



The Impact of the Gaza Blockade on the Higher Education Sector

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This study aims to shed light on the impact of the blockade on the higher education sector in the Gaza Strip. It discusses the impact of the blockade on the educational institutions from the points of its buildings and finance, as well as the impact of the blockade on the academic and research activities for members of the academic staff. In addition, the study discusses the impact of the blockade on students. The study also targets the challenges faced by the various educational institutions; administrative, academic and students during the blockade, which is represented in the blockade itself, the recent war against Gaza(Cast Lead), and the political division in the Gaza Strip. The Researcher has suffered from the lack of adequate, statistical and scientific information about it, and the scarcity of studies on this subject. The study concludes a set of results, and makes several recommendations.

First: Higher Education Institutions

Higher education is considered the community hope of progress and civilization through the well preparation of intellectual, artist and organizational leaders, and the establishment of a scientific and modern research base. It is the tool of the contemporary civilization. Higher education is linked closely to the development of society and the maintenance of the inherent values. Palestinians consider education their optimal choice, which is the best investment in their lives.

Higher education is defined as: Every academic, professional or regular study at a higher education institution recognized at least for one full academic year or two semesters after obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Higher education Institutions in the Gaza Strip can be divided, according to this definition, into three sections:

- Universities: Educational institutions that provide a bachelor's degree (first degree), it may also provide masters degrees and doctorates both individually and jointly. And it may offer programs that end with a diploma. In order to be recognized as a university, these institutions must have several characteristics including having at least three colleges.
- University faculties: Educational institutions that provide academic or vocational programs end with a bachelor's degree, or provide educational, vocational or technical programs for at least two or three years that end with a diploma.
- Junior colleges: Institutions that provide professional and technical programs end with a diploma.

The Gaza Strip has the previous three types according to the attached table at the end of study.

The Higher Education Institutions in the Gaza Strip can be classified according to their foundational, financial and administrative character into four categories:

- Governmental and educational institutions which follow the Ministry of Higher Education, financially and administratively, such as Al-Aqsa University, Palestine technical College in Deir al-Balah, and the Faculty of Science and Technology in Khan Yunis.

- General educational institutions: supervised by boards of trustees, such as the Islamic University, Al-Azhar University, and Al-Quds Open University.
- Private educational institutions: They are established by businessmen for profit objectives, such as the University of Palestine, and the University of Gaza.
- Educational institutions follow governmental or international organizations such as the Islamic Faculty which follow the Ministry of Waqf, or the technical centers that follow UNRWA (2).

Second: The Stages of the Blockade on the Gaza Strip:

The Gaza Strip is subjected to the blockade of land, sea and air by the Israeli occupation authorities for the purpose of destroying its human and material forces, blocking any human and economic development, and hitting the will and steadfastness of its people. Furthermore, the blockade aims to prevent any progress in the national project towards getting the rights of the Palestinian people of self-determination, and the establishment of their independent state.

The blockade on the Gaza Strip has passed through several stages:

- The first phase since the Al-Aqsa Intifada in 09\28\2000 until stopping the work in the safe passage in August 2003.
- The second includes the preparation and implementation of the unilateral disengagement plan (2003- 09/12/2005).
- The third phase, covering the period from the Palestinian legislative elections in 01/25/2006 and the victory of Hamas, then the government formation, and ended by the military coup in 6/14/2007.
- The fourth phase, covering the period from 06/14/2007 till May 2010 (the attack against the Freedom Flotilla at the sea). It is more intensive and difficult stage in the blockade of the Gaza Strip. And this is the part that will be focused on in this study.
- The fifth stage, the period between May 2010 and so far, which witness a breakthrough in the movement of people and goods.

The blockade and its impact on the higher education is considered to be a clear violation of the international legitimacy, such as the Hague Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which guarantees the right of education as a fundamental right of human rights. The blockade has left a negative impact on the higher education sector, and hindered the work of the educational institutions for its mission and objectives which is to prepare a human by providing knowledge, skills and values in order to serve the society. And contribute to the process of sustainable development of the Palestinian society. All this requires the provision of an appropriate and effective learning environment.

