



PALTRADE

مركز التجارة الفلسطيني - بالتريد
PALESTINE TRADE CENTER

Obtaining Visas for Investors

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

COGAT	Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories
GOI	Government of Israel
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
PA	Palestinian Authority
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
MoCA	Ministry of Civil Administration
PalTrade	Palestine Trade Center
PIPA	Palestinian Investment Promotion Agency
WBG	West Bank and Gaza
EU-GMP	European Union Good Manufacturing Practices
MNE	Ministry of National Economy
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
JIC	Joint Investment Committee
WBG	West Bank and Gaza
KHB	King Hussein Bridge

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Executive Summary

Despite concurrence on specific components in the 1995 Oslo Interim Agreement addressing the entry and residency of visitors and investors into the West Bank and Gaza (WBG), international investors, experts, and staff from countries with diplomatic relations with Israel continue to have difficulty entering into and residing in WBG. New restrictions have been imposed by the Israelis, due to security restrictions and policies, including new West Bank crossings that international investors, experts, and staff have to cross in order to reach WBG present substantial entry barriers. Despite the fact that most investors come from countries that have diplomatic relations with Israel such as Jordan, the US and EU member countries, many investors face multiple hurdles when entering WBG. These include difficulties with obtaining multiple entry business visas, extending their stay or pursuing a residency based on their investment. In addition, it is unclear what the exact requirements for entry are. The Joint Investment Committee (JIC) was created and managed by both Government of Israel (GOI) and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to address all issues related to investor's access and promotion of investment in WBG, however, the committee has failed to meet since late 2000 - with the exception of one Palestinian investment conference in May 2008, and another in November 2008.

PalTrade has focused much of its efforts on identifying the major factors that impede international investors, staff, and experts from entering and residing in WBG. The largest constraint remains the ever-increasing restrictions on entry policy, as well as the unclear procedure for obtaining and renewing entry permits/visas. These issues have been dealt with by various local and international publications. Consequently, this study is focused solely on identifying impediments and policies occurred on investors, experts and staff of the private sector

Policy Challenges

In accordance with the Oslo agreement, internationals from countries that have a visa agreement with Israel (i.e. US and Germany), can be granted a visa directly upon arrival, whereas internationals of countries with no visa agreement (i.e. Jordan and India), must obtain their visas prior to their visit from an Israeli consulate or embassy.¹ These rules apply to those visiting visitors to both Israel and the PNA and the visa obtained should allow these visitors to move freely between Israel and the PNA. However, since the outbreak of the second intifada, many international investors, staff and experts who intend to visit or to work in WBG have been exposed to the recent policy restriction by the GOI. There have been multiple cases in which internationals coming from countries *with* visa agreements have been denied entry. Internationals from countries with no visa agreement have also been unexpectedly denied visas upon application. Investors may face other substantial barriers as well, such as the issuing of "Palestinian Authority only"² visas for internationals entering WBG through the King

¹ For a complete list of countries with or without visa agreement with Israel please visit: URL <http://www.goisrael.com/Tourism_Eng/Tourist+Information/Planning+your+trip/Visa.htm>

² "Israel's New Visa Rule: If you visit Palestine, Stay There." August 22, 2009.

Hussein Bridge crossing³. Sometimes, internationals who enter Israel through Ben Gurion Airport are asked to sign a commitment statement in which they agree *not* to enter Palestinian National Authority controlled areas.⁴

In 2006, as a result of continuous pressure and protests from local and international organizations, the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), issued an instruction letter of entry and renewal of visas for internationals interested in visiting the West Bank or currently living there. The Palestine Investment Promotion Agency (PIPA), the implementing agency of the Palestinian investment law and the Ministry of Civil Affairs MoCA, the Palestinian ministry responsible for daily contact with the GOI stated that there is a mechanism for acquiring an entry visa-permit or renewal as described in the COGAT letter. However, the process fails to describe on what basis the Israelis decide who should be granted a visa-renewal-permit. Most application cases that are denied entry are not given an explanation from the Israeli side, and these reasons should be stated. (i.e. lack of documentation, incorrect information, etc.) For example; it could be based on security concerns, lack of information or improper documents. Also, there is no clear channel for a visa denial appeal process. Because most PIPA/ MoCA coordinated permits and visas could potentially be made applicable to the “PNA area only”, many investors and experts prefer to enter the country with no prior arrangement with the PA / MoCA. This of course is due to their fear of obtaining a permit that limits their movement into Israel.

The Joint Investment Committee (JIC) was created to address all issues related to investors and investment. The Palestinian MoCA clearly states that they are ready to activate the work of the committee in order to ensure proper implementation of the Oslo agreement components that are related to investment.

Methodology

To learn more about the issues facing investors, staff, and experts in obtaining or renewing their entry visas, as well as obtaining residency, the PalTrade team conducted numerous personal interviews and a number of meetings with Palestinian business associations. These included the Palestine Investment Promotion Agency (PIPA) and with PA government agencies, such as, the Ministry of National Economy and the Ministry of Civil Affairs. The report was directed at firms and individual investors that either hold international investments, or have a potential foreign investment and are facing issues related to investors’ entry. Most investment firms were included in the personal interviews. Unfortunately, PalTrade team was unable to arrange appointments with the GOI officials.

Recommendations

WBG has the potential to attract foreign direct investment, however, this cannot be realized without giving investors free access to the Palestinian Territory. In addition to the current mechanisms regulating the entry of international investors, the PA and GOI

Kalman, Time.com.

³Annex D

⁴Annex C

must establish an unambiguous and straightforward for obtaining the right to enter WBG.

- Both sides must work on activating the Joint Investment Committee and develop a permanent regular meeting schedule.
- Both sides must work on the activation of Oslo agreement articles regarding investors' right to residency in the PNA, entry permits and visas.
- Both sides must work together on revising and restructuring the CoGAT's instruction letter to address specific investors, experts, and staff entry and residency needs.
- The GOI must work on the adoption and implementation of a clear, transparent policy for issuing multiple entry residency permits to international investors.
- The GOI must provide MoCA with clear information on the basis of issuance and denial of visas and permits. It must also set up mechanisms for internationals and the MoCA / PIPA to report and appeal cases of denied entry.
- International investors, staff, and experts with the intent to invest in the PA must coordinate with PIPA / MoCA prior to their arrival to allow MoCA to pursue proper entry permits for them.
- The PA and PIPA must add a component to the investment law addressing entry visa and residency issues.
- Countries issuing travel warnings and travel alerts on traveling to WBG should remove such warnings taking into consideration security developments in the area.

1. Introduction

In the year 2000 the Palestinian Authority created a framework of economic laws to encourage and support foreign and local investment in Palestine. The implementing agency of the investment promotion laws is the Palestinian Investment Promotion Agency (PIPA).⁵ These laws were drafted to help protect potential investors from undue risk and to increase the profitability of their investment. These solid investment promotion laws provide investors with attractive tax exceptions and custom exemptions, as well as convenient service through the one stop investment window provided by PIPA. However, the laws lack any reference to assuring investors' entry or residency in the PNA, due to the inability of the PA to grant such permits/visas.

From the onset of the Oslo Agreement (and prior to it as well), the movement of internationals into the West Bank and Gaza has been controlled completely by the GOI. In general, citizens of countries that have a visa agreement with Israel such as the US and Germany can be granted a visa directly upon arrival without any prior arrangement, whereas citizens of countries with no visa agreement such as Jordan and India must obtain their visas prior to their visit from an Israeli consulate or embassy.⁶ These rules apply to visitors to both Israel and the PNA and the visa obtained should allow these visitors to move freely between Israel and the PNA. This is stated in the 1995 Interim Oslo Agreement, as outlined in paragraph 14, from annex III, Article 28:

*14. Persons from countries having diplomatic relations with Israel who visit the Gaza Strip and the West Bank shall either be required to obtain the visitor's permit or to hold a valid passport and an Israeli visa, when required. Such visitors can enter Israel during the validity of their visit permit, without any need for another permit.*⁷

*13 (B) Visitors [from countries not having diplomatic relations with Israel who visit] the Gaza Strip and the West Bank shall be permitted to remain in these areas for a period of up to three months granted by the Palestinian side and cleared by Israel. Such visitors can enter Israel during the validity of their visit permit, without any need for another permit.*⁸

In the case of investors, the Oslo Agreement included a clause that encourages investment by granting investors a residency permit in the WBG to ensure their right of entry. However, the agreement also stipulated the prior approval of Israel as stated in Paragraph 11 a, Article 28 of Annex III:

⁵URL <<http://www.pipa.gov.ps/>>

⁶For a complete list of countries with or without visa agreement with Israel please visit:
URL
<http://www.goisrael.com/Tourism_Eng/Tourist+Information/Planning+your+trip/Visa.htm>

⁷Interim Oslo Agreement

URL<<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/iaannex3.html> - app-28>

⁸Interim Oslo Agreement

URL <<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/iaannex3.html> - app-28>

“To reflect the spirit of the peace process, the Palestinian side has the right, with the prior approval of Israel, to grant permanent residency in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to (...) investors, for the purpose of encouraging investment.”⁹

In parallel to the Oslo Agreements, under Article 40, Paragraph 4, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,¹⁰ International human rights law addresses this specific issue: “The law protects a person who has been permitted legal entry into a country freedom of movement within that country”

The outbreak of the second Intifada lead to a decrease in the number of investors, and an increase of restrictions imposed by the GOI on the issuance and renewals of foreign visas. This negatively affected foreign nationals entering WBG for investment or work purposes, especially in cases when the GOI prevented their entry, or re-entry. The increasing number of rejections, especially the rejections of foreigners working in humanitarian aid and education development, has lead to greater media attention and protests. As a result, in 2006, the GOI, and specifically the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), issued an instruction letter of entry and renewal of visas for internationals interested in visiting WBG or currently living there. The instruction letter calls on internationals to follow the given procedure in obtaining and renewing visas, in order to avoid complications. The letter was sent to the PLO Negotiation Affairs Department,¹¹ as well as to foreign consulates and embassies.¹² However, in 2009 some visitors who wanted to enter WBG were given a “Palestinian Authority Only” visa, which denies them entry into the Israeli territory beyond the West Bank. It is not clear whether or not this visa allows travel to area C of the WB controlled by Israel, or to East Jerusalem or the Gaza Strip, since travel into these areas would require passage through Israeli crossing points, which is prohibited under the “Palestinian Authority Only” visa.¹³

2. Situation Analysis

Currently, tourists, investors, experts, and staff with a declared intention to visit or live in the West Bank, and who are from countries that have a visa agreement with Israel, are usually granted a visa directly upon arrival without any prior arrangements. The options regarding entry status are as follows:

- Three month multiple entry visa (tourist visa) with the possible requirement of signing a commitment letter not to enter the Palestinian Territories¹⁴
- Two to four week multiple entry visa (tourist visa)
- “Palestinian Authority Only” visa, valid only at King Hussein Bridge- KHB.

⁹Interim Oslo Agreement URL

<<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/iaannex3.html> - app-28>

¹⁰URL <<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/ccpr.pdf>>

¹¹Annex A

¹²Annex B

¹³Israel toughens entry for foreigners, Haaretz, URL

<<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1107223.html>>

¹⁴Annex C

- B1(Employment/Work), B2 (Business/Tourist) visa for international organizations registered in Jerusalem or governmental/large aid organizations with prior arrangements with COGAT or the Israeli Ministry of Interior MOI
- Visa denial both at land crossing and airport, with no information regarding denial reasons
- Those traveling through the airport could be and asked to enter the area through KHB if they want to obtain a “PNA only” stamp
- Internationals from countries that have diplomatic relations with Israel could coordinate with the Palestinian Ministry of Civil Affairs MoCA prior to their arrival in order to receive (that is, *with* prior approval from Israel) a permit that specifically limits their movement into the PNA area. Such permits are only valid upon entry through KHB

