

Israel Program to Deport Palestinians

By [Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East](#)

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Montreal - On April 13, the Israeli army confirmed that a new military decree was in effect which, on the pretext of discouraging "infiltrations", will allow tens of thousands of Palestinians considered "illegal" in the West Bank-including East Jerusalem to be expelled. The decree will also allow them to be prosecuted by military tribunals for the offences, which are punishable by up to seven years of prison.

Under the terms of the new law, an amendment to the laws in place since 1969, a person is suspected of being an "infiltrated agent" if he entered the West Bank "illegally" or if he is without a "visiting permit" in good standing. The wording of the law is so vague that it is impossible to know if it is referring to the permits that have been in use until now or to new permits to be issued at some point in the future. The decree does not specify the status of West Bank inhabitants possessing a resident card. It also ignores the Palestinian Authority's jurisdiction in the West Bank and the Oslo Accords signed with the PLO. The latter considers Gaza and the West bank as a single territorial unit and authorizes the free movement of Palestinians between the two territories.

The application of the new decree may have serious implications for around 70,000 Palestinians in the West Bank. In effect, it will legitimize the processing of civilians as criminals, and will enable their expulsion en masse to Gaza within 72 hours of their arrest. Palestinians born in Gaza, or even with one parent born in Gaza, who live in the West Bank are targeted and threatened with deportation. Those born in the West Bank but having stayed temporarily outside of the West Bank and having therefore lost their resident status are also vulnerable. Palestinians' spouses who were born outside the West Bank may also be affected.

Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) joins a dozen Israeli human rights organizations in strongly condemning the new Israeli military decree. "The application of such a measure contravenes the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the displacement of persons under the protection of the occupying force, in this case Israel. By making Palestinians vulnerable to military tribunals, the decree also violates the Oslo Accords," says CJPME President Thomas Woodley. "It is disappointing to witness the Canadian government's silence on this new attempt by the Israeli authorities to alter the West Bank's demographic composition by expelling Palestinians yet again," he added.

At least two Palestinians were deported to Gaza last week because their identity card had a Gazan address. The two men had no ties with Gaza, apart from having been born there. One had lived in the West Bank with his wife and family before being sentenced to nine years of prison in Israel. Instead of being returned to the West Bank after being released from prison,

he was deported to Gaza. The second man had lived for 15 years in Jaffa, in Israel, but was expelled to Gaza following treatment in an Israeli hospital.

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