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From: Golden, Dennis

Sent: Thursday, November 05, 2009 12:19 PM

To: United States Consulate in Jerusalem ([UsConGenJerusalem@state.gov](mailto:UsConGenJerusalem@state.gov))

Subject: Berlanty Azzam

Dear Consulate Official:

I am writing to you regarding the case of Ms. Berlanty Azzam, a fourth year student at Bethlehem University in Bethlehem who was detained and deported - blindfolded and handcuffed - to Gaza by the Israeli military on October 28, 2009. Ms. Azzam, 21 years old, is only few months away from completing her four year Bachelor's degree in business administration.

A petition against Berlanty's deportation has been filed in Israeli courts. The courts have ordered attorneys for the state of Israel to further explain at a court hearing on Thursday, November 12th at 9:00am why - after they admittedly made a "mistake" in removing Berlanty from Bethlehem to Gaza on Wednesday, October 28th. She has not been accused of being a security threat and has committed no crime. She has not yet been returned to Bethlehem University, a Vatican sponsored university.

While some Israeli officials have claimed that Berlanty has "no right" to be at Bethlehem University in the West Bank because they say that she does not have a "permit" from the state of Israel allowing her to do so, Berlanty did not need a permit to remain in the West Bank after entering in 2005 since no such kind of permit existed in 2005, so she couldn't have requested one. Berlanty only needed the Israeli permit in 2005 to cross through Israel from Gaza to the West Bank, which she received. Since that time, Berlanty has been in Bethlehem, the West Bank - and only seeks to be in the West Bank, not in Israel.

I ask that on compassionate and humanitarian grounds you request that the Israeli government, military, diplomatic, and legal officials allow this young woman, Ms. Berlanty Azzam to return to Bethlehem University to complete her studies.

I believe permitting her to return to Bethlehem to complete her degree also would be in the spirit of the "Agreement on Movement and Access" negotiated between the Palestinian Authority and Israel in 2005.

In the meantime, Berlanty is still in Gaza where she was brought blindfolded and handcuffed on Wednesday 28 October. Her father, who works for the YMCA in Gaza, and her mother, who works for the UN Relief and Works Agency, are with Berlanty. She and they and all of us want for her to return to Bethlehem to complete her bachelors degree in these last few weeks of the academic semester. Your kind and immediate assistance is deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dennis C. Golden  
President  
Fontbonne University  
St. Louis, MO USA