

URGENT CALL: HUNGER STRIKE ALERT!



THE BATTLE OF BREAKING THE CHAINS END ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION

PALESTINIAN PRISONERS ON HUNGER STRIKE

There are currently 17 Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike in Israeli jails in the “Battle of Breaking the Chains.” The hunger strike is demanding an end to the practice of **administrative detention**. Administrative detention is the process by which Israel imprisons Palestinians without charge or trial for indefinitely renewable periods; there are hundreds of Palestinians held under administrative detention. No reason is revealed for their imprisonment; instead, a “secret file” produced by Israeli military intelligence serves as a pretext for their continued detention.

The first five hunger strikers: **Nidal Abu Aker, Ghassan Zawahreh, Shadi Ma’ali, Munir Abu Sharar and Badr al-Ruzza** - all held without charge under administrative detention - began refusing their meals on **20 August**. They were soon joined by Bilal al-Saifi and Suleiman Skafi. In late September, another ten Palestinian prisoners joined the strike.

One hundred more prisoners - mostly administrative detainees - have pledged to join the strike on 10 October; 250 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails have been returning their meals three times a week in unity with the strikers’ demands. Dozens of Palestinian administrative detainees are boycotting the military court sessions - sessions which simply “rubber-stamp” detention orders from the Israeli military.

The hunger strikers have been refusing food and vitamins since 20 August; they have lost massive amounts of weight, suffer constant headaches and body pains. Some are unable to walk. However, they have not been moved to

hospitals - instead, they are being held in **isolation cells in solitary confinement**, as a means of isolating them from their fellow Palestinian prisoners and attempting to coerce them to end the strike.

In their isolation cells, they have been denied cold water and access to fresh air. All of their personal belongings, including books and papers, have been confiscated, and they have been denied blankets and pillows. Several of the strikers have been denied legal visits; and they have been transferred repeatedly - and abusively - from prison to prison, isolation cell to isolation cell, in a metal vehicle, shackled to a metal chair, known as the “bosta” - a lengthy, stressful and harmful procedure.

What is administrative detention?

Administrative detention has always been a tool used by the Israeli occupation to arbitrarily imprison Palestinians. Dating from the era of the British colonial mandate over Palestine (Britain first brought administrative detention to Palestine), administrative detention is a mechanism by which the Israeli military imprisons Palestinians without charge or trial for periods of one to six months. These periods are indefinitely renewable; administrative detention orders are routinely renewed three to four times, and have been renewed for years at a time.

Administrative detainees are imprisoned based on the so-called “secret file,” prepared by Israeli military intelligence. They and their lawyers have no way to know the content, accuracy or even existence of this file. Instead, the Israeli military courts “rubber-stamp” initial administrative detention orders and their renewals, often confirming dozens of such orders in one day.

Administrative detainees can be barred from seeing a lawyer for up to 90 days. Even once they can see a lawyer, detainees’ lawyers are prohibited from accessing the “secret file.”

Israel routinely uses administrative detention against hundreds of Palestinians: students, workers, farmers, members of Palestinian Legislative Council, community organizers, and more. Far from a rare, “emergency” practice, administrative detention is standard operating procedure for the Israeli military.

Under international law, administrative detention can be used only for “imperative reasons of security” in an emergency situation, on a case-by-case basis. Israel’s use of administrative detention, on the other hand, is often used en masse, routinely and as an alternative to the military courts, especially when arrested Palestinians refuse to confess in interrogation. Israel seeks to justify its occupation of Palestinian land as a “state of emergency” since 1948 in order to arbitrarily imprison Palestinians. Like other Palestinian prisoners, administrative detainees are mostly held within Israel (1948 occupied Palestine). Like Israel’s practice of administrative detention itself, this violates the Fourth Geneva Convention. Israel’s administrative detention policy also violates the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Why a hunger strike?

The hunger strike is a method of collective or individual struggle within the prison to demand the rights of detainees. It has a long history within the Palestinian movement, where hunger strikes in the 1970s and 1980s won significant concessions in the rights of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. The hunger strike also has a long history in the movements of other oppressed and colonized peoples fighting mass imprisonment and political detention, including the Irish movement, Turkish and Kurdish political prisoners, and, more recently, prisoners held by the US at Guantanamo Bay and within the California prison system.

Because Palestinian prisoners are denied their rights, cut off from society and have little to no legal recourse, they are left to struggle with their bodies. The hunger strikes of Palestinian political prisoners like Khader Adnan and Muhammad Allan, seeking freedom at great personal risk, inspired many. In 2012, thousands of Palestinian prisoners went on hunger strike in order to win an end to the solitary confinement of 19 Palestinian leaders, including Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Secretary Ahmad Sa’adat, secure family visits for Palestinian prisoners from Gaza, and other demands for their conditions of imprisonment.

The Battle of Breaking the Chains is demanding an end to administrative detention as a policy - not only the freedom of individuals.

TAKE ACTION: WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Contact political officials in your country – members of Parliament or Congress, or the Ministry/Department of Foreign Affairs or State – and demand that they cut aid and relations with Israel on the basis of its apartheid practices, its practice of colonialism, and its numerous violations of Palestinian rights including the systematic practice of administrative detention. Demand they pressure Israel to free the hunger strikers and end administrative detention.

2. Hold a solidarity one-day hunger strike in your area. Gather in a tent or central area, bring materials about Palestinian prisoners and hold a one-day solidarity strike to raise awareness and provide support for the struggle of the prisoners and the Palestinian cause. Please email us at samidoun@samidoun.net to inform us of your action – we will publicize and share news with the prisoners.

3 Protest at the Israeli consulate or embassy in your area. Bring posters and flyers about administrative detention and Palestinian hunger strikers and hold a protest, or join a protest with this important information. Hold a community event or discussion, or include this issue in your next event about Palestine and social justice. Please email us at atsamidoun@samidoun.net to inform us of your action – we will publicize and share news with the prisoners.

4. Boycott, Divest and Sanction. Hold Israel accountable for its violations of international law. Don't buy Israeli goods, and campaign to end investments in corporations that profit from the occupation. G4S, a global security corporation, is heavily involved in providing services to Israeli prisons that jail Palestinian political prisoners – there is a global call to boycott it. Palestinian political prisoners have issued a specific call urging action on G4S. Learn more about BDS at bdsmovement.net.

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