Third: The Impact of the Blockade on the Institutions of Higher Education

The blockade left many effects on the Palestinian higher education on several levels:

Universities, Colleges and Junior Colleges

The blockade has a negative reflection on the universities and colleges in the Gaza Strip from several aspects, including:

1- Buildings and Laboratories

The blockade contributed to hinder the urban development of universities, and infrastructure due to the lack of construction materials needed for that. The Gaza Strip has suffered from the lack of cement, iron and other materials required for construction because the Israeli occupation authorities prevented their entry to the Gaza Strip. Subsequently; the lack of construction materials has resulted in the universities' sufficiency with their current, existed buildings and facilities despite the overcrowding that they suffer from. In order to provide a sound educational environment, adequate classrooms must be available. And they must be adequate in terms of space, equipment and ventilation. It also must provide scientific labs to the faculties of medicine, engineering and disciplines of physics, chemistry and biology. Moreover, universities and colleges suffered from not being able to build new facilities in the period between (2007-2011) due to the lack of the construction materials, and because of the high price of bringing them through the tunnels, where the Israeli authorities banned the entry of gravel, cement and iron to the Gaza Strip with an exception to a small part of those materials that has been allowed to get into the Gaza strips for projects related to UNRWA. The Islamic University resumed construction of new buildings in 2011 with the availability of building materials at affordable prices through a network of spending on the Egyptian-Palestinian borders.

Also, Al-Aqsa University began constructing new buildings and facilities in the university campus in Khan Younis in the beginning of 2010, and it developed some of its buildings in the campus as well. And Al-Quds Open University- the middle are branch has started the constructing of its new campus at Al-Zawida area in 2012.

What made the matter more complicated during the blockade is the exposure of the Palestinian universities' buildings to bombing in the recent war against Gaza (2008-2009). The labs of the Islamic University have been exposed to a direct bombing during the war, and they were completely destroyed, including engineering laboratories and equipment, and the chemistry laboratories as well. The reconstruction of the destroyed laboratories did not begin before 2012 because of the noticed expansion in the entry of the construction materials through the tunnels and that was funded by the Islamic bank for development.

Buildings at Al Aqsa University in Gaza and Khan Younis also have been exposed to damages because of the Israeli bombardment of its neighboring regions. The Emirates Foundation worked to provide financial support to address the damage caused temporarily by covering windows nylon to ensure the continuation of the study during the winter season.

The building of the Faculty of Agriculture and Environment at the University of Al-Azhar in the area of Beit Hanoun has been destroyed completely. Also, the buildings of the College for Applied Sciences in the Tel al-Hawa have been exposed to damage due to the Israeli invasion to the area.

2- Decline in Funding

The donors who supports the higher education institutions halted their support of the infrastructure projects because of the sever difficulties in launching these projects on the ground. This led to a significant decline in the development of infrastructure and buildings in these universities. Many international institutions such as (USAID) , European institutions and others stopped to provide the fund needed to support the construction projects of the higher education institutions due to political reasons which are represented in the Hamas governance of the Gaza Strip, and the lack of the necessary building materials. For example, the blockade has led to the non-implementation of the draft submitted by the Republic of Turkey for the establishment of a library building on the campus of Al-Aqsa University in Khan Younis city. Blockade has also led to non-implementation of projects supported by the Paltel for Telecommunications which were in million dollars to build a swimming pool and gyms for the Faculty of the Physical Education at Al-Aqsa University.

Some institutions have just funded the preparation of some computer labs in the universities like what the German Foundation for Academic Exchange (DAAD) did at the Islamic University, Al-Azhar, Al-Aqsa in 2009-2010. As well as, the Muslim Foundation hands - Gaza branch equipped computer laboratories in each of the Islamic University, the University College for the applied sciences, and Al-Aqsa University in 2010. This shows that the funding has been limited, in addition to being a funding for preparation process not for the establishment of new buildings.

Due to the drop in funding and the lack of construction materials, some charity institutions provided a partial funding to renovate some of the buildings that were destroyed partially during the war. UAE charity body has funded the maintenance of the Central Library building at the Islamic University, which was set into fire because of the war, as well as the maintenance of the Main Hall of the conferences in the same university. Also the UAE body contributed to the restoration of the conference hall in the Al-Quds Open University in Gaza which was set into fire also during the war. The UAE body for charities also contributed to the restoration of the building of the Faculty of Science and Technology in Khan Younis after being partially damaged in the war.

The Decline in funding caused a negative impact on the urban development of the universities, and the need to provide new buildings and laboratories to keep up with the annual natural increase in the number of students enrolled, this in turn resulted in an increase in the overcrowding and thus have a negative impact on the functioning of the educational process in terms of the level.

Also, it caused a reduction in universities budget and its impact on the level of aid and services provided for the students.

The blockade has resulted in stopping the fund of the international institutions provided for the construction projects of the public higher education institutions as part of the blockade imposed on the government formed by Hamas in the Gaza Strip. This stop in the fund caused damage in the governmental higher education institutions such as Al-Aqsa University which is the largest public university in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Al-Aqsa University has attempted to circumvent the decided blockade on the public higher education institutions by creating the "Society of Al-Aqsa University Friends" , chaired by Dr. Kamal Sharafi, the

head of the Board of Trustees in order to get funds for projects at the university in addition to the projects that support the university students fund.

The funding institutions have begun recently in 2012, to resume its partial support for the construction of buildings at universities. The Central Branch of the Al-Quds Open University is being constructed with the support of UNDP.

Also the Islamic Development Bank is currently funding the re-construction of a laboratory building at the Islamic University. The king Hassan college at Al-Azhar University is being constructed these days. This building is funded by the Moroccan government.

3- Libraries

Blockade has contributed to a shortage in supplying universities' libraries with references and latest books and periodicals. Closure of commercial crossings and determining which goods are brought into Gaza Strip led to ending the supply of books to Gaza. This contributed to the isolation of the Gaza Strip libraries from the scientific publications that are issued in Arab and foreign countries. Even newspapers and periodicals in Egypt that is near to the Gaza Strip have been stopped since 2006, and didn't begin until earlier 2012, where it was resumed by the Jordanian library in Gaza. The blockade and the difficulty of movement led to the inability of officials of university libraries and directors of public libraries that belongs to local institutions and municipalities, in addition to the owners of private libraries to participate in book fairs that are held in neighboring Arab countries such as Egypt and Jordan.

The procurement rate of the Islamic University before the blockade, for example, was up to 70 thousand dollars, but it declined so much under the blockade. Also, there has been a shut down in several development projects in the library such as the portal project, and the project of binding the old books. Moreover, many employees weren't able to participate in conferences and training courses abroad to raise their professionalism. This applies to the rest of the universities. Blockade has also led to the inability of institutions and foreign donors to connect awarded books to libraries, universities and colleges in the Gaza Strip because of the difficulty of movement and shipping procedures.

The number of public libraries that contribute to enriching the cultural life and knowledge through the provision of different sources of knowledge from books and periodicals, graphics and audio-visual materials has declined in the Gaza Strip. The number of public libraries dropped from 24 to 16 in the years before the blockade. This is considered a serious indication in the cultural situation in the Gaza Strip. The decline in the number of libraries is due to a declining interest in public libraries, and the lack of funding for cultural institutions in addition to the lack of patrons due to the declining interest in the cultural and scientific knowledge and research. Libraries, also, don't get supply of new books because of the closure and the constant interruptions of electricity which negatively affects their performance and operational capacity and efficiency, and the postponement of upgrading hardware and maintenance.

