



***Committee on International Freedom of Scientists
of the American Physical Society***
One Physics Ellipse, College Park, Maryland 20740, USA

CIFS 2008 15 January 2008

Chair
PAVEL PODVIG
CISAC, Stanford University

Prime Minister of Israel
c/o Embassy of Israel
3514 International Drive, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Past Chair
JUAN GALLARDO
Brookhaven National Laboratory

ANDREW GROSSO
Andrew Grosso & Associates

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

ANDREW KENT
New York University

I write to you on behalf of the Committee on International Freedom of Scientists (CIFS) of the American Physical Society (APS). APS is the largest organization of physicists in the United States with a large international membership. The Society is independent of any government. CIFS is charged by APS with monitoring the human rights of scientists throughout the world, including the United States, and assisting those in need.

YOUSEF MAKDISI
Brookhaven National Laboratory

NOEMI MIRKIN
University of Michigan

The Committee believes that education and science education in particular is an essential element of peace, security, and prosperity. The right to education is acknowledged in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is why we are concerned about all cases in which this right is restricted.

MICHAEL RAMSEY-MUSOLF
University of Wisconsin, Madison

KHALED A. SALLAM
Oklahoma State University

SALLY CAROL SEIDEL
University of New Mexico

VALERII VINOKOUR
Argonne National Laboratory

CIFS has learned from accounts in the U.S. and international press that Israel is preventing 670 students from the Gaza Strip from traveling to the USA, Europe, Jordan, Asia and other destinations to pursue higher education (among those that reported the story are *The Jerusalem Post*, *The Boston Globe*, *The New York Times*, and the *International Herald-Tribune*).

Liaisons from the APS:
AMY K. FLATTEN
Director of International Affairs

MICHELE IRWIN
*International Programs
Administrator*

According to Gisha, a Tel-Aviv based Israeli not-for-profit organization (see www.gisha.org), thirty students who are trying to travel to the U.S., including six who were awarded Fulbright fellowships, are unable to do so due to the restriction to movement to and from Gaza imposed by the government of Israel.

The Human Right Watch has documented that "...students are among roughly 6,400 Gazans with foreign citizenship, permanent residency, work permits, student visas or university admissions abroad, who have been trapped in Gaza since June, when Hamas took control of the territory by force."

CIFS is troubled by this apparent violation of the rights of travel and education. It is our understanding that most of the students are waiting for permission to leave Gaza, either to obtain visas for the countries where they have been admitted to universities, or to travel to those countries directly. Many started their studies in previous years and were trapped in Gaza when they returned home for the summer. Especially troublesome is the fact that in some cases Israeli authorities have issued exit permits to some of the students, but then refused to let them leave arguing unspecified security concerns.

CIFS asks you to allow the students to travel to pursue their education. We believe that this action would help educate future generations, which is an important step to building peace and security in the region.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pavel Podvig". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Pavel Podvig
CIFS Chair 2008