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BERLANTY AZZAM AWARDED DEGREE

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Berlanty Azzam, a Bethlehem University student deported to Gaza on the 28th October 2009 has been awarded her degree after completing her studies by telephone and email. The decision to award the degree comes after a rejected appeal by Israeli Human Rights group Gisha. Israeli officials admitted that Azzam posed no security threat, and claimed she was deported and denied re-entry to the West Bank on the basis of her ID card bearing an address in the Gaza Strip.

Bethlehem University officials travelled to Gaza to confer Azzam's degree at the Holy Family Church in Gaza on Sunday 10th January. The ceremony was also attended by Bethlehem University alumni in Gaza and Gazan students waiting to be granted permission to study at the university in the West Bank. Commenting on the occasion, Azzam said "I am sad because I was not able to graduate with my colleagues in Bethlehem, but I was able to challenge the occupation and today I am graduating from Bethlehem University."