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PALESTINIAN PRISONER SOLIDARITY NETWORK

Free Ahmad Sa'adat: A Resource Guide Updated 23 Dec 2022

## Free Ahmad Sa'adat: A Resource Guide

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The case of Ahmad Sa'adat, Palestinian national leader, General Secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and elected member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, is the case of only one of over 5,000 Palestinian political prisoners, but it is a critically important and paradigmatic case - the case of a Palestinian leader, targeted for political "crimes," for his commitment to Palestinian resistance and refusal to compromise on the clear principles of Palestinian liberation, and for his historic and continuing role as a leader in the Palestinian prisoners' movement.

The Sa'adat case illustrates the reality of the Israeli military courts and the occupation injustice system, that it is merely another tool and mechanism of the occupation, another weapon aimed at the Palestinian people. Ahmad Sa'adat's refusal to recognize the military courts is itself representative of the steadfastness and determination of the Palestinian prisoners' movement and the entire Palestinian people, who continue to refuse and resist the occupation in all of its forms, despite its abuses, tortures, and continual aggression.

Sa'adat's case is a striking violation of prisoners' and human rights - he has been subject to imprisonment without charge, he is a prisoner of conscience, he has received an unprecedented sentence on political charges, he was for over three years subject to isolation, solitary confinement, and denial of family visits - but also of committed, determined and organized resistance, providing a clear voice in support of the complete liberation of his people and his land despite all mechanisms imposed by the occupation to separate him from his fellow prisoners and his people. Despite all of these efforts, meant to break Sa'adat's spirit, the occupation has failed miserably in this goal - just as it has failed miserably in its attempts to break the spirit of the Palestinian people through over sixty years of occupation and oppression.

Furthermore, the case of Ahmad Sa'adat illustrates precisely the forces aligned against the Palestinian people, their prisoners, and their liberation movement: the Israeli occupation and its military courts and armies; the U.S. and Britain and fellow imperialist powers, whose guards presided over Sa'adat's over four years in Palestinian Authority jails without charge at the behest of Israel; and the Palestinian Authority and its "security cooperation" with the occupation, that initially kidnapped and imprisoned Sa'adat and made his later abduction by the occupation military possible. This alliance of forces against the Palestinian people is perhaps most clearly visible in Sa'adat's case, and support for Sa'adat means confronting all of those responsible.

The case of Ahmad Sa'adat not only implicates the responsibility of international imperialism, but also inspires international solidarity. Sa'adat's case has inspired action throughout Palestine, the Arab homeland, and internationally. From Ramallah to Nablus to Gaza, from Amman to Sana'a to Beirut, from Paris to San Francisco to Barcelona, the case of Ahmad Sa'adat has sparked thousands to take action.

The following resource guide is presented by the Campaign to Free Ahmad Sa'adat in order to support your own organizing, including a backgrounder on the Sa'adat case, several of Sa'adat's statements to the military courts, and draft resolutions, actions and flyers for use in activities. You and your organization can have an important role to play in working to win freedom for Ahmad Sa'adat and his fellow Palestinian prisoners. Learn more at the website of Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network ([samidoun.net](http://samidoun.net)) and the Campaign to Free Ahmad Sa'adat ([freeahmadsaadat.org](http://freeahmadsaadat.org)), and contact us at [samidoun@samidoun.net](mailto:samidoun@samidoun.net) to plan more about how we can work together.

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## BACKGROUND

Ahmad Sa'adat is the General Secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council. One of over 5,000 Palestinian political prisoners, he was sentenced to thirty years in Israeli prisons for a range of "security-related" political offenses on December 25, 2008, over two and one-half years since he was abducted in an Israeli military raid on the Palestinian Authority Jericho prison. These charges include membership in a prohibited organization (the PFLP, of which Sa'adat is General Secretary), holding a post in a prohibited organization, and incitement, for a speech Sa'adat made following the Israeli assassination of his predecessor, Abu Ali Mustafa, in August 2001.

