

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

I am writing on behalf of the British Society for Middle East Studies (BRISMES) to protest against Israeli violations of Palestinian academic freedom.

BRISMES was founded in 1973 to encourage and promote the study of the Middle East in the United Kingdom. The leading UK association in this field, the Society publishes the British Journal of Middle East Studies. BRISMES members form a network of global academic collaboration in teaching and research that includes both Israelis and Palestinians, and individual members enjoy fruitful links with colleagues from both academic communities.

Members of our Society have for a long time observed with grave concern the many ways in which Israeli occupation and control has violated Palestinian academic freedom and degraded its educational infrastructure.

Our present concern is a new round of restrictions that the Israeli authorities have imposed on the employment of foreign nationals at Palestinian universities.

According to a recent (2018) survey by the Palestinian National Authority's Ministry of Education and Higher Education, as many as half of the 64 foreign faculty and staff members employed by nine Palestinian universities have been negatively affected by Israeli denial or restriction of their permission to work over the last two academic years.

These measures appear to have been implemented in an arbitrary and opaque manner. 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. They imply stress and humiliation for the Palestinian academic community in general. These measures clearly violate Palestinian and foreign nationals' academic freedom and further degrade Palestinian teaching and research.

BRISMES condemns these measures and urges you to rescind them.

Yours sincerely,

Stuart Laing, President of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies
On behalf of the BRISMES Council