

HUNGER STRIKE FOR JUSTICE

The Case of Palestinian Prisoner Hassan al-Aweiwi

Palestinian prisoner **Hassan al-Aweiwi** has been on hunger strike since 2 April 2019, protesting his imprisonment without charge or trial under Israeli administrative detention.

On Thursday, 6 June, Aweiwi was transferred to a civilian hospital, Barzilai, after the severe deterioration of his health after over two months without food. He is currently being held in Ramle prison clinic - although his family and lawyers note that he has faced severe medical neglect and mistreatment at the hands of Israeli prison officials. Aweiwi, 35, has lost over 20 kilograms (40 pounds) since he launched his hunger strike.

The married father of three from al-Khalil was seized by Israeli occupation forces on 15 January 2019 and transferred to administrative detention - imprisonment without charge or trial. There are currently approximately 500 Palestinians, out of a total of 5,400 Palestinian prisoners, held under administrative detention. Detention orders can be issued for up to six months at a time and are indefinitely renewable; Palestinians have been jailed for years at a time under administrative detention.



Palestinian prisoner Hassan al-Aweiwi. He has been on hunger strike for over 2 months because he is being imprisoned by Israel without charge or trial.

Since Aweiwi launched his strike on 2 April 2019, he has been subject to numerous retaliatory measures, including throwing him in isolation, transferring him from prison to prison, denying him family visits and delaying his legal visits. The transfer process for Palestinian prisoners uses a “bosta,” a metal vehicle that is poorly ventilated and extremely hot in the summer, and “bosta” journeys often involve many stops that make the trip extremely lengthy and, indeed, torturous. His family say the frequent transfers are an attempt to force him to end his strike.

Locked away with no charge and no trial for an indefinitely renewable period: this is the reality for thousands of Palestinians over the years, including approximately 500 today (of a total of nearly 5,500 Palestinian prisoners.) This is administrative detention.

Dating from the era of the British colonial mandate over Palestine, it is the mechanism by which the Israeli military imprisons Palestinians without charge or trial. Palestinians routinely spend years at a time jailed under administrative detention orders. Israel routinely uses administrative detention against hundreds of Palestinians: students, workers, farmers, members of Palestinian Legislative Council, community organizers, and more. Under international law, administrative detention can be used only for “imperative reasons of security” in an emergency situation, on a case-by-case basis.

Far from a rare, “emergency” practice, administrative detention is standard operating procedure for the Israeli military against Palestinian civilians.

Why a hunger strike?

The hunger strike is a method of struggle within the prison to demand the rights of detainees. It has a long history within the Palestinian movement, where collective hunger strikes have 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 in US jails in Guantanamo Bay and domestically.

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 and their very lives for freedom and basic human dignity.



TAKE ACTION: HOW YOU CAN HELP

1) **Contact political officials in your country. Write letters and make phone calls** to protest the violation of Palestinian prisoners' rights. Demand your government take action to stop supporting Israeli occupation or to pressure the Israeli state to end the policies of repression of Palestinian political prisoners. In particular, demand that your political officials put pressure on Israel to end the policy of administrative detention, the imprisonment of Palestinians without charge or trial.

Call during your country's regular office hours:

- Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs Marise Payne: + 61 2 6277 7500
- Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland: +1-613-992-5234
- European Union Commissioner Federica Mogherini: +32 (0) 2 29 53516
- New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs Winston Peters: +64 4 439 8000
- United Kingdom Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt: +44 20 7008 1500
- United States President Donald Trump: 1-202-456-1111

2) **Organize or join an event or protest for the Palestinian prisoners.** You can organize an info table, rally, solidarity hunger strike, protest or action to support the prisoners. If you are already holding an event about Palestine or social justice, include solidarity with the prisoners as part of your action. Send your events and reports to samidoun@samidoun.net.

3) **Boycott, Divest and Sanction.** Join the BDS campaign to highlight the complicity of corporations like Hewlett-Packard and the continuing involvement of G4S in Israeli policing and prisons. Don't buy Israeli goods, and campaign to end investments in corporations that profit from the occupation. Build a campaign to boycott Israeli goods, impose a military embargo on Israel, or organize around the academic and cultural boycott of Israel. There are so many ways you can play an active role in helping to cut off the funds that serve to prop up Israel's colonial regime of imprisonment. Learn more about BDS at bdsmovement.net.