Sa'adat is a prisoner of conscience, targeted for imprisonment because of his political activity and in his capacity as a Palestinian leader. The systematic assassination, imprisonment and detention of Palestinian political leaders has long been a policy of the Israeli state, as reflected in the imprisonment of Sa'adat and over 10 other members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, including Marwan Barghouti, as well as Palestinian political prisoners as a group, targeted for their involvement in and commitment to the struggle for the liberation of their land and people.

Born in 1953, Sa'adat is the child of refugees expelled from their home in the village of Deir Tarif, near Ramleh, in 1948. A math teacher by training, he is married to Abla Sa'adat, herself a noted activist, and is the father of four children. Abla Sa'adat was herself arrested and detained for four months, and prevented from leaving Palestine to speak about Palestinian rights at an international conference. He has been involved in the Palestinian national movement since 1967, when he became active in the student movement. Prior to his abduction from Jericho in 2006, he had been held at various times as a political prisoner in Israeli jails, for a total of ten years. Sa'adat was elected General Secretary of the PFLP in 2001, following the Israeli assassination of then-General Secretary Abu Ali Mustafa in his office in Ramallah on August 27, 2001.

Sa'adat had been held in a Palestinian Authority prison for over four years, and, in January 2006, elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council on the Abu Ali Mustafa slate, when on March 14, 2006, the Israeli military stormed that prison at Jericho, abducting Sa'adat and five fellow prisoners and taking them to Israeli military prisons. For the entire period of Sa'adat's imprisonment in the PA jails, he had been convicted of no crime; his sentencing- in an illegitimate military court of occupation - came nearly seven years into his detention, after a trial that began after five years of PA/US/British, then Israeli, imprisonment.

This trial was, of course, a military trial, as are the trials of nearly all Palestinian political prisoners, presided over by three military judges, two of which are not required to have any legal background. These trials are based on military law, including military regulations that may be issued at any time by the Israeli military commander over the area. This military rule under occupation dates from the era of the British occupation of Palestine, in which these "emergency" military rules were adopted in order to suppress the Palestinian national movement for independence and self-determination. These military laws continue today for the same purpose - to continue a military occupation and suppress the indigenous people of Palestine's struggle for liberation and self-determination. Such military trials generally fail to uphold international

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standards for fair trials. At a more basic level, they are an illegitimate manifestation of an illegitimate system - trials that, by their very nature, can never be fair or legitimate.

Sa'adat is the child of 1948 refugees who, with six million others in Palestine, in the camps outside Palestine and in exile around the world, are denied their right to return to their homes, lands and properties and denied their right to organize, struggle and act to obtain their freedom, their return and their liberation.

### **JERICHO ASSAULT AND ABDUCTION**

On March 14, 2006, the Israeli army laid siege for twelve hours to the Palestinian prison at Jericho holding six political prisoners. Israeli bulldozers and tanks attacked the prison while the Israeli military issued threats of assassination against the prisoners. This military assault caused the death of two Palestinians, the injury of twenty-three more, and the abduction of Ahmad Sa'adat and five other political prisoners from Jericho to Zionist prisons.

For over four years, these men had been held in the Palestinian Authority prison at Jericho, under U.S. and British guards. Immediately prior to the Israeli assault on the prison, these U.S. and British guards abandoned their posts, clearing the way for the military attack. The U.S. State Department blamed Palestinians for the siege, stating that the democratically-elected Palestinian Legislative Council leadership had indicated its willingness to release these illegally-held political prisoners. Said Sa'adat in a letter to the Palestinian people after his abduction, "The Quartet [US, EU, Russia and UN] provide a cover for occupation. What happened in Jericho Prison has made the British and US governments an integral part of the conflict and forever buried any illusions in their neutrality."

Since his abduction - a blatant violation of Palestinian sovereignty - Sa'adat's trial was repeatedly postponed and delayed. Israeli Attorney General Menachem Mazuz admitted shortly following the abduction that there was insufficient evidence to indict Sa'adat in the assassination of extreme racist Israeli minister Rehavam Ze'evi in 2001, an act of retaliation for the August 2001 Israeli murder of PFLP General Secretary Abu Ali Mustafa. Instead, Sa'adat was indicted on a wide array of political charges in a hearing on March 28, 2006 at Ofer Military Base in Ramallah.

Sa'adat has consistently and repeatedly refused to recognize the legitimacy of the illegitimate court; his lawyers have petitioned for the charges to be dropped, as they are clearly politically motivated and the court itself is illegitimate. His trial was repeatedly postponed, from May 2006, to September 2006, to January 2007, to May 2007, and again to July/August 2008. With each hearing, Sa'adat's courageous refusal to recognize in any way the illegitimate court - refusing to stand for the military judges, issuing statements exposing this mockery of justice, and refusing to deal with the military courts or interrogators - stand in clear contrast to the system of occupation and oppression represented by the military courts, exposing its bankruptcy and illegitimacy.

On December 25, 2008, Sa'adat was sentenced on December 25, 2008 to thirty years in the occupation prisons for these entirely political charges. His extensive sentence, produced by an Israeli military court, was intended as a mechanism for imprisoning the resistance and the

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commitment of the Palestinian people to seek freedom, justice, liberation and self-determination. This is the highest sentence delivered in the occupation courts for a political charge.

Maher Taher, member of the Political Bureau of the PFLP, speaking on behalf of the Front in an interview with Al-Jazeera, emphasized the complicity of the Palestinian Authority in Sa'adat's abduction and imprisonment, as he had been held in PA jails for 4 years at the time, as well as the direct responsibility of the U.S. and Britain as strategic partners of the occupier, for this crime against Sa'adat and the Palestinian people..

Palestinian national political leaders from various trends strongly condemned the illegitimate court and its sentence, including the prime minister of the Gaza government, Ismail Haniyeh; the secretary-general of the Palestinian National Initiative, Mustafa Barghouti; Ahmad Bahar, acting president of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Azzam al-Ahmad, chair of the Fateh legislative bloc; and Daoud Shihab, spokesperson for Islamic Jihad, all of whom labeled the military court and the sentencing as illegal and unjust.

### **ISOLATION**

Isolation and solitary confinement have been used on a regular basis by Israeli prison authorities, despite widespread condemnation and protests by Palestinian and international groups.

"Segregation, isolation, separation, cellular, lockdown, Supermax, the hole, Secure Housing Unit. whatever the name, solitary confinement should be banned by States as a punishment or extortion technique," said Juan E. Mendez, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture, commenting in general on the use of isolation tactics on prisoners.

On March 18, 2009, Ahmad Sa'adat was suddenly transferred from Hadarim prison and to Asqelan prison, into solitary confinement. Sa'adat has been repeatedly subjected to solitary confinement and punitive measures at the behest of the Israeli regime. Sa'adat has been moved repeatedly from prison to prison, and often placed in solitary confinement or isolation.

In June 2009, Sa'adat engaged in a nine-day hunger strike against his isolation. On August 10, 2009, Sa'adat was moved from the isolation cells at Asqelan to the isolation unit at Ramon prison in the Naqab desert.

A severe set of sanctions was imposed upon Sa'adat, including denial of family visits, denial of visits to the prison canteen, and a fine, and the extension of his solitary confinement. These punishments came in addition to an earlier set of draconian sanctions directed at Sa'adat as a result of his leadership in the prisoners' movement, including denial of family messages, prohibition of cigarettes, and confiscation of all electrical appliances, newspapers and magazines.

On October 22, 2009, Sa'adat faced yet another hearing on his isolation at the Israeli military court at Bir Saba. Sa'adat once again registered his utter rejection of the Israeli military courts, and was joined by actions of solidarity and support throughout Palestine and around the world, organized by a wide array of prisoners' rights organizations. At the hearing, Sa'adat's isolation was extended by six additional months. His personal books were confiscated and he is routinely denied access to television, newspapers or any other source of information. He was denied

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family visits, including visits from his wife Abla. In the prison yard, Sa'adat was held handcuffed and in ankle shackles and allowed only one-hour of exercise/recreation. All of this had been 'justified' by the occupation authorities as 'punishment' for giving two cigarettes to another prisoner.

