

Ambassador Nimrod Barkan  
Embassy of Israel in Canada,  
50 O'Connor Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1P 6L2

By fax: (613) 750-7555

25 April 2017

Dear Ambassador Barkan,

We are writing to call on the Israeli government to take steps to ensure the urgent protection of a Canadian citizen experiencing a high-risk pregnancy. For over four months, Bissan Eid, a 24-year-old graduate student from Concordia University in Montreal, has been prevented from leaving the Palestinian territory of Gaza. She is in urgent need of an exit visa from the Israeli government, so she may return to Canada for medical care.

In June 2016, Ms. Eid travelled to Gaza to get married and to visit her aging grandparents. Since December 2016, when she applied for an exit permit, she has been trying to travel back to Canada but has been prevented from doing so due to the slow processing of her exit visa by the Israeli authorities. She is experiencing a high-risk pregnancy, and is expected to give birth in May. She is also experiencing high levels of stress, due to her situation. The time to act is now, there is simply no time for any further delays.

The health system in Gaza has been severely impacted by a decade of blockade and repeated armed conflict. Shortages of medical equipment and medications are frequent, and doctors are often prevented from being able to exit Gaza for training, leaving them unable to keep up to date with advances in medical practice, according to Medical Aid for Palestinians and Physicians for Human Rights - Israel. As a result, patients are frequently required to seek treatment in other areas of the Occupied Palestinian Territories (West Bank or East Jerusalem) or abroad.

The maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births in Gaza is 31 compared with seven in Canada, according to data from United Nations Population Fund, the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the World Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO). The neonatal mortality rate per 1,000 live births is 14 in Gaza compared with three in Canada, according to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the WHO and the World Bank. The infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births is 21.3 in Gaza compared with four in Canada, according to UNRWA, WHO, the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme.

Furthermore, the undue delay to Bissan Eid's return to Canada has interfered with her university education. After successfully completing a bachelor's degree in science and civil engineering from Concordia in 2015, she is now pursuing a Masters in civil engineering. She has already completed one year of studies in her program but was unable to enroll in the winter semester due to the delay in receiving a permit to exit Gaza.

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**National Office:**

312 Laurier Avenue East, Ottawa, ON K1N 1H9  
Tel: (613) 744-7667 Fax: (613) 746-2411  
info@amnesty.ca

**Toronto Office:**

1992 Yonge Street, 3rd floor, Toronto ON M4S 1Z7  
Tel: (416) 363-9933 Fax: (416) 363-3103  
toronto@amnesty.ca

**Vancouver Office:**

Suite 430, 319 West Pender, Vancouver, BC V6B 1T3  
Tel: (604) 294-5160 Fax: (604) 294-5130  
vancouver@amnesty.ca

Bissan Eid requires your active support to secure an exit permit from the Gaza Strip and return to Canada either via Israel or Jordan. She deserves to have her rights fully protected, in particular her rights to health, to life and to freedom of movement.

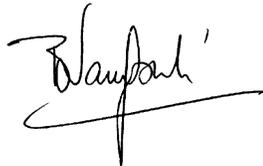
Your Excellency, we urge you to take every action possible to ensure the prompt and safe exit of Bissan Eid from Gaza to receive the urgent and critical medical care she requires.

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss this further with you.

Sincerely,



Alex Neve  
Secretary General  
Amnesty International Canada  
(English branch)



Béatrice Vaugrante  
Directrice Générale  
Amnistie internationale Canada francophone

cc. The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ottawa, Canada