, to state but some of the extensive ramifications.

RTE Call to Action by Third States

The Campaign calls on the US, EU Member States, and other third States to redouble our shared efforts to address critical humanitarian issues regarding movement, access, and residency in the oPt. Third States have a clear 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; and businesses and socio-economic development more broadly. Third States maintaining friendly relations with Israel have a special standing, legal basis and obligation to challenge the arbitrary exclusion of their nationals from the oPt when the acts of exclusion cause or contribute directly to such harms. In such situations, **failures to object and demand rectification in conformity with international law imply acquiescence to the Occupying Powers' violation of its obligations to the protected civilian population under its control**. This obligation to object and demand rectification is not primarily owed by third States to their nationals. It is primarily owed to the protected persons and communities of the oPt, and to the community of States.

The Campaign urges Third States to make a fresh assessment of their own relevant rights and responsibilities. The current conditions are unlawful and unsustainable. Diligent third State scrutiny and responses to the wrongful administrative treatment of their dependents as they seek to enter or maintain their presence in the oPt is necessary and appropriate as a first level of harm mitigation and humanitarian protection. This diligence must also open the way to addressing the persistent mal-administration that continues to give rise to serious harms. It is time to secure Israel's **articulation and implementation of a clear and consistent regime governing entry into, movement within, and longer-term stay in the oPt** in keeping with international humanitarian law, applied without discrimination, and according all affected persons full dignity and respect.

Objectives:

1. End the illegal closure imposed on Gaza and all other unlawful restrictive measures that violate Palestinians' fundamental right to freedom of movement within the oPt.
2. Implement the rights to family unity and family reunification and the establishment of clear, transparent and internationally lawful procedures for foreign nationals seeking to reside in the oPt.
 - Cancel the stipulation by Israel's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) that restricts foreigners to a 27-month, single entry, maximum stay.
 - Adopt and implement a clear and transparent policy for issuing multiple entry residency permits to foreign nationals.
3. Halt arbitrary and abusive denials of entry to foreign nationals traveling to the oPt.
 - Obtain Israel's adoption and implementation of a clear, transparent policy that places no unlawful barriers on access to the oPt by foreign nationals.
 - Obtain explicit assurances that people who have previously been unlawfully denied entry will be permitted to re-enter the oPt.
4. Abolish "PA only," "Judea and Samaria only," and other geographic restrictions that arbitrarily restrict freedom of movement within the oPt and undermine its territorial integrity.
5. End the collective punishment of protected persons whose relatives may have overstayed their original visa duration.

Measures by Third States:

1. Vigorously scrutinize cases of denied entry, denied visa renewals and denied residency in the oPt.
 - Set up clear mechanisms for citizens to report and appeal cases of denied entry and visa renewals.
 - Set up effective mechanisms for liaising with Israeli authorities to ensure the safe transit of their nationals into the oPt in conformity with international law and the prompt and proper resolution of cases where such transit has been hindered.
 - Insist on receiving an official explanation of each decision taken by Israel to bar any of their citizens from the oPt and/or refuse residency.
 - 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.
2. Reinvigorate the implementation of third State duties to object to *prima facie* unlawful acts and policies when notified of them, lest failures to object imply acquiescence to them.
3. Promote Israel's compliance with international humanitarian law with appropriate and effective tools of persuasion and dissuasion.
4. 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.

RTE Call to Action by Individuals and Global Civil Society

Concerned individuals and organizations are called on to intensify their efforts to advocate for the fundamental right to freedom of movement for Palestinians and 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 the Quartet Representative's Office as well as Israeli, UN 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 into the oPt and that all foreign citizens seeking to enter or maintain a presence in the oPt will be treated with dignity and respect.

2. **Write your local press** protesting Israel's unlawful policy of entry denials and residency restrictions to the oPt by telling your personal story and the impact it has had on you, your loved ones, your business, your organization, etc.
4. **Update the Campaign on your experience.** Updated and reliable information about how entry and visa extension 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 challenge 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 have 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. (Report here: http://www.righttoenter.ps/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/RTE_case_report_form.pdf).
5. **Encourage friends and family members affected by the policies 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.

Important information for all foreign nationals

(1) "Tanseeq" for visa extensions applications based on employment in the West Bank

The Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Civil Affairs (MoCA) will now provide foreign nationals with a dated and stamped proof of PA transfer of the foreign national's initial request for "coordination" to COGAT upon request. Such documentation can be valuable proof in any legal proceedings should Israeli authorities unjustifiably deny an application on administrative/procedural grounds. Due to the current frequency of denials, we recommend all foreign nationals request this documentation.

(2) Transfer of Family Unification applications from the PA to Israeli authorities

Upon request, the Palestinian Authority's MoCA has provided foreign nationals with dated and stamped documentation of transfer of family reunification (*lem shemil*) requests from the PA to the Israeli authorities. Such proof is crucial for foreign nationals engaged in family unification legal proceedings, since cases are often dismissed on the basis of allegations that the request for family reunification was never transferred by the PA to Israeli authorities. Foreign nationals can also inquire with the PA after the status of their application either by directly visiting the Ministry of Civil Affairs' relevant office or via Al Haq in coordination with the Right to Enter campaign. The relevant form and information for inquiring into the status of applications can be found at <http://www.righttoenter.ps/lem-shemil-status-form/>

(3) Lawyers' list

For foreign nationals experiencing issues with entering or maintaining presence in the oPt, a list of lawyers willing to work on cases of denied entry or difficulties in obtaining visa extensions can be found at <http://www.righttoenter.ps/denied-entry/qualified-lawyers/>

Important information for US citizens

If you are experiencing delays or other difficulties in renewing your visa, the US Consulate's American Citizens Services Unit has indicated that it will inquire after your visa case with COGAT, or the Israeli foreign ministry, or any other relevant Israeli authority, following your submission of a privacy waiver to them and a short summary of the problems you are facing. The waivers are meant to obtain your permission to share your personal data. You will have to stipulate the purpose for which the data can be shared and indicate the relevant authorities with which it may be shared (e.g. "COGAT, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant Israeli authorities who can resolve this matter."). The ACS will require the original form, signed. (You can send it to the Consulate General Jerusalem, American Citizen Services, 18 Agron Road, Jerusalem 9419003). To access this form go to:

<http://www.righttoenter.ps/united-states-privacy-waiver/>