



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

E/CN.4/2005/NGO/147  
2 March 2005

ENGLISH ONLY

---

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
Sixty-first session  
Item 10 of the provisional agenda

**ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS**

**Written statement\* submitted by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), a  
non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[10 February 2005]

---

\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

## THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) and the Right to Education Campaign at Birzeit University wish to raise its grave concern over the Israeli military obstruction of access to Palestinian universities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). In particular, Birzeit University, near Ramallah in the West Bank, was virtually sealed off by the Israeli Army for two-and-a-half years by a military roadblock, and is still subject to arbitrary roadblocks which block access to students and faculty trying to reach the University.

We note, with particular concern, Israel's prevention of students from the Gaza Strip from studying at Palestinian universities in the West Bank.

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies joins Birzeit University in calling for the right to education in the OPT to be upheld, including the right of all Gaza students to study at West Bank universities.

### **Illegal deportation of four Birzeit University students to the Gaza Strip**

On 21 November 2004, four university students from Gaza were arbitrarily taken from their studies at Birzeit University in the West Bank, and deported back to the Gaza Strip by the Israeli Army. No charges were made against the students and no written deportation orders were issued. Clearly, the deportation was not carried out within the framework of security measures permitted to the Israeli military occupation under international law.

The four students - Walid Muhanna, Bashar Abu Salim, Mohammad Matar and Bashar Abu Shahala - are among the last Gaza students still studying in the West Bank. In 2000, there were over three hundred Gaza students studying at Birzeit University; today there are only thirty-five.

### **The right to freedom of movement**

Since October 2000, Israel has made it virtually impossible for Palestinians to move between the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Students from Gaza enrolled in West Bank universities have been forced to study 'illegally', or to drop out of university entirely.

Since April 2004, over 1500 university students in the Gaza Strip have been prevented from traveling through the Rafah Terminal on the Palestinian-Egyptian border, to attend their universities in Arab or foreign countries abroad.

Students in the West Bank are also prevented from reaching their universities due to frequent closure of cities, hundreds of military roadblocks and the construction of Israel's illegal wall inside the West Bank.

### **The right to choose one's place of residence within a single territory**

The Occupied Palestinian Territory, Gaza and the West Bank, is one integral territorial unit. Every resident of the Occupied Territory is permitted to travel freely within that territory and to

decide on his place of residence according to his own wishes. This is a basic right in customary international law.

Israel's prevention of Gaza students from studying at West Bank universities is in clear violation of the human right to education, the right to freedom of movement and the right to choose one's place of residence within a single territory.

**We believe that all Palestinian students should be free to pursue their higher education in accordance with international law.**

This statement is supported by the following organisations: Birzeit University, Right to Education Campaign.

-----