Book fairs held by the Ministry of Culture of Gaza government have been considered very weak and limited to what is available in local libraries without the participation of publishing houses and libraries from neighboring countries.

Fourth: Hindering the Completion of Graduate Studies and Research Activity

Higher education institutions faced difficulties in giving scholarships for its members to complete their higher studies abroad due to the blockade. These difficulties caused a decline in the development of universities' cadres, and providing an appropriate human cadre in several disciplines. Al-Azhar University couldn't send 15 assistants and lecturers abroad to pursue their higher studies in the period between 2007 and 2011. Other universities and colleges faces the same problem as well. Moreover, the blockade contributed to hinder the procedures of obtaining a visa, especially for the United States and European countries, which deprived many grantees from completing their travel procedures.

The blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip hindered the scientific research activity in higher education institutions. The continuous closure of the Rafah crossing led to a weak participation of many university staffs in scientific conferences outside Gaza strip. This was reflected on their performance and their interaction with colleagues at universities abroad. On a personal level, the blockade and the Israeli occupation authorities prevented the researchers from the travelling to the West Bank and participating in many conferences organized by private universities in the West Bank such as Birzeit University and the Arab American University in Jenin. The researcher had to use video conference to present his research in these conferences. And he has been deprived from the direct interaction with the conference sessions, and meeting other researchers participating in the same conference. Also, the blockade prevented the researcher from attending a conference held in Cairo in April 2009 about "Modernity and the development of social sciences in the Arab world," which organized by the German Academic Exchange Foundation (DAAD).

Many university's staff didn't participate in scientific foreign conferences due to travel difficulties, and deportation policy, which was followed by Egyptian authorities, which is an insult to the dignity and status of Palestinian researchers and academics. This has contributed to the isolation of universities' staffs in the higher education institutions to keep Palestinians away from the scientific developments and research activities.

Also, the West Bank researchers has been prevented from being involved in scientific conferences held by universities in the Gaza Strip which weakened the spirit of scientific research cooperation between universities in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. It is worth mentioning that there are many technical problems connected with the use of video conference such as the problems in the clarity and quality of image and sound.

The difficulty of travel procedures at the Rafah crossing, the reluctance of the Egyptian authorities and preventing Arab researchers from coming to Gaza contributed to a poor communication between the Gaza Strip scientific researchers and institutions abroad. For example, Egyptian authorities prevented twelve researchers from coming to Gaza and participating in the activities of the Fourth International Scientific Conference of the Faculty of Arts at Alaqsa University, which was held in the period from 05/08/2012 until 10/05/2012. These actions resulted in preventing researchers from presenting their

researches, and preventing the universities in the Gaza strip from taking an advantage from the academic interaction with other universities. All these difficulties and restrictions follow the relaxation which Israel did for the freedom of movement into and from the Gaza Strip after May 2010!

The blockade and the high standard of living forced the academics to obtain additional hours in order to improve their income, particularly in the public higher education institutions. They seek for working at more than one university, the fact which affects their availability for the scientific researches especially that many academics in the higher education institutions suffer from a lack of material and moral incentives toward the scientific researches. Universities' interest and scientific research funding declined due to the drop in funding them, issuing scientific journals from the universities declined because of the blockade, and weak supply of printing supplies sometimes. This prompted many universities to issue a number of scientific journals electronically until recently.

Also the blockade contributed to the difficulty of communication between graduate students enrolled in Arab universities, especially the Egyptian ones, and obstructed their communication with their supervisors on their graduation researches which has been reflected negatively on their performance, and their ability to submit their researches before the deadline.

The universities in the Gaza Strip have worked within their normal academic progress and their adaptation to the blockade on opening Masters Programs in several fields. The Islamic university and Al-Azhar University have witnessed the blockade before opening Master programs in the colleges of education and literature, but the past six years have witnessed the opening of more majors dramatically. These programs are characterized with the weakness in infrastructure, both in laboratories and libraries.

