

Denied Entry to Gaza for Breast Cancer Mission

A full training and treatment project was wrecked after Israel had denied permission for Philippa Whitford.

By [Palestine Post 24](#)

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Israeli occupation has denied permission for British lawmaker, Philippa Whitford, who is a doctor, from entering Gaza to offer help for patients of breast cancer.

Over the past two and half years[1], I have been working with Medical Aid for Palestine (MAP) to improve the provision of services and treatment for breast cancer patients in Palestine.

Last year, I travelled out with the specific aim of setting up a project to enable experienced professionals in breast cancer care to provide teaching and training to local Palestinian clinicians working with breast cancer patients.

Since my last visit, I have managed to recruit a team of specialists from all over Scotland to join the project, which will help improve breast cancer care – prevention, diagnosis and treatment – for women in Gaza and the West Bank.

Tragically, many Palestinian women are denied permits to travel from Gaza to Jerusalem to access radiotherapy so it is important to be able to access as much treatment as possible near their home.

The plan this year was to travel out with the whole team in September but, frustratingly, I was denied a visa. Moreover, two others did not receive their visas in time.

However, I travelled, but I had to completely change my schedule and work the entire time from a base in Jerusalem.

Nonetheless, I am still able to see significant improvements since my visit last year, which is fantastic given that local clinicians are working under very difficult circumstances, particularly in Gaza. Hopefully, things will continue to progress.

In October, I raised the issue of my visa being denied in Parliament with the Foreign Office Minister. [To see my question click here](#)

Following this, [Commonspace](#) asked to interview me about how this affected my trip, my past work in Gaza, my thoughts on the current situation and what needs to be done to resolve it, and what our project hopes to achieve.

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Note

[1] This letter was written one year ago.

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