In general, internationals as described by the COGAT instruction letter,¹⁶ (Tourists, Investors, Staff and Experts,) from countries with visa agreements with Israel can acquire a visa upon arrival, and also have the option of obtaining one prior to arrival through an Israeli Embassy or Consulate. Citizens of countries with no visa agreements must obtain a visa prior to their arrival at an Israeli consulate or embassy.

Most applications from foreign investors are submitted to PIPA through its one-stop investment window. Subsequently, applications are transferred to the Palestinian MoCA, which then submits them to Israeli officials in the Israeli Civil Administration in Bet Eil for approval. The Palestinian side also currently utilizes this mechanism.

One recent example is the Palestinian Investment Conference in Bethlehem, which was attended by over 1068 regional and international investors. 164 Participants that arrived from countries with no diplomatic relations with Israel had been granted¹⁷ entry permits/visas. This illustrates that there are no technical issues with allowing large numbers of foreign visitors to enter WBG. The main issue is the difficulty investors face is obtaining long-term, multiple entry permits and visas and as well as the high uncertainty of being granted re-entry visas. This severely limits the investors’ ability to plan, or make an investment engagement as well as the PA’s ability to promote investment.

Renewal for investors, staff, and experts already staying in the West Bank is normally processed through:

- Palestinian Investment Promotion Agency PIPA that transfers applications to the Palestinian MoCA, which then sends all application documents to the Israeli Civil Administration in Bet Eil for approval.
- Directly through the Palestinian MoCA, which then sends all applications to the Israeli Civil Administration

¹⁵ Annex D

¹⁶ Annex A

¹⁷ Palestine Investment Conference “Statistical Brief About the Conference” , URL
<<http://www.pic-palestine.ps>>

- .Directly through a personal channel of communication with the Israeli Civil Administration.

This procedure is in line with the instructions of COGAT instruction letter “sending a request to the representative of the Israeli Ministry of Interior MOI in Bet Eil either to receive visa or to extend Visa is by”:

- “Approaching the Palestinian Population Registry officer in the Palestinian Ministry of Civil Affairs MoCA in Ramallah,” that passes all applications to the Israeli Ministry of Interior MOI representative in Beit Eil.
- “In exceptional cases independently approaching the Israeli Ministry of Interior MOI representative in Beit Eil.”¹⁸

PIPA and MoCA state that there is a mechanism for acquiring an entry visa-permit or visa renewal permits, however the process fails to describe on what basis Israelis decide who should be granted a visa-renewal-permit. Most applicants that have been denied visas reported that there was no explanation provided by the Israelis whether the application was denied based on security concerns, lack of information or improper documents. In addition, it is unclear what the channel is for appealing a decision and what the appeal process is.

The Palestinian side prepares most of the paperwork for visa renewal and applications for visas/permits.. There is no clear process outlined in the COGAT letter defining what type of information and documentation needs to be submitted by applicants in order to ensure proper information feedback. Due to the fact that many coordinated permits and visas are valid in the PA area only, most investors and experts prefer to enter the country with no prior arrangement with the PA/MoCA. This is despite the fact that the Oslo Agreement specifically addresses the issue of free movement of internationals with proper documents between Israel and WBG as mentioned in paragraph 14, and 13(b) from annex III, Article 28: “Person from countries” with diplomatic and no diplomatic relation with Israel and holds a permit or a visa “Such visitors can enter Israel during the validity of their visit permit, without any need for another permit”.¹⁹

In addition, the Oslo Agreement states that “investors, for the purpose of encouraging investment” should be “granted permanent residency with prior approval from the Israeli side”.²⁰ However, residency permits were granted only prior to the second intifada, and not in the recent years. PIPA and MoCA have clearly stated that there is no mechanism for obtaining permanent residency for investors, and that all applications that had been sent to the Israeli side for approval had no response from Israel.