It is worth noting that many of these programs' students have received master's degrees with a clear decline in the academic level. The blockade and the inability of students to travel and access references and sources are reasons stand behind the low level of their academic theses. For example, a student from Al-Azhar University in Gaza prepared his thesis for Master at Al-Azhar University (2011) about "The situation of the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon," without being able to do field visit to these camps.

The blockade also caused the disability of the Global Research in the scientific fields that require laboratory materials. These materials were scarce during the blockade. One of the academics and researchers at Al-Azhar University mentioned the obstacles that the blockade caused and they are as follows:

- 1- The difficulty of gain access to the tools and research requirements, devices, equipment and chemicals.
- 2- The difficulty of obtaining guarantees for hardware and laboratory equipment maintenance which may be allowed to enter through international organizations.
- 3- Classifying a lot of research supplies (sophisticated devices, chemicals and biological materials) on the list of contraband for security reasons, they are not allowed to enter through international institutions.

- 4- Difficulty in sending or bringing biological samples in order to conduct additional sophisticated tests, where obstacles on crossings prevent the proper climatic conditions necessary for duly saved.
- 5- Difficulty in sending or bringing researchers from Arab and foreign countries to participate in research activities for a short or long term in Gaza, and that because of the complicated process that requires different formats and arrangements for the entry and exit procedures that exceed the benefits of the visit.
- 6- The inability to perform many research experiments because of the failure to ensure the continuous connection of the electricity 24-48 hours, as many of the devices cannot be unplugged for one second.

Cultural and academic activities in the Gaza strip have also deteriorated, whether the activities that are carried out by universities, cultural institutions or public libraries. The declining number of lectures, seminars, study days, conferences, courses, artistic performances and exhibitions are due to the interruption of communication with the West Bank, Jerusalem and abroad, and the lack of funding, and the decline of public concern.

Fifth: Students in the Higher Education Institutions

The blockade left a negative impact on students in several ways, including:

- 1- The difficulty of movement and travel

Blockade has contributed in the difficulty of enrolling the students in Arab and foreign universities, where the continuous closure of Rafah crossing in the period between 2006 and 2010 resulted in a decline in the number of students studying abroad. It forced students to study in local universities in the Gaza Strip , the fact which has deprived them from the freedom of choice and diversity in the fields of study.

In its report for the year 2009, Human Rights Watch (H RW), estimated the number of students who were in Gaza and prevented arbitrarily from joining their universities abroad about 660 students, 400 of whom were trying to study in Egypt.

Also the blockade contributed to an educational and cultural isolation for Gaza Strip from the West Bank and East Jerusalem. There is no longer students attend universities in the West Bank, which ,in turn, contributed in the cultural isolation of the Gaza Strip from the outside world. Nabil Qasees, the former President of Birzeit University, has indicated that the blockade policy has contributed in reducing the percentage of students of Gaza Strip who are studying at the university from 22% before the blockade to 0% at this moment.

Some reports indicated that there are only two students from the Gaza strip studying at Berzeit University. The Israeli occupation authorities also prevented students from Gaza Strip to pursue their studies in West Bank universities. They were arrested there and deported to the Gaza Strip, and prevented from returning again which negatively affects their future. Some were forced to go to universities in Gaza to complete their education, whether in undergraduate or master's degree. This means that Israel has violated the Palestinian-Israeli agreements, which stipulates that "Gaza and the West Bank is single geographical unit." This indicates that Israel follows a systematic policy aims to isolate the two parts of the country from each other.

Blockade also prevented many Palestinian students living abroad, especially in the Arab Gulf states to come and join universities in the Gaza Strip, especially since many public universities in those countries prevent Palestinian students who obtained a high school diploma to enroll in its universities. This forced the Palestinians in the Arab Gulf states to send their sons to the Egyptian universities such as the University of October 6. This was a great financial load on Palestinian families in the Arab Gulf states.

2- The Financial and Economic Implications

The Blockade contributed to the deteriorated economic status of many of the Palestinian families, in addition to the increasing in the unemployment rate, the fact that let many of the Palestinian students leave their colleges and schools in order to work to support their family.

