

national lawyers guild

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November 3, 2012

The Honorable Dr. Alia Hatoug Bouran

Ambassador of Jordan

Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

3504 International Drive, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20008

Re: Denial of entry into Jordan to Mr. Iyad Burnat

Dear Dr. Hatoug Bouran:

The National Lawyers Guild urgently requests that the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan allow Mr. Iyad Burnat of Bil'in, Palestine, to travel immediately to Amman for his flight into the Detroit Metropolitan Airport, to participate tomorrow, Sunday, November 4, 2012, in a national conference to be held at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Hundreds of university students from across the United States have traveled there, many at great personal expense, to hear him speak.

The National Lawyers Guild has been intensively involved in international human rights and humanitarian issues for three-quarters of a century and is widely respected in the United States and around the world for our members' expertise and seriousness of commitment. Please advise the appropriate officials that the right to travel is expressly protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention. The right to free expression, which by definition includes exposure to all perspectives, is also protected by various international human rights treaties including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Only totalitarian regimes refuse to allow their population to be exposed to the peaceful expression of all sides of political controversies. Whatever may be our personal views of particular perspectives, they all deserve to receive public exposure.

Following his scheduled participation in this weekend's student conference, from November 2012 to February 2013, Mr. Iyad Burnat has scheduled speaking engagements throughout the United States, in more than 30 cities, where community members expect to hear about his work in Bil'in. Presentations are scheduled in New Hampshire, Maine, New York, Massachusetts, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Louisiana, California, Washington, Oregon, Arizona, Utah, Washington DC, North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. The invitation to the U.S. was extended by Jewish Voices for Peace and Interfaith Peace Builders, long-established and widely recognized organizations.

Needless to say, it would not reflect well upon the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan if the thousands of students and community members in the U.S. who are now planning to attend these scheduled events are told instead to stay home, because Jordan has barred the speaker's entry into that country to prevent his trip to the United States, after the State of Israel allowed his departure for this same purpose. We assure you that such a disclosure to the U.S. population would be a stunning new perspective on the Hashemite

Kingdom of Jordan to thousands of politically engaged Americans, suggesting active Jordanian complicity in a pattern of travel restrictions to the United States that has silenced other Palestinian human rights speakers. Such a revelation to the U.S. general public about Jordanian government's violations of rights under the Fourth Geneva Convention and other international human rights treaties would cause great damage to the Kingdom's reputation in this country, as well as to the Palestinian people.

We therefore respectfully urge you to act immediately to persuade your country to permit Mr. Iyad Burnat to travel into Amman, for the purpose of flying to the United States on this speaking tour.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Azadeh Shahshahani', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Azadeh Shahshahani

President