



CAMPAIGN FOR THE RIGHT TO ENTER THE
OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY (OPT)

A grassroots campaign working for the right to freedom of movement and residency in the oPt

8 September 2022

PRESS RELEASE

Right to Enter Campaign Rejects Israel's Draconian Entry Procedures

The Right to Enter rejects entirely Israel's attempts to make more palatable its draconian new procedures restricting the entry of foreign passport holders into the occupied West Bank. We continue to view these procedures, now slated to go into effect October 20, 2022, as Israel's attempt to further intensify its control over Palestinian daily life—determining who they love, who they learn from, who they work with, what outside resources they are able to access, their control over tourism and trade, and further isolating the West Bank— further entrenching its matrix of control over the oPt, as Israel continues its crushing military blockade over the Gaza Strip since June 2007 (see [Palestine Action Aid](#) for more on Gaza).

We continue to call on the international community to intervene and pressure Israel to halt these procedures in their entirety. The 4 September changes to the regulations (first published in February) indicate that diplomatic pressure works, but merely tinkering with the procedures does not address the serious harm done by Israel's continued contravention of international law.

For over 15 years, the Right to Enter campaign has called for the implementation of the right to family unity and family reunification and for Israel's establishment of a policy on entry, movement and residence in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) that is fully in line with its international legal obligations; that is clear, consistent, and transparent; that addresses, resolves and prevents from recurrence all past instances of maladministration; and that is applied without discrimination, and accords all affected persons full dignity and respect. (See RTE's [Position Statement](#).)

A negotiation approach, rather than a principled approach, will inevitably lead to an unsatisfactory result. There is really no reason why Israel, as an occupying power, should be permitted to consistently violate international law in how it administers movement and migration into the oPt.

Who is Affected?

Most Palestinians do not have legal status in the oPt because Israel controls the Palestinian population registry. But families often stretch across boundaries, with some members holding foreign passports and others living in the oPt.

Israel does not share data on how many foreign passport holders visit, live, and work in the occupied West Bank but they include Palestinians and non-Palestinians. Aid organizations, educational institutions, news agencies, and businesses often employ foreign national staff and consultants that require unhindered access. Civil society, including universities and human rights organizations, benefit from and often rely on foreign passport holders, as does the tourist industry.

Israeli-imposed restrictions on foreign nationals wishing to enter or stay in the oPt, including these procedures, continue to cause serious harm to Palestinian families, the autonomy and functioning of education, religious, health and other social services, and socio-economic development in the oPt.



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Serious Harm

“In any other country, I and spouses like me would have clear criteria and a transparent process to follow to gain a citizenship that we would qualify for through residency and contribution to the nation. Instead, we must live in fear of being deported, never knowing what to do to be able to remain with our families with certainty, or to return if we travel,” says a mother of three who has lived in the West Bank for over 20 years on a tourist visa.

Existing procedures for spouses and family members of oPt residents do not allow for family unification (see [“Letter from International Spouses of Palestinians,”](#) July 14, 2021) except through intermittent political gestures from Israel, a position upheld by the Israeli High Court (see Al Haq, [“Engineering Community”](#)).

Palestinian educational institutions will also be deeply affected by the procedures. Per [Birzeit University](#), “The new directive invests the Israeli military the absolute right to select which international faculty, academic researchers and students may be present at Palestinian universities, including academics and students of Palestinian origin but without residence documents, living and working in Palestine. The Israeli military will impose their own arbitrary criteria on which fields of study are permissible and what qualifications are acceptable. . . . Plainly put, the directive puts Palestinian universities under siege and divests them of basic control over their academic decisions.”

Numerous cases of foreign passport holders being harassed or denied entry at Israel’s borders have been documented (see RTE [“In the News”](#)). The proposed entry regulations do not change these circumstances, but instead impose further bureaucratic hurdles to entering the occupied West Bank, all of them determined by Israel, the occupying power. Moreover, they allow foreign nationals of most Arab countries—where most diaspora Palestinians live—no access at all.

About Right to Enter

Right to Enter is a grassroots campaign, comprised of affected volunteer individuals and families, defending the rights of access, movement and residency in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territory. It 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 more information or access to individuals affected by the new procedures,
contact righttoenter@gmail.com*

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