Whenever the financial situation of many families, especially of breadwinner who works in the field of services and construction, declines, many families stop sending their children to study in universities that requires a lot of payments such as fees, money for transportation and other expenses. In addition , the financial situation of the Palestinian families led many students to look for work to support their families, and to try to finance their fees and expenses. This, therefore, made the students skip many of their classes which affected their educational attainment negatively.

Universities give different scholarship for students who have excelled in the high school or in a particular field in the university, keep Holy Quran, who are sons' of martyrs or prisoners' wives, and for those who have more siblings studying in the same university.

Universities also work on giving the students grants and loans from the Ministry of Higher Education in order to cover the students' necessities. And because of the blockade, some universities worked to mitigate fees for all students. For instance, the graduate students in Al-Aqsa University have been granted a discount of 50% to get their certificates. Due to the fact that people become no longer able to let their children study, the number of students who benefit from the grants and loans to cover their fees and costs of the study is gradually increasing.

In addition to all of that, as a kind of facility, the university makes it easier for students to pay their fees and premiums by installment rather than at once. The pay period is of four stages:

- At the end of the third week of registration.
- At the end of drag-and-drop operations.
- At the beginning of the midterm exams.
- At the beginning of the registration for the second semester.

A study prepared on the impact of the blockade on the Gaza Strip university students' ability of paying tuition fees shows an observed reduction in the students' abilities of paying tuition fees for the university where they study. This refers to the blockade as students have become unable to pay in installments, recently.

The same study also highlighted the decline in the ability of the Gaza Strip students to register and pay for the normal average of studying hours during the blockade, compared with their abilities before the blockade.

Higher Education Institutions have tried to solve the crises by establishing a Student Loan Fund of the Palestinian National Authority. According to this project, students are provided with different loans and grants to cover their fees under certain conditions. This Fund is supported by several supporters whether Palestinian, Arabian or International.

To help the students, universities are also trying to give charitable donations to their students because of the deteriorating economic situation of many of the Palestinian families that it caused by the blockade. To achieve this, the universities try to contact supporters from outside, and they did make contacts in this regard which let them come up with some successes and achievements.

The blockade of the Gaza Strip and the deteriorating economic situation of many of the families in addition to the rise of consumer culture, all led to the increase in the female education. This makes males prefer to marry undergraduate or graduate university females or even the ones who have got a job! This led the girl to adapt to the existing social reality and goes for education.

Recently, because of the bad economic situation, not only the young girls, but also a lot of housewives and old ladies register in the universities, study and graduate to apply for a job. This highlights the overlap between the social economic and educational variables.

3- Decline of Educational Achievement

The blockade on the Gaza Strip resulted in a negative effect on the economic status of the students the fact which influenced their educational achievement. In addition, the high number of graduates and the scarcity of job opportunities because of the blockade have a major negative impact on the students' concentration and perseverance.

Adding the difficulties associated with the blockade, we will notice how bad the transportations are, which let the students suffer more and more. Counting on the power cut which is a very bad problem. Blackouts leads people to use motors with their very noisy sounds which lessens the students' concentration and raises their pressure and frustration.

It is worth mentioning that the Palestinian students in the Gaza Strip originally suffer from social and economic pressures. This could be a main reason behind losing concentration while studying, memorizing the information without even understanding it only for the sake of gaining marks and paying greater attention to the future career they would have than to benefit of what they learn.

Najeh Shaheen states, "The student's desire to learning is clearly decreasing. This phenomenon exists in a very broad, weird way than one could imagine, since it is known that the Palestinian students do not care much about the university-life-experience as about the certificate in less than no time!"

The blockade , the deteriorating economic conditions and the intense competition for limited job opportunities all result in letting students focus on getting high marks in their

studying paying no attention for what they benefit. This makes students want to gain high marks by memorizing without showing their creativity and qualities.

