

## Middle East Studies Association of North America

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March 6, 1992

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir  
Office of the Prime Minister  
3 Kaplan Street  
Kiryat Ben Gurion  
Jerusalem 91919  
ISRAEL

Your Excellency:

The Committee on Academic Freedom of the Middle East Studies Association is deeply concerned about the decision made on January 18, 1992, by the Israeli security office to deny Dr. Khalil Shikaki, a political science professor at al-Najah University, permission to return to his home on the West Bank. Dr. Shikaki attempted to return after participating in an exchange program with the University of Wisconsin and a semester teaching at the University of Southern Florida.

The Middle East Studies Association comprises 2,200 academics worldwide who teach and conduct research on the Middle East and North Africa. The Association publishes the respected International Journal of Middle East Studies and is committed to ensuring respect for academic freedom throughout the region.

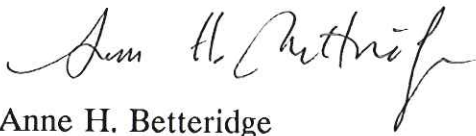
The Committee understands that al-Najah University had obtained the proper permit for Dr. Shikaki from the military authorities for his return to Nablus. However, when he reached the Allenby Bridge crossing, he was denied entry to the West Bank and his permit was confiscated by the security officials. He was turned away without explanation.

These actions constitute serious interference with central principles of academic freedom. They set a precedent for denying a respected professor the freedom to travel internationally -- a freedom that entails the right to return home -- and to participate in international exchanges, which are essential to teaching and scholarship. The actions also constitute a violation of international human rights standards. Although no reason was given for barring

Dr. Shikaki from entering the West Bank, the suspicion is that he is a victim of a policy of collective punishment, under which he is being punished for the actions of his brother, Fathi Shikaki, a founder of Islamic Jihad. Penalizing an innocent individual for the political stance of a relative is impermissible by international human rights standards.

We respectfully urge that Dr. Shikaki be allowed to return to Nablus and that such interference with academics' freedom to travel be brought to an end immediately.

Sincerely,



Anne H. Betteridge  
Executive Director

cc: Shmuel Goren, Coordinator of Activities in the Territories  
Ambassador Moshe Arad, Embassy of Israel, Washington, DC  
Ambassador William Brown, Embassy of the United States of America  
John Hirsch, Israel Desk, US Department of State  
Dr. Michael Van Dusen, House Committee on International Relations  
Philip Wilcox, US Consul General, Jerusalem, Israel  
Senator Nancy Kassebaum (Kansas), US Senate