

Israeli travel restrictions

A middle management office, attempting to keep protestors out of the Palestinian territories, decided to require written permission to enter the territories. A handout was given out to everyone arriving at Ben-Gurion Airport. This un-official experiment would set up a major clash with all of the Christian pilgrims as well as create a logistical nightmare. It would have destroyed the already decimated Israeli tourism industry. Pave immediately brought this matter up with Israeli Ambassador to the Vatican, Oded Ben-Hur, who agreed with the folly of the experiment and had the policy abolished



Welcome to the State of Israel

Information on entry into territories under the control of the Palestinian Authority

1. We would like to bring to your attention, that entry into the territories under the control of the Palestinian Authority, in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria (Area A), is forbidden without the attainment of prior written authorization.
2. Entry into the aforementioned territories, without prior authorization, may result in legal measures being taken against you, including deportation and refusal of future re-entry into the State of Israel.
3. Those interested in entering the Gaza Strip via the "Erez" crossing are required to fill out a form requesting entry (into the territories controlled by the Palestinian Authority) and to submit it to the Foreign Relations Office in the Coordination & Liaison Administration in the Gaza Strip, situated at "Erez" crossing.
4. Requests will be processed with the utmost effort to authorize them within 5 working days.
5. Additional information can be obtained at the Foreign Relations Office in the Coordination & Liaison Administration in the Gaza Strip reachable by telephone (08-674-1556) or by facsimile (08-689-2613).
6. The submission of a request to authorize entry into the above mentioned areas does not constitute permission to do so, until written authorization has been received.

مرحبا بكم في دولة إسرائيل

الدخول إلى المناطق التي تخضع لمسؤولية السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية

1. تسهلا لإقامتكم في إسرائيل نسترعي انتباهكم إلى منع الدخول بدون إذن إلى مناطق السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية في قطاع غزة والأراضي الواقعة تحت مسؤولية السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية في متلقة يهودا والسامرة (الضفة الغربية) - مناطق (أ).
2. إن دخول المناطق المذكورة بدون إذن من شأنه تعرض المخالفين للملاحقة القضائية بما فيها الإبعاد عن دولة إسرائيل ومنع إمكان العودة إليها مستقبلا.
3. على الراغبين في دخول منطقة قطاع غزة عن طريق معبر (إيرز) تعبئة نموذج طلب الدخول إلى مناطق السلطة الوطنية وتقديمه إلى مكتب الأجانب الكائن بمقر الارتباط في متلقة قطاع غزة.
4. سيتم الاعتناء بالطلب والسعي للرد عليه خلال 5 أيام عمل.
5. للحصول على مزيد من التفاصيل يرجى الاتصال بمكتب الأجانب في مقر الارتباط على الهاتف رقم 08-6741556 أو على الفاكس رقم 08-6892613.
6. لا يجوز اعتبار مجرد تقديم طلب تنسيق المرور إذا بدخول المنطقة إذ يجب انتظار ورود الرد على الطلب خطيا.

BEFORE date January 22,2004

Asia News Article dealing with the Handout



AsiaNews.it

22 January, 2004

ISRAEL - PALESTINE

Pilgrims: A not so big "Welcome" to Bethlehem, Jericho and Emmaus.

Jerusalem (AsiaNews) – There are obstacles placed in the way of pilgrims wanting to visit the Holy Land. Over the past few days Israeli border officials have been passing a leaflet in English and Arabic to travelers arriving in Israel and Palestine. Written in large print is a great big "Welcome to the State of Israel". However the leaflet specifies that "entry into the territories under the control of the Palestinian Authority" (i.e. Gaza, Judea and Samaria) "is forbidden". This means that it is impossible for pilgrims to reach Bethlehem, Jericho, Emmaus and Qumran, traditional destinations for all Christian pilgrims

A written request is necessary to enter these territories, while waiting for the authorization from the Israeli military government, which promises to respond within 5 working days.

The request itself does not authorize any entry. Only a written response from the military government's Foreign Relations Office constitutes a valid authorization.

Anyone daring to enter these territories without authorization risks serious sanctions: "legal measures" and even "deportation and refusal of future re-entry into the State of Israel".

Special instructions are given for those requesting entry into the Gaza Strip. The request must be submitted directly to the Foreign Relations Office, located in the "Erez" crossing, recently the stage of a suicide attack.

To make further inquiries, the leaflet gives the Office's telephone numbers: 08-674-1556; fax: 08-689-2613).

Below we attach the original text of the "Information" leaflet:

Welcome to the State of Israel



AsiaNews.it

"We go, our common task for the Third Millennium."
(from "Get up let's go" by John Paul II)

19 February, 2004

ISRAEL - PALESTINE - VATICAN

Pilgrims no longer limited to travel through Judea and Samaria

Rome (AsiaNews) –There are no longer problems and obstacles for pilgrims wanting to reach Bethlehem and the Occupied Territories. Israel's ambassador to the Holy See, Oded Ben Hur, told *AsiaNews* today that the Tel Aviv airport no longer passes out leaflets stating that visits to the Occupied Territories are limited and that it has "returned to previous procedures".

Last Jan. 22 *AsiaNews* reported that Tel Aviv airport military personnel handed out leaflets to pilgrims wanting to travel to the Occupied Territories (Bethlehem, Jericho, Emmaus, Qumran, etc.), informing them they needed special authorization to visit these places.

Military authorities were given the final authority to grant permission or not. Israeli sources confidentially told *AsiaNews* the procedure risked stopping tourism in the Holy Land.

The Ministry of Tourism, worried about the procedure's consequences on the flow of tourism (which was already tested by problems with terrorism and Israeli-Palestinian tension), attempted to put the brakes on requiring such special authorizations.

Yesterday, Feb. 18, the Israeli tourism minister, Raphael Ben Hour, issued a statement in Hebrew, asking "to get rid of the leaflet informing tourists that their travel to Palestinian Authority territories, in Judea and Samaria, was prohibited."

In the statement he said "instructions have been given to border police to stop passing out the leaflet ... at Ben Gurion airport" so that "tourist travel to Judea and Samaria will be permitted according to the rule and norms" of the past. In his statement he makes no mention of Gaza, which has been placed under tight control following the latest terrorist attacks."

During a telephone call with *AsiaNews*, Ambassador Oded Ben Hur said "all this (the leaflet and its stipulated travel restrictions) was a mistake and we have corrected it."

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