

# Israel tightens controls on West Bank students

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By Spero News 

Palestinian students in Gaza, enrolled at the University of Bethlehem in the West Bank, are at risk for imprisonment as Israeli soldiers intend to enforce the recent law in force prohibiting Palestinian students from Gaza to study in the West Bank.

In particular, the University informed Agency Fides of case Berlanty Azzam, a 4th-year Business Administration student at the University of Bethlehem. Berlanty is originally from Gaza, but has lived in the West Bank since 2005 with a valid permit issued by the Israeli Army.

Recently, on one of her trips into the West Bank, she was stopped at a checkpoint and detained for not complying with the requirements in force, which were tightened by Israel during the attack on Gaza in January 2009.

"This is just a student who intends to complete her studies," Fides was told by a source at the University of Bethlehem. "She does not deserve prison and her living in the West Bank precedes the latest rules on staying there," the source noted.

The University of Bethlehem is the first university established in Palestine, and the only Catholic university in the territory. It offers courses in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Ramallah and Amman, Jordan. It was founded in 1973 by the De La Salle Brothers and now registers more than 3,000 students.

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