Since September 2000, no investor business visas or residency permits have been issued. All international investors would have to stay in the country with a tourist visa that, by default, limits their ability to live with stability in the PNA. Existing investors interviewed stressed that the uncertainty of renewing their current tourist visas impacts their willingness to pursuing new investments or expanding existing ones. “PA only”

¹⁸ Annex A

¹⁹ Interim Oslo Agreement

URL <<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/iaannex3.html> - app-28>

²⁰ Annex A

visas and permits limit investors' ability to conduct business effectively, as they are unable to reach and interact with vendors and customers in Israel. The inability of the PA to control the visa process has weakened its position in promoting investment, since they cannot guarantee that investors would be granted either a multiple entry visa or a permanent residency.

Additionally, many experts from countries with diplomatic relations with Israel that are able to obtain entry visas may decide not to travel to WBG after seeing travel warnings issued by their countries. This especially affects experts that work for government institutions or large firms, who cannot obtain approval from their superiors due to lack of or inadequate insurance coverage for locations with travel warnings and general security concerns. Few pharmaceutical firms indicated that they failed to get international EU GMP certifiers to come to Palestine due to travel warnings, and only one firm was successful after a long process of security coordination and diplomatic arrangements.

3. Impact

The Palestinian economy recently started the process of integration with regional and international economies through the implementation of free trade agreements and a widespread network of trade associations. WBG holds a strategic location within the region, with an untapped emerging market and a massive investment potential.

Currently, most private sector development projects as well as the PA objectives focus on improving access to foreign markets and overcoming the obstacles that are hindering the movement of people, goods and services to these markets. Investment in Palestine is being encouraged not merely to increase the size of the economy, but also to stimulate and increase private sector employment, generate income, and improve living standards.

However, due to unclear process of obtaining visas and entry permits and hurdles put up by GOI in obtaining a permanent residency, this attractive environment for potential investors remains off limits for many of them. Investors are usually encouraged by tax incentives and customs exemptions. However, lack of easy access to investments discourages potential investors from investing in Palestine, therefore limiting the development of large and moderate economic projects in the territories. For example, investors in general could be granted a permit to enter the PNA, however the inability of the PA to guarantee them multiple entry permits as well as a permanent residency when the investment is implemented leads most investors to reconsider their investment.

According to World Bank, short-term investment needs (2005-2008) were estimated to be between \$500 and \$900 million, depending on how the political situation evolved²¹. Taking into consideration such a large need for investment in the Palestinian economy,

²¹URL <<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/News and Events/20370051/WBGupdateNov04.pdf>>

the lack of direct foreign investment would have a substantial negative impact on the employment rate of university graduates, living standards and economic growth.

Most sectors of the Palestinian economy would be affected by the PA's inability to bring in foreign investment. Palestine is in need of restoration and construction of physical infrastructure: urban development, roads, water purification and distribution facilities, energy production and distribution (electricity, gas). Direct foreign investment is needed for the development of tourism, agriculture and agro food (fruits and cut flowers),²² and the construction of housing and modern shopping centers to keep up with fast population growth. Funds are also needed for the information and communication technology (ICT) sector that supports the growth and development of most other sectors of the economy.

5. Recommendations:

- Both sides should work on activating the Joint Investment Committee and encouraging a permanent regular meeting schedule.
- Both sides should work on the activation of Oslo agreement articles regarding investors' right to residency in the PNA; entry permits as well as visa entry.
- Both sides should work together in revising and restructuring the CoGAT's instruction letter to include investors / experts / staff entry and residency needs, as well as a revision of specific components.
- GOI should work on the adoption and implementation of a clear, transparent policy for issuing multiple entry residency permits to international investors.
- GOI should provide MoCA with clear information of how visa entry is granted and on what basis such visa / permits are permitted and denied. As well as to set up clear mechanisms for internationals and the MoCA / PIPA to report and appeal cases of denied entry.
- International investors / staff / experts with intention to invest in the PA should coordinate with PIPA / MoCA prior to their arrival to allow MoCA to pursue them proper entry permits.
- The PA and PIPA should add a component to the investment law addressing entry visa and residency issues.
- Countries issuing travel warnings and travel alerts on traveling to the WB should remove such warnings taking the security development in the WB