Sa'adat's isolation, and the isolation of 18 other Palestinian political prisoners, often influential leaders in the prisoners' movement, was extended repeatedly for six-month periods, along with the prohibition on family visits. The end of isolation and solitary confinement was a primary demand of the prisoners' movement, and was put into sharp relief, when on September 27, 2011, hundreds of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails launched a collective hunger strike, with the ending of isolation and the release of isolated prisoners into the general population as a primary demand.

Solidarity campaigns mobilized internationally in support of the prisoners' hunger strike, which was joined by Palestinian political prisoners in international prisons, including George Ibrahim Abdallah in French prison. Demonstrations took place in major European capitals, the US and Canada in support of the strike, while support tents were set up throughout Palestine and filled with solidarity strikers. This hunger strike ended on October 18, 2011 with the Wafa al-Ahrar prisoner exchange deal, which secured the release of 1,000 Palestinian prisoners; Israeli prison authorities, at the time, committed to end isolation as well - a promise that was never implemented.

From April 17-May 15, 2012, thousands of Palestinian prisoners of all political affiliations launched a massive hunger strike, called the Karameh hunger strike. Foremost among their demands was an end to the use of isolation and solitary confinement. This strike captured global attention and political power, and concluded with an agreement to return isolated Palestinian prisoners to the general population - including Sa'adat, after over three years in solitary confinement. Throughout this struggle, Sa'adat was a key leader in the hunger strikes and prison organizing and in bringing an end to isolation - a struggle that continues today, as Israeli prison authorities continue to develop mechanisms to segregate and isolate Palestinian political prisoners.

### **PA/BRITISH/US IMPRISONMENT**

On August 27, 2001, PFLP General Secretary Abu Ali Mustafa was assassinated by a missile shot from an Apache helicopter by the Israeli military as he worked in his office in Ramallah. This assassination was the latest in a long line of assassinations by the Israeli state of Palestinian political leaders, a policy that continues to this day. Following the murder of Abu Ali Mustafa, Ahmad Sa'adat was elected General Secretary of the PFLP.

Rehavam Ze'evi, the tourism minister in Ariel Sharon's Israeli government, represented the Moledet party, an extreme racist party whose program is based on the expulsion and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from all of Palestine. Ze'evi, whose long military career included involvement in the war of 1948 and the expulsion of nearly a million Palestinian refugees from their homes and lands, continued his quest to uproot the Palestinian people through the Israeli military and political system throughout his career, referring to Palestinians as "a cancer" and



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"lice." In retaliation for the murder of Abu Ali Mustafa, on October 17, 2001, fighters from the PFLP's armed wing assassinated Ze'evi in the Hyatt hotel in Jerusalem.

Israel continued its campaign of mass terror against the Palestinian people, attacking Palestinian cities and towns, including the town of Beit Rima, where the Israeli military killed nine Palestinians while purportedly searching for Sa'adat. Israel repeatedly demanded that the Palestinian Authority crack down on the PFLP and arrest its leaders and members, threatening the PA leadership if it refused to act on behalf of the Israeli military to repress the Palestinian resistance. Nonetheless, yielding to the demands of Israel, the U.S. and Britain, on January 15, 2002, Sa'adat attended a meeting with PA security under false pretenses, from which he was abducted and taken to the Muqata'a compound in Ramallah, then-Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's headquarters. In February 2002, four of Sa'adat's comrades in the PFLP, Ahed Ghoulmi, Majdi Rimawi, Hamdi Qu'ran and Basel al-Asmar, were also arrested by PA security services and brought to the Muqata'a.

In March and April of 2002, Israeli military forces laid siege to the Muqata'a, and as demanded by the United States and Great Britain as a condition for the end of Israel's siege of the Muqata'a, Sa'adat, Ghoulmi, Rimawi, Qu'ran, al-Asmar and Fuad Shoubaki would be transferred to the PA's prison at Jericho to be held as political prisoners.

