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Open Rafah for Ayman

Ayman Talal E. Quader is a Palestinian who was born on July 19, 1986, in Gaza and has lived in Gaza City for his entire life. As a young Palestinian student who truly loves his homeland and has always dreamed of freedom for his people, Ayman has worked very hard to achieve one of his most important goals in life; earning a scholarship for a Masters program in Europe.

Ayman was recently accepted to an academic scholarship program at the Universitat Jaume I (UJI) in Castellón, Spain for the International Masters in Peace, Conflict and Development Studies (PEACE Master). Ayman was also successfully granted a Spanish student visa in order to complete his academic program that begins February 2010 and runs all the way through to May of 2012.

"All I want is my basic rights to learn and study; rights that are supposed to be guaranteed and recommended by all the international resolutions and the United Nations."

"I am not asking for a miracle, it is my reserved right. I am handling all my documents, visa, acceptance letter from my university and supporting documents. Why I am being prevented from leaving Gaza and prevented access to Spain?"

"The issue of the borders is politically extremely complicated," Ayman said in an interview. "Since Hamas was elected as the leadership of the Palestinian people in 2006, the Israeli government has declared and relentlessly implemented a total siege on the Gaza Strip."

The conditions of the borders have become extremely complex, making it almost impossible for Palestinians living in Gaza to leave under any circumstances, including for medical treatment, to visit relatives or on academic scholarship to study abroad. The borders, including the Rafah border - the only throughway between Gaza and Egypt - are all controlled by Israeli Security Forces, although Israel's control of the Rafah border is more indirect than the borders leading out of Gaza and into "Israel Proper" (as defined by the 1967 armistice lines; see UN Resolution 242). The Egyptian authorities have been complicit with the Israeli government in the collective punishment of a civilian population, contrary to article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Conventions (1949), by neglecting much needed humanitarian aid and building supplies into the strip, pre and post *Operation Cast Lead*. The result is thousand of homeless and starving Gazans left with nowhere to turn but the international community.

Maan News agency reported earlier this month that throughout the entire year of 2009, the Gaza borders were only opened 33 times. This is truly a crime against humanity.

Israel AND Egypt are both in direct breach of international laws and conventions that guarantee fair access to education for Ayman as declared in the spirit of the *United Nations Declaration of Universal Human Rights, Article 28*, and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966)*.

The purpose of this manifesto is to send a swift and authoritative message to the Egyptian and Israeli governments, ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! This is a call to lawyers, politicians, journalists and all activists for human rights to join the fight for Ayman and his right to the education that he has always dreamed of. Together we can make a difference for Ayman, together we can make a difference for Palestine, one step at a time.