²² URL <<http://www.medibtikar.eu/-Business-and-investment-.html> Business and investment opportunities: Palestine Authority>

ANNEXES

Annex A: Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) instruction letter to the PLO Negotiation Affair Department

Annex B: Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) instruction letter to international consulates and embassies.

Annex C: Commitment letter to Internationals restricting them from entering the WBG

Annex D: A Copy of the “Palestinian Authority only” stamp

ANNEX A

Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) instruction letter to the PLO Negotiation Affairs Department



STATE OF ISRAEL
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE TERRITORIES

1

28 December 2008

Dear Dr. Erakat,

I would like to advise you that the policy regarding entry of foreign nationals from countries maintaining diplomatic relations with Israel has changed, and entry of these foreign nationals into the West Bank is now possible.

For your information, attached please find several relevant procedures with regard to this matter. We shall continue to update you on this issue.

Best regards,


Maj. Gen. Moshe Mishiev
Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories

141028

Coordinator Office, Hekiryu Tel-Aviv – Tel. 03-8976361 – Fax: 03-8976308



STATE OF ISRAEL
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE TERRITORIES

2

**Entry of Foreign Nationals from those
Countries that Maintain Diplomatic Relations
with Israel into the West Bank – Instructions**

1. Entry to the West Bank:

In general, entry of foreign nationals from countries maintaining diplomatic relations with Israel into the West Bank is possible.

Entry of aforementioned foreign nationals will be permitted through means of the military commander's consent, on the basis of which an entry permit from the Ministry of Interior will be granted. The foreign national will be required to keep the military commander's consent form with his/her passport.

Nationals from countries that do not have visa agreements with Israel can enter the West Bank through Israel, after receiving a visa from the Ministry of Interior, through the embassy/consulate at the country of origin. The request must detail the reason for the visit.

Nationals from countries that have visa agreements with Israel may enter the West Bank by either of the following procedures:

- Preliminary coordination through the embassy /consulate at the country of origin (Recommended).
- Uncoordinated arrival at the border. This necessitates some checking procedures at the border crossing.

In general, nationals will be able to receive an entry visa valid for three months.

The following groups are eligible:

- Spouses of local residents.
- Workers of international representation offices in Israel (diplomats, consulate staff and their families).
- Representatives of International Organizations.

Coordinator Office, Hakiya Tel-Aviv – Tel. 03-6975351 – Fax. 03-6976308



3

STATE OF ISRAEL
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE TERRITORIES

- Businessmen/ investors/ persons with working permits.
- Pilgrims.
- Reporters.
- Volunteers, lecturers, consultants and others.

2. Visa Renewal:

The visas can be extended by sending a request to the representative of the Ministry of Interior in Beit- El, in either of the following ways:

- Approaching the Palestinian population registry representative in Ramallah and applying for visa renewal.
- In exceptional cases- independently approaching the Israeli Ministry of Interior representative at Beit - El.

The following groups will be able to extend the visa for another year (the total staying time shall not exceed 27 months):

- Spouses of local residents.
- Businessmen.
- Investors.
- People with working permits (Bankers/ specialist doctors).

At the end of the 27 months, a further extension may be granted (provided the foreign national exits and re-enters the area).

International organization employees can obtain a six month renewal for their visa in either of the following ways:

- Sending a request to the International Relations Branch at the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories.
- Sending a request to the Israeli Ministry of Interior population registry regional offices - for employees that live in Israel.

Coordinator Office, Hakiryat Tel-Aviv - Tel. 03-6975351 - Fax. 03-6976306



STATE OF ISRAEL
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE TERRITORIES

Comment:

The "LAST PERMIT" stamp has been cancelled. People who have this stamp on their passport may leave the area, and their return will not be prevented solely on the basis of the stamp.

