



## **The Right to Education Campaign at Birzeit University**

### **1. Aims and Principles**

- 1.1 The Right to Education Campaign was set up by Birzeit University to reach out to students, teachers and campaigners worldwide to support the right to education in Palestine.
- 1.2 The Right to Education Campaign<sup>1</sup> is an international campaign calling on human rights advocates, universities, trade unions and other social movements and organizations in Palestine and around the world to collectively campaign in support of Palestinian students, teachers and educational institutions under military occupation.
- 1.3 The Campaign also runs local level projects with the objectives of tackling the isolation of students imposed by the Israeli occupation; addressing the marginalization of students and young people in public life; and encouraging students to participate in local and international rights-based activism.
- 1.4 The Campaign stands for all fundamental human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and other conventions and agreements in international law and international humanitarian law.
- 1.5 The Campaign specifically refers to the fundamental human right to education.
- 1.6 The Campaign believes that “Education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights”.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.7 The Campaign believes that the obstruction of Palestinian education by the Israeli military occupation not only violates the human rights of individuals, it is an attack on the development of Palestinian society as a whole.
- 1.8 For students and teachers under military occupation, normal academic life is a goal that continues to be obstructed and the right to education a basic prerequisite that needs to be defended.
- 1.9 The Campaign believes that it is the responsibility of governments, organizations and ordinary people to defend the universal right to education and to demand its realization.

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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter shall be referred to as ‘the Campaign’.

<sup>2</sup> UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 13.

- 1.10 The core aims of the Right to Education Campaign are:
- a. To document, research and raise awareness of the issues facing Palestinian education under Israeli military occupation.
  - b. To build an international campaign in support of the rights and academic freedom of Palestinian students, teachers and educational institutions.
  - c. To provide legal representation for Birzeit University students and faculty arrested, detained or deported by the Israeli military authorities.
  - d. To oppose the illegal Israeli occupation and its attacks on Palestinian education, demanding the right to education and unimpeded access for all Palestinians to their educational institutions.
- 1.11 The Campaign seeks to raise awareness about the range of obstacles facing Birzeit University and students and teachers at all levels of the Palestinian education sector.<sup>3</sup>
- 1.12 The Campaign seeks to bring pressure to bear on governments, international institutions and ultimately the Israeli authorities to adhere to its legal obligations to allow unimpeded access for all Palestinians to their educational institutions.
- 1.13 All aims and principles of the Campaign are guided by Birzeit University's Mission Statement which reads: "Birzeit University strives to promote excellence in higher education by providing quality academic teaching, training, research and relevant community programs within the context of sustainable development, emphasizing social conscience and democratic values in a free civil Palestinian society".

## **2. Organization and Structure**

- 2.1 The Right to Education Campaign is based at the Public Relations Office of Birzeit University and functions as part of the international outreach of the University, campaigning on issues of concern to Birzeit University and the rights of all students, teachers and educational institutions in Palestine.
- 2.2 The Campaign Coordinator is responsible for coordinating and implementing the activities of the Campaign, in conjunction with the Campaign Committee.
- 2.3 The Campaign Committee is a volunteer committee composed of students, faculty and employees from different departments and institutes within Birzeit University. The Campaign Committee functions as the advisory board for the Campaign, bringing together individuals with skills, knowledge and experience directly relevant to the Campaign.

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<sup>3</sup> At their extreme these obstacles have included the closure of educational institutions, their actual physical destruction and the injury or arrest of students and teachers. More commonly, it is Israel's policy of internal sieges, closures of cities and curfews that have together made access to the classroom by students and teachers a daily challenge and have severely disrupted the educational process.

- 2.4 The University lawyer is responsible for providing legal representation for Birzeit University students and faculty arrested, detained or deported by the Israeli military authorities.
- 2.5 Projects and activities of the Right to Education Campaign are funded on a project-by-project basis by donor organizations working to promote human rights and support the sustainable development of Palestinian society.

### **3. Membership and Affiliation**

- 3.1 The Right to Education Campaign at Birzeit University calls on trade unions, educational institutions, social and political movements and concerned individuals around the world to support the right to education in Palestine.
- 3.2 Supporting organizations and institutions are invited to affiliate to the Right to Education Campaign as a means of building an international coalition of organizations to collectively campaign in support of Palestinian students, teachers and educational institutions. Affiliating organizations will be kept in touch with bi-monthly news and Campaign updates.
- 3.3 Affiliation to the Right to Education Campaign at Birzeit University is a public show of solidarity and support to all Palestinian students and teachers who are struggling to live, work and study under the illegal Israeli occupation.
- 3.4 There are no compulsory monetary or other requirements for affiliating organizations. A sample motion of affiliation is provided by the Campaign with suggestions for practical measures of solidarity and support. Affiliating organizations are also free to submit their own motions of affiliation.<sup>4</sup>
- 3.5 Individual supporters of the Right to Education Campaign can subscribe to Right to Education Bulletin. The bi-monthly email Bulletin includes news, campaign updates, calls to action and practical ideas for supporting the right to education in Palestine.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Sample Motion of Affiliation <http://right2edu.birzeit.edu/downloads/pdfs/CampaignAffiliationMotion.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Supporters can subscribe to the bi-monthly Right to Education Bulletin by emailing [right2edu@birzeit.edu](mailto:right2edu@birzeit.edu) with “subscribe” in the subject line.