On April 25, 2002, Ghoulmi, Rimawi, Qu'ran and al-Asmar were tried in an impromptu military court of the Palestinian Authority inside the besieged Muqata'a. With Israeli tanks directly outside the Muqata'a, Quran, Al-Asmar, Rimawi and Gholmi were tried and sentenced for the Ze'evi assassination. Despite their civilian status, the four were tried before a military court presided over by Brigadier-General Ribhi Arafat, who had no legal standing to act as a judge. They were not allowed to have attorneys or proper legal defense in a trial that took a total of two hours. No evidence, no confessions and no statements were received in order to convict the four; all were found guilty and the verdicts immediately ratified by PA President Yasser Arafat, and the four were given no right to appeal the verdicts.

Ahmad Sa'adat was never charged nor tried for any crime. After the sentencing, the four were transferred on May 1, 2002, with the uncharged and untried Sa'adat, to Jericho Prison, ostensibly under the control of the PA, but subject to the guardianship of United States and British forces. On May 2, 2002, Israeli forces withdrew from the Muqata'a. The director of the US/British "supervision" of the prisoners at Jericho Prison formerly ran the infamous Maze Detention Center for Britain in the occupied North of Ireland. The prisoners were not subject to Palestinian sovereignty and authority, but rather to the conditions and demands of the United States and Great Britain. Sa'adat and his comrades were held under difficult conditions in Jericho prison, often secluded from one another and not allowed to communicate, denied access to newspapers, books, recreation and family and other visits. Water and electricity in their cells have been turned off, and numerous other punitive measures were implemented against them by the British and U.S. guards "monitoring" the prison. In response, Sa'adat and his comrades have engaged in two hunger strikes, demanding an end to inhumane treatment and their immediate release.

The Palestinian High Court of Justice, the highest Palestinian judicial body, ruled on June 3, 2002 that Sa'adat should be released immediately. Numerous Palestinian and international

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human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, called for the release of Sa'adat and the implementation of Palestinian and international law. Nevertheless, Sa'adat was never released; the PA refused to comply with the orders of its own judiciary, the U.S., Britain, and Israel demanded he remain held as a political prisoner, and the PA complied with their demands. While Sa'adat was imprisoned in Jericho, on August 20, 2002, the Israeli military assassinated his brother Mohammed, illustrating the continuing campaign of assassination and murder on the part of the Israeli regime. Sa'adat - and his fellow political prisoners - remained in Jericho prison in 2006, until the Israeli siege on the prison.

### **PALESTINIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS**

There are, today, over 5,500 Palestinian political prisoners held in Israeli jails. Palestinians, living under occupation and oppression for over 65 years, have been targeted relentlessly for imprisonment and detention for that time. Since the extension of the occupation of Palestine to the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, over 800,000 Palestinians have been taken prisoner - one out of every four Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza. Forty percent of male Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have spent time in jail as a political prisoner, or held under administrative detention - arbitrary detention without charge. The effects of political imprisonment on Palestinian society have, thus, been massive and vast.

Palestinian political prisoners are often activists working to end the occupation of their land and the oppression of their people. In 1948, 78% of historic Palestine was conquered by Zionist armies - armies composed of Europeans who sought to establish an ethnically and religiously exclusive state on the land of Palestinian Arabs. Nearly one million Palestinians were made refugees, who have continued to struggle to attain their right to return to their homes and lands ever since. In 1967, the remaining 22% of Palestine - the West Bank and the Gaza Strip - were invaded and seized by Zionist armies, now identified as the army of the state of Israel. Many Palestinians have been working to end this brutal military occupation, obtain the return of the refugees, and liberate the land of Palestine. For that activity, they have been targeted by the occupying forces for detention and imprisonment.

Palestinian political prisoners represent every major Palestinian political organization. Over 40 percent of the elected members of the Palestinian Legislative Council have been imprisoned since the 2006 PLC elections. There are currently over 450 Palestinians in administrative detention - arbitrary detention without charge or trial, renewable for an unlimited number of six-month terms. Among those is Khalida Jarrar, leading Palestinian leftist and feminist, who has been jailed since July 2017 without charge or trial. These prisoners are not held because they are charged with traditional crimes, disturbing their communities or hurting their families. They are held because they, as Palestinians, organized, acted, or fought for the freedom of their land.

