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Servizio Informazione Religiosa - Direttore: Paolo Bustaffa

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Tuesday 12 January 2010

15:42 - HOLY LAND: VISIT OF EU-USA BISHOPS. EXPELLED FROM BETHLEHEM, SHE GRADUATES IN GAZA

(Bethlehem) She was blindfolded, handcuffed and repatriated to Gaza, forced to leave Bethlehem, the city in which she has been studying for four years. Her dreams were shattered by the Israeli police just when she was about to realise them. Her only fault? That of having the name of her hometown, Gaza, on her identity card. This is the happy-ending story of Berlanty Azzam, a student in business, administration and translation at the Catholic university of Bethlehem. Her nightmare was turned into a dream on 11 January 2010: Berlanty graduated, 75 days after her arrest, at the Catholic Parish of the Sacred Family in Gaza, where she was joined, among others, by the vice-chancellor of the university, Peter Bray, and by the Apostolic Nuncio Mgr. Antonio Franco. The story was related to the SIR by Fr. Jack Curran during the visit to the Palestinian university of the US and EU bishops of the Coordination for the Holy Land.

Tuesday 12 January 2010

15:43 - HOLY LAND: VISIT OF EU-USA BISHOPS. EXPELLED FROM BETHLEHEM, SHE GRADUATES IN GAZA (2)

(Bethlehem) “After she has been forced to return to Gaza, explained Fr. Curran -, Berlanty has been followed via telephone and videoconference by her professors so that she could complete her degree. We have managed to guarantee her right to education even thanks to the efforts made by Gisha, an association of lawyers operating in the field of human rights. There are many other people in Gaza who are still waiting for the Israelis to grant them a visa to enter Bethlehem”. “We hope that, after this event, the arrival of students from Gaza will be facilitated. More than 430 students from Gaza have already graduated and many more would like to enrol. Now more than ever – he concluded – we want the rights of young Palestinians, and Gaza in particular, to be fully recognised, but we need the support of everyone. The presence of the bishops from Europe and the US is comforting us in our service to the Palestinian people”.