

PALESTINIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

On Hunger Strike for Justice and Freedom

There are approximately 7,000 Palestinian political prisoners inside Israeli jails. Palestinians, living under occupation and oppression for over 68 years, have been targeted for mass imprisonment and detention by the Israeli occupation.

Nearly every Palestinian family has been touched by political imprisonment - a father, mother, son, daughter, sister, brother, cousin, uncle, aunt. Since the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967, over 800,000 Palestinians from those areas have been held as political prisoners - one out of every four Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza. Forty percent of Palestinian men in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, have spent some time in occupation jails.

Around 750 of these Palestinian prisoners are held without charge or trial in a system called "administrative detention." Introduced to Palestine by British colonizers in the early twentieth century, administrative detention is arbitrary jailing with no charges and no trial, on the basis of secret evidence. It is renewable indefinitely for repeated periods of up to six months. Palestinians held under administrative detention are not charged with any crime, nor are they brought to trial even before the Israeli occupation's rigged military courts.

Writers, scholars, journalists, students and artists are also Palestinian political prisoners. Palestinian students are frequently arrested and criminalized for participation in student politics - student election blocs are labeled as supporters of "prohibited organizations," which include most Palestinian political parties.

Isolation and solitary confinement are frequently used against Palestinian political prisoners, including hunger strikers, political leaders, and other influential prisoners. Solitary confinement and isolation have been deemed to be forms of torture by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture.

Many Palestinian prisoners have engaged in hunger strikes, demanding freedom and justice. They continue to put their bodies, health, and lives on the line daily in direct confrontation with an occupation from behind bars.

There are currently five Palestinians on hunger strike in Israeli prison: Anas Shadid, Ahmad Abu Fara, Ahmad Salatna, Samer Issawi and Munther Snobar. Three are imprisoned without charge or trial, and they are on hunger strike to demand their freedom. Two are hunger striking in order to protest the mistreatment of Palestinian women prisoners and demand adequate health care and family visits for all Palestinian prisoners.

AHMAD ABU FARA, 29, from the village of Surif near al-Khalil, launched his hunger strike on 25 September 2016. He has been imprisoned without charge or trial since a raid on his home by Israeli occupation forces on 2 August. Newly married in late 2015, his pregnant wife suffered a miscarriage after the violent raid. He has experienced severe deterioration of his health and is currently held in the Assaf Harofeh hospital.

ANAS SHADID, 19, launched his hunger strike on 25 September 2016. From the village of Dura near al-Khalil, he is a recent high school graduate. He was arrested on 1 August by Israeli occupation forces and has been imprisoned without charge or trial since his arrest under administrative detention. He has experienced severe deterioration of his health and is currently held in the Assaf Harofeh hospital.

SAMER ISSAWI, from the village of Issawiyeh near Jerusalem, is on open hunger strike since 25 October. He has previously engaged in long-term hunger strikes and, in fact, secured his freedom from detention in the past, before being targeted for re-arrest and sentencing based on secret evidence. He is on strike to end medical neglect of sick prisoners and denial of family visits for Palestinian prisoners, and that women prisoners be transferred to a location near the military courts.

MUNTHER SNOBAR, from Nablus, serving a life sentence, jointly launched his hunger strike on 25 October alongside Samer Issawi, with the same demands for prisoners' treatment.

AHMAD SALATNA, from Jenin refugee camp, began his strike on 30 October, demanding an end to his administrative detention, imprisonment without charge or trial.

TAKE ACTION!

WRITE a letter or op-ed for your local or school newspaper or blog, focusing on the stories of Palestinian prisoners.

CALL your government officials and demand they take action to sanction Israel. Call the White House at 1-202-456-1111 to demand action on Palestinian prisoners.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Apartheid Israel, including the boycott of G4S - one of the world's largest companies - for its role in Israeli prisons.

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