Palestinians' arrest and detention are covered by Israeli military regulations; there are over 1500 of these regulations at any given time, which can be altered at any time by the Israeli military commander of the region creating new regulations to which Palestinians must adhere -or be subject to arrest, detention and imprisonment. Prisoners are transferred to Israeli facilities for holding, detention and sentencing.



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Although it is a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention for these prisoners to be transported outside the parts of Palestine occupied in 1967 -the West Bank and Gaza - they are often transferred to the parts of Palestine occupied in 1948 - Israel - as 21 of 24 Israeli detention facilities are within those 1948 lines. Palestinian attorneys and family members from the West Bank and Gaza attempting to visit their clients and loved ones in prison are often turned back from the border and prohibited entry.

Because these prisoners are often extensively involved in activism and organizing, despite the horrid conditions of detention, Palestinian political prisoners have become a highly organized group, operating prisoners' associations, political organizations within the prisons and representative committees, and engaging in protests and hunger strikes that have drawn the attention of the world to their cause. Their voice within the Palestinian national movement is honored for its clarity, and for the sacrifices these prisoners have made for the freedom of their people and the liberation of their land.

Palestinian prisoners are often arrested in mass arrest campaigns; the Israeli military admits to arresting hundreds Palestinians on a monthly basis. Entire male populations of villages or neighborhoods may be rounded up and arrested. The use of "moderate physical pressure" in Israeli interrogations is accepted, legal and common. Legalized torture in Israeli jails includes the use of shortshackling, "stress positions" - painful positions in which a prisoner is shackled for periods of time, beatings and squeezing of handcuffs, as well as sleep deprivation, exposure to temperature extremes for extended periods of time, humiliation and threats, and many other documented tactics of abuse. In June 2003, the Palestinian Prisoners' Society estimated that 90% of Palestinian detainees were tortured while in Israeli custody, and confessions and information extracted through torture are admissible in Israeli military courts.

There are, at present, 53 Palestinian women prisoners held in Israeli jails, including Khalida Jarrar. Female prisoners who give birth find their babies imprisoned with them until the child turns two, when he or she is released to family on the outside, and pregnant female prisoners are handcuffed to their beds during labor and birth. Thousands of Palestinian children have been detained since 2000, and there are 230 imprisoned Palestinians under 18 at the present time, including 41 under the age of 16.

The imprisonment of Palestinian political prisoners - some of the strongest organizers, activists and leaders of Palestinian society - is a deeply felt wound in the Palestinian community. The freedom of these prisoners, imprisoned because of their desire to see their homeland free, is a necessary part of achieving justice for the Palestinian people.

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## AHMAD SA'ADAT BIOGRAPHICAL TIMELINE

**1953** - Born in al-Bira, to 1948 refugees from the destroyed village of Dayr Tarif (near al-Ramleh).

**1967** - Became a student activist following the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in the PFLP-led Palestine Student Union.

**1969** - Formally joined the PFLP, attracted by its combination of Marxism-Leninism (which he felt most suitable for the son of a refugee peasant family) with traditional pan-Arab nationalism.

**Feb 1969** - First arrested by Israel for PFLP activities; received 3 months detention. Arrested again in 1970 (detained for 28 months), 1973 (detained for 10 months), 1975 (held for 45 days). Credits his early years in prison with giving him the opportunity to advance his understanding of Marxist theory and consolidating his commitment to the PFLP.

**1975** - Graduated from the UNRWA Teachers Training College in Ramallah, specializing in Mathematics.

**1976** - Rearrested by the Israelis and imprisoned for four years.

**Apr 1981** - Elected to the Central Committee of the PFLP.

**1989** - Arrested and held in administrative detention for 9 months.

**1992** - Arrested and held in administrative detention for 13 months.

**Mar 1993** - Elected to the Politburo of the PFLP while still in administrative detention, reportedly in recognition of his education and organizing activities with other detainees.

**1993** - Released from administrative detention, but declared a "wanted person" liable to re-arrest, shortly after release.