Recently, nepotism and favoritism have been considerably used in the recruitment process, adding to that the factional affiliation that Hamas government in the Gaza Strip hires its supporters in educational functions (as Fatah did previously when it was in the lead). This way of employment led the "wrong" man be in what should be called the "right" place. As a result, the motivation of the university students lessens as well as their educational attainment because they know by heart that some unqualified people will take their places.

4- Decline in National and Value Systems

Due to the blockade and the bad economic conditions, the students tended to join some political factions not for the land's sake but for the sake of having a lot of advantages, one of which is having a job directly after graduating. This, therefore, leads to a decline in the value system of the students who know that they area source of change in the community. As a very normal result, this contributed to indulge more in the factional fanaticism and to extend the Palestinian division!

Sixth: The Palestinian Division and its Impact on Higher Education Institutions

The Palestinian-political-division affected the Higher Education Institutions in Palestine. There are two Higher Education Institutions: one in Gaza and the other in the West Bank that have no mutual, cooperative evolutionary development plan for the Palestinian higher education as a whole! And since the division reaches the educational system, it is a bad omen!

This affected the Higher Education Institutions in terms of the administrative control that members of Hamas are the ones to control these institutions. In October, 2009, they fired Zidan Abu Zuhri, president of Al-Aqsa University, and the university was controlled by the Ministry of Higher Education in the Gaza Strip, instead. Moreover, in all its institutions, Hamas try to let the majority be from the members of Hamas.

During the previous two years, an aggressive recruitment policy has been used as a way for employment at universities in addition to the ministry's assigning policy in recruitment and transportation. In 2007, the Faculty of Science and Technology in Khan-Yunis had been controlled by Hamas Government. This shows that the division still exists between the two parties even between their institutions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. By this, they show that they still believe that the governmental, educational institutions are for those in the reins of power and authority which was a reason behind preventing some academic activists from exercising their partisan, political activities as happened in Al-Aqsa University in fall, 2007.

Ibrahim Abrash, Political Science Professor in Al-Azhar University, says, "The most dangerous and worst way the parties could approach is to transfer their conflicts and differences to the educational institutions, especially universities, the thing that makes universities be a battleground without paying attention to what might that affect on the students' educational attainment and academic performance".

"The outcomes of education, in general, and of the university education, in particular, is not living up to the needs of the national, political and development requirements which requires ringing the bells of danger, and to appeal for the Palestinian leadership and all people of conscience to pay more attention to the universities, especially in the Gaza Strip", Abrash states.

Seventh: Conclusions

- Negative impact of the blockade on the Higher Education Institutions and its Multiple Sectors whether faculty, staff or students.
- The blockade resulted in declining funding, which negatively impacted the development of urban infrastructure and institutions of higher education.
- The blockade has also resulted in the decline of Scientific Research, and the weakness of the university libraries according to the sources, references, and periodicals which are necessary for the teaching process and the Scientific Research. It also negatively affected on the Higher Education Institutions' Science Labs.
- It resulted in isolating the Gaza Strip institutions from the Arab and Foreign educational institutions, in addition to the decline in participating in Arab, regional and international conferences. As a result, the Palestinian institutions are weak compared to their overseas counterparts.
- The last offensive on the Gaza Strip caused massive damage to the educational institutions' buildings whether partly or wholly which reflected negatively on the Teaching and the Research processes.
- The continual power cut on the Gaza Strip negatively affects the students for losing the ability to manage their time in a good way because of the power cut!
- The bad transportation system, for the lack of petrol and gas, also caused difficulties on the students in reaching the places of education in the suitable time.
- The Palestinian division resulted in decreasing the development of Higher Education Institutions due to lack of a national unified vision and policy.
- It's a reason behind lowering the students' educational level because of many economic, political and social reasons.
- It leads to intense competition for governmental jobs because of the job scarcity.

Eighth: Recommendations

- End the Israeli blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip, and re-open all the border crossings.
- Provide the educational institutions with adequate support and cancel funding restrictions.

