

Motion to Affiliate to the Right to Education Campaign at Birzeit University

THIS UNION NOTES*:

1. That over one third of the Palestinian population are students in full-time school or university education; and that in spite of the systematic attacks on educational institutions over 38 years of the illegal Israeli occupation, Palestinian education and higher education remain resilient.
2. That Israel's separation, isolation and ghettoization of Palestinian areas by the illegal wall inside the West Bank, around 700 military roadblocks and checkpoints, frequent closures of cities, prolonged curfews, and prison-like restrictions on the movement of all Palestinians, prevent thousands of students and teachers from reaching their schools and universities.¹
3. That Birzeit University, near Ramallah in the West Bank, was sealed off by an Israeli Army roadblock for nearly 3 years between 2001-2003; and that today the road to Birzeit remains subject to frequent 'flying checkpoints', which block, harass and intimidate students and faculty trying to reach the University.²
4. That Al Quds University in East Jerusalem is now surrounded by an 8-meter high concrete wall, which cuts the University off from 36% of its students.³
5. That students from Gaza are barred from reaching the 8 Palestinian universities in the West Bank.⁴
6. That 73 educational institutions have been partially or fully destroyed in the Gaza Strip since September 2000, including kindergartens, schools, and a teacher training college which was completely demolished on 16 March 2004.⁵
7. That 8 out of the total 11 universities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been shelled or broken into by the Israeli Army since September 2000.⁶
8. That Hebron University and the Palestine Polytechnic University in Hebron were closed down by Israeli military order for much of 2003; and that the students of Hebron had to physically break down the gates to their universities, in defiance of the Israeli Army, to reconvene classes and demand their right to an education.⁷
9. That Birzeit University has been closed down by Israeli military order 15 times in its history; and that all the Palestinian universities and the majority of schools, including kindergartens, were closed down by military order between the years 1987-1992, denying a whole generation their right to education.⁸
10. That over 700 children, 200 university students and 39 teachers have been killed by the Israeli Army since September 2000.⁹
11. That schoolgirls Raghda Adnan al-Assar and Ghadeer Jaber Mukhaymar, aged 10 and 9, were shot dead by Israeli soldiers while sitting at their desks in UN schools in the Gaza Strip in September and October 2004; and that schoolgirls Rania Iyad Aram and Iman al-Hams, aged 8 and 13, were shot and killed on their way to school within the same month.¹⁰
12. That over 3,000 Palestinian children have been arrested by the Israeli Army since September 2000 and that some 300 children are currently held in Israeli prisons and detention centers.¹¹
13. That 2 presidents of Birzeit University Student Council were imprisoned in 2004 and 4 out of the total 11 members of the Student Council were imprisoned in the same year; and that there are currently some 80 students from Birzeit University held in Israeli prisons and detention centers, 10 of whom are held without charge or trial, including human rights worker and sociology student, Ziyad Hmeidan.¹²

***Please substitute 'Union' as appropriate to your organization**

THIS UNION BELIEVES:

1. That the right to education is a fundamental human right and basic to human freedom, as declared in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which states that “Everyone has the right to education”, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966),¹³ which recognizes that “Education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights.”
2. That the obstruction and attacks on Palestinian education in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by the illegal Israeli occupation not only violate the human rights of individuals, but are an attack on the development of Palestinian society as a whole.
3. If peace is sought, then freedom, justice, education and development are necessary.
4. It is the responsibility of governments, civil society organizations and ordinary people to defend the universal right to education and to demand its realization.

THIS UNION RESOLVES:

1. To affiliate to the Right to Education Campaign at Birzeit University as a public show of solidarity and support to all Palestinian students and teachers who are struggling to live, work and study under the illegal Israeli occupation.
2. To raise awareness within this union and beyond to local and national constituencies about the issues facing Palestinian education under military occupation.
3. To support the Right to Education Campaign’s calls for international action against Israeli violations of the human right to education in the occupied Palestinian territory.
4. To oppose Israel’s illegal military occupation and its attacks on Palestinian education and to lobby the elected representatives of our own government to pressure the government of Israel to adhere to its legal obligations to end attacks on civilian infrastructure and to allow unimpeded access for all Palestinians to their educational institutions.

Name of organization: _____

Date of affiliation to the Right to Education Campaign: _____

Contact details (including email address): _____

**Please direct all communications to Helen Murray, Right to Education Campaign, Birzeit University:
Email: right2edu@birzeit.edu, Telefax: +972 2 298 2059**

Right to Education Campaign
Public Relations Office
Birzeit University
Birzeit P.O. Box 14
West Bank - Palestine

**Right to Education website: <http://right2edu.birzeit.edu>
Birzeit University website: www.birzeit.edu**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR AFFILIATING ORGANIZATIONS:

Affiliation to the Right to Education Campaign is a means of building an international coalition of organizations to campaign in support of Palestinian students, teachers and educational institutions.

