

Affidavit

I, the undersigned, Brother Robert Joseph Smith, PhD, holder of USA Passport No. 211625478, having been put on notice that I must tell the truth and nothing but the truth and that if I do not do so, I will be subject to criminal penalties under the law, hereby declare as follows:

1. My name is Brother Robert Smith. I am the Vice President for Academic Affairs at Bethlehem University in the West Bank. I make this affidavit to provide information to the court regarding the restrictions on students residing in the Gaza Strip who are trying to reach their studies in the West Bank.
2. I have been working at the Bethlehem University since 2007, and during this period no student from the Gaza Strip was issued a permit by Israeli authorities to reach her or his studies in the Bethlehem University.
3. In 2009 twelve students were officially accepted to the University from the Gaza Strip and funding has already been secured to allow their studies. Four of them were admitted in April, and the remaining eight were admitted in August. None of these students has been granted permission to reach his or her studies.
4. Official requests have been submitted to Israeli authorities through the appropriate channels and all the relevant procedures were duly followed. High level officials from both the Church and State Governments supported the appeal. Nevertheless, the students' requests were either officially refused or endlessly delayed.
5. It should be noted that the Bethlehem University was founded 36 years ago under the initiative of Pope Paul VI and at request of Palestinian residents, Christians and Muslims, who wanted to secure higher education for their children. At its founding, the Bethlehem University was the only university in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. Until this day it is the only Catholic University in the Palestinian Territories and therefore provides a unique opportunity to study in a Christian, Vatican-Sponsored university environment, which for some serves as a natural continuation of their Christian upbringing and K-12 schooling in Gaza.
6. I affirm that this is my name, and the content of this affidavit is true.

Signature

Date

I certify that on _____, I spoke to Brother Robert Joseph Smith, and after I put him on notice that he must tell the truth and nothing but the truth and that if he does not do so, he will be subject to criminal penalties under the law, he affirmed the truth of this statement above. I certify that I subsequently received Brother Robert's signed affidavit via fax. Brother Robert has assured me that he will be attending the hearing in HCJ 8731/09 Berlanty Azzam v. Commander of the West Bank Territory, scheduled for this coming Thursday, November 12 2009, and that at this time he will sign the statement brought above in my presence.

Attorney signature

Date