



“I was asked to spy if I wanted to study”

Ahmed* is a medical student. He cannot continue his training at an East Jerusalem hospital because his permit was confiscated. He recounts how the Israeli secret service asked him to work for them if he wanted his permit back.



The entrance of Al Quds medical school in Abu Dis with the Barrier in the background cutting the school off from East Jerusalem.

“As part of my studies at Al Quds medical school in Abu Dis, for the last two years I’ve been doing on-the-job training at an East Jerusalem hospital. Being a Palestinian from the West Bank, I need a permit from the Israeli authorities to enter Jerusalem. I’ve never had any problems getting one before. This spring, however, a soldier at the checkpoint confiscated my permit. I was told that I had to see the Israeli secret service, Shin Bet, if I wanted to get it back.

When I finally got an appointment a few weeks later, the Shin Bet officer told me: “If you help us, we will help you.” They asked me to inform them about my fellow students’ activities, in

particular any travel abroad. In other words, I was asked to spy if I wanted to study. I refused and, as a result, I didn’t get my permit back.

Although I can do my training in Hebron, for example, there are huge repercussions on the quality of my studies. The East Jerusalem hospital where I’ve been training has half a dozen professors specialized in my field. In Hebron, there is only one. There is also much less interaction between students in the West Bank because there are far fewer students per hospital.

When I finish my undergraduate studies at Al Quds medical school in a bit over a year, I

Medical students face difficulties accessing East Jerusalem for training

150-160 students in the fourth, fifth and sixth year of studies at Al Quds medical school in Abu Dis are eligible for training at East Jerusalem hospitals. 90 percent come from the West Bank and need permits to attend specialized, medical training in paediatrics, neonatology, surgical interventions, internal medicine, cardiology, etc. On the whole, the same high-quality, specialized training is not available in the hospitals elsewhere in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt).

Therefore, access to East Jerusalem for medical students is critically important, especially if the quality of medical care in the oPt is to be ensured in the long term.

In June 2010, Al Quds medical school reported that 11 students could not continue their training in East Jerusalem because the Israeli authorities had refused to renew their permits. Physicians for Human Rights Israel is helping these students to bring their case to court in order to create a precedent with regard to permits for medical students from the West Bank.

want to go to the United States for my specialization. My diploma is recognized in the US, UK, the Arab world and many other countries. Israel, however, refuses to recognize it.”

*Ahmed’s name has been changed and some of the details of his story omitted in order to protect his identity.

The right to the highest attainable standard of health is enshrined in the 1946 WHO Constitution and numerous human rights instruments. Four criteria make up the right to health: availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality.