

August 29, 2019

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu
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Minister of Justice Ayelet Shaked
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Minister of Education Naftali Bennett
Chairman, Council for Higher Education of Israel
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Minister of the Interior Aryeh Machluf Deri
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Ambassador David Melech Friedman
US Ambassador to Israel
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Dear Prime Minister, Ministers, and Ambassador,

As teachers and scholars, the American Anthropological Association wishes to express our dismay regarding the severe and unreasonable limitations imposed on foreign nationals who are faculty members at Birzeit and other Palestinian universities in the West Bank and Gaza. These faculty, some of whom have been teaching for years in Palestinian universities, now have to deal with a wide range of arbitrary demands and conditions in order to obtain visas that permit their employment in Palestinian universities. Moreover, for the past three years, the Israeli authorities have increasingly denied visas—both new and re-entry—to such academics. These restrictions severely imperil the quality of Palestinian education and the right to education of Palestinian students.

As an organization we are committed to academic freedom, and as scholars we can directly attest to the benefits and values of higher education. We therefore call upon you to ensure that these professors can obtain entry and receive visas for the duration of their work contracts, and that the academic restrictions, which make it exceedingly difficult for foreign nationals to work in academic institutions in Palestine, be abolished immediately. We ask that Israel make public a clear and lawful procedure for issuing entry visas and work permits for international academics in the West Bank in order for Palestinian universities to manage and maintain their academic freedom.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Dr. Alex Barker
President, AAA