



Bethlehem University alumna Berlanty Azzam's story continues to garner international attention

Bethlehem University alumna Berlanty Azzam's story continues to garner international attention, with her forced removal from the West Bank to Gaza in October 2009 held up as a visible example of the restrictions Palestinians face within their own country. On 3 February 2010 she discussed her case again, this time with a gathering on "The Right of Palestinians to Study and Travel" at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Unable to get the Israeli-issued permit she needed to leave Gaza, Berlanty communicated with the Washington, DC gathering via audio link.

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By Maan News

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Bethlehem University Student Recounts forced deportation to Carnegie Endowment in DC

Bethlehem - Ma'an - Bethlehem University student Berlanty Azzam, forcibly removed from the West Bank in October, was hosted via telephone link in Washington on Wednesday by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, where she spoke about the right to education in Palestine.

The event, titled "The Right of Palestinians to Study and Travel: A Discussion" had Berlanty recount her abrupt seizure, where she was blindfolded and handcuffed on the road from Ramallah to Bethlehem, held four hours then ejected into Gaza, where her family lives. Israeli military personnel said she was living illegally in the West Bank and 'deported' her to Gaza.

Berlanty's story, as one of the narratives of dozens of BU students from Gaza, was put in context of the larger Israeli ban on Gaza residents seeking education at Palestinian universities in the West Bank by Vice President for Development at BU Brother Jack Curran. More than 12 students from Gaza were accepted to BU last year, but were denied permission to travel to the West Bank by Israeli officials, and many more, who were able to leave years ago, are afraid they will face the same fate as Berlanty.

Tania Hary, Director of International Relations for GISHA, the Israeli rights association who oversaw the legal case challenging the forcible removal, spoke on the particulars of Berlanty's case, and its ramifications on the larger right to movement and education for Palestinians.

Organizers said they had hoped Berlanty would be able to travel to the United States to speak about the ordeal, but noted she was denied permission by Israeli forces to leave Gaza.

Groups in DC that participated in the discussion were, Project Engage, Americans for Peace Now, the Foundation for Middle East Peace, and Churches for Middle East Peace.