For aims of the Right to Education Campaign please see the attached document "Statement of Aims and International Call to Action", available on the Right to Education website, under 'About the Campaign' <http://right2edu.birzeit.edu>.

Affiliating organizations will be kept in touch with bi-monthly news and campaign updates.

Please let us know of your plans to submit a motion of affiliation in advance, so that we can provide you with any further information you may need. Please contact the Right to Education Campaign, Email: right2edu@birzeit.edu Tel: +972 2 298 2059; or Friends of Birzeit University, UK, Email: fobzu@fobzu.org, Tel: 0207 832 1340

If your organization would like to carry out practical activities, which can also be included in the motion of affiliation to the Right to Education Campaign, it can do so by:

- Organizing a delegation to visit Birzeit University and other universities and educational organizations in Palestine, or organizing a delegation of Palestinian students and faculty to come on a speaking tour to universities and organizations in your country (please contact right2edu@birzeit.edu).
- Sponsoring a student at Birzeit University to enable them to continue their education.¹⁴
- Initiating active academic relations with Birzeit University through departmental links; student and faculty exchange; joint research projects; and inclusion at international academic conferences.
- Making a donation to the Right to Education Campaign at Birzeit University to support the continuation of campaigning activities and student development projects.¹⁵
- Helping to raise awareness by screening the Right to Education Campaign film, "A Caged Bird's Song", which follows Palestinian students in their daily struggle to reach their schools and universities. The Campaign has recently released a new version of the film, in Arabic with English, French and Spanish subtitles. Copies of the film available online at <http://www.palestineonlinestore.com/films/cagedbird.htm>.
- In October 2005, the Right to Education Student Photography Project will launch its international exhibition and publish a book of student photographs, documenting the issues facing Palestinian education under occupation from a student perspective. To host the exhibition please contact right2edu@birzeit.edu.

Finally, thank you for all your efforts in support of Palestinian students and teachers under military occupation. Your solidarity and support for the right to education in Palestine is appreciated and vital.

"It makes an impact on students and teachers, feeling that we're not alone and people around the world know about us and that we deserve to live like other people do... Silence I would say is more painful than the bullets of occupation."¹⁶

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- ¹ For the latest figures, details and maps on closures, access and humanitarian impact, please see United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/opt/>
- ² Birzeit University, Right to Education website, Birzeit-Surda Roadblock <http://right2edu.birzeit.edu/news/catindex20>
- ³ International Court of Justice, Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Summary of the Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004 , http://www.icj-cij.org/icjwww/ipresscom/ipress2004/ipresscom2004-2_summary_mwp_20040709.htm
- ⁴ Amira Hass, Ha'aretz, "Gazan Students Unable to Study in the West Bank", 16 February 2005
- ⁵ Palestinian Center for Human Rights, Press Release, "Israeli Forces Destroy University Building in Gaza", 16 March 2004, www.pchr.org
- ⁶ Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, "Assessment 15: The Effects of the Israeli Occupation on Palestinian Education (28/9/2000 – 3/4/2005)"
- ⁷ International Palestinian Youth League (IPYL), "Occupied Campus: The Israeli Military Closure of Hebron University", December 2003
- ⁸ Right to Education Campaign, Barriers to Education Fact Sheet 2005 http://right2edu.birzeit.edu/downloads/pdfs/BarriersFactSheet_2005.pdf
- ⁹ Figures for number of children killed, as of 20 June 2005, Defence for Children International/Palestine Section www.dci-pal.org; all other figures: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, "Assessment 15: The Effects of the Israeli Occupation on Palestinian Education (28/9/2000 – 3/4/2005)"
- ¹⁰ Amnesty International Report 2005, Israel and the Occupied Territories, "Killings and Attacks by the Israeli Army", <http://web.amnesty.org/report2005/isr-summary-eng>
- ¹¹ Figures as of 20 June 2005, Defence for Children International/Palestine Section, www.dci-pal.org
- ¹² Birzeit University figures, 20 June 2005; Right to Education Campaign, Press Release, "Israeli Occupation Forces Arrest New Student Council President", <http://right2edu.birzeit.edu/news/article243>; Al Haq, Press Release, "Al Haq Demands Immediate Release of Fieldworker Ziyad Hmeidan", 16 June 2005, www.alhaq.org
- ¹³ Ratified by Israel in 1991
- ¹⁴ For details on scholarships and giving to Birzeit University, please go to http://www.birzeit.edu/p/ps?url=community_groups/giving/scholarships&id=50230
- ¹⁵ To make a donation to Birzeit University's Right to Education Campaign please contact Friends of Birzeit University, UK, registered charity no. 279026, Email: fobzu@fobzu.org, Tel: +44 207 832 1340
- ¹⁶ Interview with Dr Carmela Armanios, Birzeit University, "A Caged Bird's Song", 2003.