- Rebuilding the Higher Education Institutions' buildings that were damaged in the last offensive on the Gaza Strip.
- The establishment of adequate buildings in higher education institutions to address the over crowding in the classroom.
- Enhance communication between the Palestinian higher education institution sat the level of the nation, as well as communicate with Arab universities, regional and international, and provide freedom of travel to participate in scientific conferences and seminars at home and abroad.
- Promoting scientific research, and the establishment of appropriate infrastructure of traditional and electronic libraries.
- Ending the state of Palestinian political division, and avoiding the higher education institutions the partisan political conflict and competition.
- Providing an adequate support to the students in order to help them pursue their studying. And mitigate the economic constraints and open recruitment based on qualifications, not party affiliation.
- Do educational studies to study the effects of the blockade on the students' motivation toward learning, and its impact on the academic level.

Appendixes

Appendix (I)

Table (1) shows the Higher Education Institutions and the number of their students in the academic year, 2010 (Al Mezan Center for Human Rights).

Institution	Region	Males	Females	Students' No.
<u>Universities</u>				
The Islamic University of Gaza	Gaza	7348	11856	19204
Al-Azhar University	Gaza	11348	7976	19324
Al-Aqsa University	Gaza	4410	9929	14339
Palestine University	Al-Zahra	945	247	1192
Gaza Women University	Gaza	-	40	40
Al-Quds Open University	Gaza	8018	5823	13841
Al Oma university	Gaza	903	155	1058
<u>University Colleges</u>				
Applied science	Gaza	4431	3874	8305
College of Science and Technology	Kan Younis	1014	601	1615
Palestine Technical College	Deir El-Balah	541	316	857
Arab Community College	Rafah	90	331	421
Palestine College of Nursing	Kan Younis	308	321	629
Islamic Da'wa College	Deir El-Balah	133	284	417
Palestine Applied Polytechnic	Gaza	26	11	73
College of Ability Development	Kan Younis	26	42	68
<u>Intermediate Colleges</u>				
College of intermediate studies- Al Azhar University	Gaza	2513	393	2906
Gaza Community College- UNRWA	Gaza	182	290	472
Gaza Community College for Tourist Studies	Gaza	64	27	91
Abd El-Mohsen Hamouda Legal Academy	BaytLahia	76	211	287
Alzaytona College for Sciences and Development	Al-Maqazi	178	39	217
Palestine Academy for Security Science	Gaza	127	0	127
Applied Future Polytechnic	Gaza	361	172	533
Namaa College Science and Technology	Jabalya	78	52	130
Institutions of Higher Education	The Gaza Strip	43156	42990	86146

Appendix (II)

Table (2) shows the classification of Higher Education Institutions in the Gaza Strip, 2010-2011, according to the Higher Education Statistical Yearbook, 2010-2011.

Institutions	Public	Governmental	Private	Others
<u>Universities</u>				
The Islamic University of Gaza	1			
Al-Azhar University	1			
Al-Aqsa University		1		
Palestine University			1	
Gaza Women University			1	
<u>University Colleges</u>				
Applied science	1			
College of Science and Technology		1		
Palestine Technical College		1		
Palestine College of Nursing/ Kan-Younis		1		
Islamic Da'wa College		1		
<u>Intermediate Colleges</u>				
Al-Aqsa College for Intermediate Studies		1		
Arab Community College/ Rafah			1	
Gaza Community College- UNRWA				1
Gaza Community College for Tourist Studies			1	
College of intermediate studies- Al Azhar University	1			

Notice: There are many other institutions not included in the directory as Al Oma University, Alzaytona College for Science and Development and Applied Future polytechnic. The objective of establishing these colleges is to Islamize education in the Gaza Strip, and create alternative educational institutions of the existing institutions that belong to the National Movement, in addition to employing their students and open the door of employment for its educational cadres. Thus, this could not be considered as a kind of educational development but a development in the political conflict.