Coordinator Office, Hakiya Tel-Aviv - Tel. 03-6975351 - Fax. 03-6976308

Annex 1: Page 4

ANNEX B

Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) instruction letter to International Consulates and Embassies.

05/03/2007 10:12 MFA JERUSALEM -> 972 8 282 0966 Page 2 of 4

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
JERUSALEM



משרד החוץ
ירושלים

March 5, 2007

To:

Embassy / Consul

Dear Sir or Madam,

In response to requests from foreign missions to specify the arrangements required for transit of foreign citizens through Israel to the West Bank, we attach a guide to the policy of the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) in this regard.

In the preparation of this policy every effort has been made to simplify the arrangements and to be sensitive to the needs of visitors and the local population.

It will be understood that the implementation of these arrangements takes place at a time of political sensitivity and genuine security concerns.

We trust that the foreign missions and visiting foreign citizens will demonstrate respect and understanding for the arrangements that this situation unfortunately requires.

If you have any questions or issues for clarifications, you are invited to contact the Consular Liaison Section at the Consular Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Tel. 02-5303429).

Best Regards,

Yigal T'zarfati

Head of Consular Affairs Bureau

SC
DSC
CAO
All Units + Sections

9 Shderot Yitzhak Rabin, P.O.Box 3013, Jerusalem, 91035
Tel: +972-2-5303111. www.mfa.gov.il

Annex 2: Page 1

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
JERUSALEM



משרד החוץ
ירושלים

Transit Policy to the West Bank via Israel

1. General

- a. The issue of transit to the West Bank via Israel is dealt with by the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), working in coordination with the Ministry of Interior (which, under Israel law, holds the authority to approve the entry of foreigners into Israel).
- b. This document sets out COGAT's policy regarding the issue of transit as it relates to foreign citizens who are not registered in the West Bank's Population Registry (henceforth: "foreign citizens"). These foreign citizens are permitted to enter Israel via Ben Gurion Airport and / or the Allenby Bridge.
- c. Foreign citizens who are registered in the West Bank Population Registry as residents of the West Bank, are permitted to enter via the Allenby Bridge, on the basis of Palestinian documentation (Palestinian Passport / Palestinian identity card **along** with Exit Permit), in accordance with current procedures.

2. The following categories of foreign citizens may request an entry permit valid for up to three months:

- a. Spouses of resident Palestinians registered in the West Bank Population Registry
- b. Children up to the age of 16 of resident Palestinians
- c. Businesspersons / investors / bearers of a working permit for the West Bank
- d. Staff of foreign missions in the West Bank
- e. Representatives of international organizations in the West Bank
- f. Lecturers and consultants
- g. Humanitarian cases and others

3. Issue of Entry Permit

- a. Foreign citizens of **states that do not have a visa-exemption agreement** with Israel, belonging to one of the above categories, who require a visa for entry to Israel for the purpose of transit to the West Bank, should apply for a visa at the nearest Israeli consulate or embassy. They must present documentation confirming their status / position and the purpose of their visit.

9 Shderot Yitzhak Rabin, P.O.Box 3013, Jerusalem, 91035
Tel: +972-2-5303111. www.mfa.gov.il

ANNEX C

Text of Declaration Restricting Access to the oPt

I, _____, citizen of _____ and holder of passport Number

hereby declare the following:

1. I understand that this permit is granted me for entry and visitation within Israel only, And it has been explained to me that I am unable to enter the areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority without advance authorization from the Territory Actions Coordinator and I agree to act in accordance with these regulations.

2. I understand that in the event that I enter any area under the control of the Palestinian Authority without the appropriate authorization all relevant legal actions will be taken against me, including deportation and refusal of entry into Israel for a period of up to ten years.

Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____
Border _____ Official's signature _____ Official _____

ANNEX D

A Copy of the “Palestinian Authority only” stamp