**1994** - Elected leader of the PFLP in the West Bank.

**1995** - Arrested by the PA and briefly detained in a sweep of PFLP members, under Israeli pressure.

**Mar 1996** - Briefly detained without charge again by the PA in a sweep of known activists.

**Dec 1996** - Arrested by the PA in a roundup of PFLP members on the West Bank, following a PFLP attack on Israeli settlers in Beit-El/Surda on 11 December. Released without charge on 27 February 1997 after conducting a hunger strike, the PA fearing the consequences if he should die in jail. He collapsed hours after release, and spent several days comatose and on a respirator in Ramallah Hospital.

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**2000** - George Habash steps down as General Secretary of the PFLP, at the party's Sixth National Conference. Replaced by Mustafa Zibri (Abu Ali Mustafa), a long-time PFLP leader based in Damascus.

**27 Aug 2001** - Abu Ali Mustafa assassinated when an Israeli helicopter fired rockets at his office in the West Bank town of Ramallah.

**3 Oct 2001** - Ahmad Sa'adat elected Secretary-General of the PFLP. Sa'adat declares at his inaugural press conference that the goals of the Palestinian people are "our right of return, and our independence, with Jerusalem as the capital" He also vows to avenge the assassination of Abu Ali Mustafa.

**17 Oct 2001** - Four members of the PFLP assassinate the far-right Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Zeevi. (Zeevi is known as a supporter of the forced expulsion of Palestinians and as a proponent of "targetted assassinations". His assassination is a popular move among militants, and reinvigorates support for the PFLP). Israel accuses Sa'adat of having ordered the assassination.

**22 Oct 2001** - The PA condemns the killing of Zeevi as contrary to wider Palestinian interests as it gives Israel an excuse to take military action in the Occupied Territories. Jibril Rajoub, head of the West Bank Preventative Security Service, outlaws the military wing of the PFLP - the Martyr Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades - and issues an ultimatum to Ahmad Sa'adat to turn himself in or face arrest.

**24 Oct 2001** - IOF attacks the West Bank village of Beit Rima, apparently in an unsuccessful attempt to capture Sa'adat, shooting dead nine Palestinians including 5 local policemen sleeping in an olive grove.

**15 Jan 2002** - Sa'adat is arrested by Palestinian special forces after being lured to a meeting in a Ramallah hotel with PA Intelligence chief Tawfiq Tirawi. The PFLP condemns the PA for caving to U.S. and Israeli pressure, and putting its own survival ahead of the national consensus by arresting the head of a PLO faction. Its military wing warns that it will kill Arafat aides if Sa'adat is not released. PFLP supporters protest the arrest in the streets of Ramallah, Gaza City and Bethlehem.

**2 Feb 2002** - The PFLP's politburo announces that the movement will suspend its participation in the PLO Executive Committee until Sa'adat is released.

**21 Feb 2002** - The PA's General Intelligence Services capture in Nablus the cell of the Martyr Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades believed responsible for the assassination of Zeevi. They are held with Sa'adat at Arafat's Ramallah compound.

**Mar-Apr 2002** - Sa'adat besieged with Arafat in the Muqata by the IOF, beginning 29 March.

**29 Apr 2002** - Under heavy U.S. pressure, Arafat accepts a deal to end the siege of his compound. The terms of the deal are not made public but it is apparent that Israel has agreed to lift the siege on Arafat in return for the PA agreeing to imprison under international supervision

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Ahmad Sa'adat, the four PFLP members accused of killing Zeevi (Basel al-Asmar, 'Ahed Abu Ghalma, Majdi al-Rimawi and Hamdi Qar'an), and Fuad Shubaki - the PA official accused of organising the Karine A weapons shipment. The four PFLP members are cursorily tried by a military tribunal inside the Muqata, and sentenced to terms up to 18 years' imprisonment for killing Zeevi. Arafat rules that Sa'adat is a political leader, not a military leader, and so his case must be decided by the Palestinian judiciary.

