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CMEP to Secretary Clinton on Eviction of Bethlehem University Student (October 30, 2009)

October 30, 2009

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madame Secretary,

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

Bethlehem University has strong connections to the United States. It is registered in the U.S. and has been the recipient of USAID funds under the Assistance to US Schools and Hospitals Broad (ASHA) program. The US based Catholic Relief Services, a member of our Board, was one of its founders in 1973 and remains a supporter. The General Councilor of Christian Brothers Conference of Washington, DC is on the University's International Board of Regents.

This disruption of education and deportation appears to represent an escalation in the previous policy of preventing Palestinian residents of Gaza from studying in Palestinian universities in the West Bank. We ask that you request the government of Israel on compassionate and humanitarian grounds to allow this young woman to return to Bethlehem to complete her studies. She has not been accused of being a security threat.

We 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 that was facilitated by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Sincerely,

Warren Clark
Executive Director

James Fine
Chair of the Board

Philip C. Wilcox, Jr.
President, Foundation for Middle East Peace
Member, CMEP Leadership Council

[You may also click here to read Representative Jim Moran's November 5, 2009 letter to Secretary Clinton. \(/letters/2009_Letters/Moran_Letter_to_Sec_Clinton.pdf\)](#)

