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Date: May 28, 2015

In your response please note: 40522  
15607

To: Maj. Gen. Sami Turjeman  
GOC Southern Command

**By fax: 08-9902655**

Dear Sir,

**Re: Request for approval for a visit to Gaza by Israeli citizens, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ Abu Hasireh and his wife, Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ Abu Hasida, to the Gaza Strip in the coming holidays of Id al-Fitr and Id al-Adha.**

1. I am contacting you with a request to allow Mr. Abu Hasireh and Mrs. Abu Hasida, whose information appears in the subject line, to enter the Gaza Strip for a short holiday visit with their daughter, who lives in Gaza and whom they have not seen for nine years. The request is made ahead of the upcoming Id al-Fitr and Id al-Adha holidays. The daughter is \_\_\_\_\_ **Mughrabi, ID. \_\_\_\_\_.**
2. Mr. Abu Hasireh and Ms. Abu Hasida have not visited their daughter, or Mr. Abu Hasireh's six siblings, who also live in Gaza, since 2006.
3. Id al-Fitr begins on July 16 or 17, 2015 (depending on the moon) and lasts three days. Id al-Adha begins on October 4, 2015, and lasts five days.
4. As is known, holiday visits have provided the only chance for Israelis to see relatives in Gaza, given the narrow criteria that allow visits in Gaza only in the most exceptional circumstances, such as a first degree relative's funeral, wedding or critical illness.
5. In 2007, more than eight years ago, Israel stopped holiday visits by Israelis in the Gaza Strip. At the same time, the criteria for visiting first degree relatives in Gaza were narrowed. More than eight years ago, family ties were abruptly severed, and the precious meetings and rare shared moments longed for by grandchildren and grandparents, sisters and brothers, were to be no more.
6. In the time that has passed since 2007, the family naturally had both joyous and sorrowful occasions. For instance, the couple were unable to attend their granddaughter's wedding in July 2008. This was particularly difficult for Mrs. Abu Hasida, who had raised her granddaughter as her own in the early years of her life.



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7. It is superfluous to note that every day that passes, the harm caused to the family life of families that are split between Israel and the Gaza Strip grows deeper, and the longing grows more intense with each family event.
8. We note at this point, that up until 2007, including in the years that followed disengagement in 2005, Israel allowed family visits during the holidays, based on the recognition of these individuals' right to family life (HCJ 10043/03 **Abajan v. IDF Commander in the Gaza Strip** and HCJ 1034/04 **Qotina v. IDF Commander in the Gaza Strip**). In 2007, Israel stopped allowing holiday visits, and a commitment was made by the military commander to periodically re-evaluate the policy (HCJ 8250/07 **HaMoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual v. GOC Southern Command**; this commitment was made again in HCJ 7235/09 **HaMoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual v. GOC Southern Command** and HCJ 5649/12 **Fahima Hamdan v. GOC Southern Command**).
9. We note that restrictions on travel to and from Gaza have been mitigated, such that Israelis may enter the Gaza Strip under the Divided Families Procedure, and for humanitarian visits. Palestinians also exit Gaza every Friday in shuttles to attend Friday prayer in Jerusalem's al-Aqsa Mosque. Palestinian business people enter Israel from Gaza and staff members of international organizations enter and exit Gaza via Israel.
10. If travel for the purpose of business and prayer can be justified, then surely there is justification to allow Mr. Abu Hasireh and Mrs. Abu Hasida to travel to meet their beloved daughter and Mr. Abu Hasireh's siblings, and relieve some of the hardship, longing and harm suffered by the family for many years.
11. Given the aforesaid, and the many years that have passed since Mr. Abu Hasireh and Mrs. Abu Hasida last saw their relatives in the Gaza Strip, it is just and appropriate to review and approve their entry for a short holiday visit in Gaza. The time that has elapsed since the last family visit and the family occasions the family has experienced in separation over the years during which a visit was made impossible, justify approving the visit over the coming holidays.
12. Your prompt, written response is appreciated.

Sincerely,  
Shira Livne  
Client advocacy coordinator

Enclosed:

Copies of ID cards.

CC:

Commander of Israelis Desk, Warrant Officer 'Amer Nassraldin