**1 May 2002** - All six are transferred to Jericho Prison on the evening of 1 May, where they are nominally under the control of the P.A. but actually guarded by U.S. and British monitors. Arafat is widely criticised in the Occupied Territories for winning his own freedom at the expense of Sa'adat's.

**2 May 2002** - IDF withdraws from the Muqata.

**3 Jun 2002** - The Palestinian High Court of Justice in Gaza rules that there is no evidence linking Sa'adat to the assassination of Zeevi, and no legal grounds for his continuing detention. It orders his immediate release from jail. Ra'anana Gissin, an Israeli government spokesperson, implies that if the PA releases Sa'adat, he will be assassinated, saying "if he is not brought to justice, we will bring justice to him..."

**4 Jun 2002** - The Palestinian Cabinet declines to implement the High Court ruling, ostensibly because it fears that Sa'adat will be assassinated if released. (More realistically, it is probably because releasing Sa'adat will contravene the terms of the 29 Apr agreement that removed the Israelis from the Muqata).

**13 Jun 2002** - Amnesty International calls for the PA to respect the finding of the High Court and release Sa'adat immediately, and for Israel to guarantee it will not take extrajudicial measures against him. Palestinian NGO's call upon Arafat to uphold the rule of law. Sa'adat remains in jail.

**20 Aug 2002** - Israeli Special Forces troops assassinate Sa'adat's younger brother, Mohammed, a member of the PFLP, at his home near Ramallah.

**26 Aug 2002** - Sa'adat begins a 72-hour hunger strike to protest his continued detention.

**14 Jan 2003** - In a letter from prison, Sa'adat expresses his opposition to the Road Map, on the grounds that it is designed solely to provide security for Israel's occupation and criminalize opposition to it as terrorism.

**23 Jan 2003** - Sa'adat's wife, Abla, is arrested by Israeli troops at the Allenby Bridge border crossing, and prevented from addressing the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, where she was a scheduled speaker.

**15 Mar 2005** - PA President Mahmoud Abbas suggests that Sa'adat will be released when the PA resumes security control of Jericho later that month. Other PA officials deny they have any such intention, and Sa'adat himself doubts whether the PA even has the power to release him.

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**23 Nov 2005** - The PFLP announces that Sa'adat will run in the PLC elections of Jan 2006, in the hope that this will raise awareness of his imprisonment and bring pressure to bear for his release.

**14 Mar 2006** - Ahmad Sa'adat was arrested by the Israeli Occupation Forces from the Jericho Prison with hundreds of other political prisoners after the prison was attacked by the IOF.

**25 Dec 2008** - Ahmad Sa'adat was sentenced to thirty years in prison by the illegitimate Zionist military court.

**June 2009** - Ahmad Sa'adat goes on nine day hunger strike in protest of isolation and solitary confinement.

**October 22, 2009** - Ahmad Sa'adat sentenced to an additional six months of isolation by Zionist military courts, after over 206 days of isolation.

**September-October 2011** - Ahmad Sa'adat and hundreds of Palestinian prisoners participate in hunger strike demanding an end to isolation and solitary confinement

**April 17, 2012** - Prisoners' Day 2012, in which over 2500 Palestinian prisoners began an open ended hunger strike demanding an end to isolation, visits for Gaza prisoners, and an end to the "Shalit laws"

**May 29, 2012** - Ahmad Sa'adat is finally released from solitary confinement and moved from Ramon prison to Shata prison and its general population.

**October 2014** - Ahmad Sa'adat was denied family visits for three months. This denial was later extended for three additional months; no reason was given.

**July 2015** - Ahmad Sa'adat and his comrades were attacked in Nafha prison by Israeli prison guards, sparking Palestinian and international protests.

**July 2016** - Sa'adat joins the collective rolling hunger strike in support of Palestinian prisoner Bilal Kayed, who engaged in a 71-day hunger strike to win his freedom after he was arbitrarily ordered to six months in administrative detention after completing his 14.5-year sentence.

**May 2017** - Ahmad Sa'adat joins the mass #DignityStrike for basic human rights in Israeli prisons and is transferred to Ohli Kedar prison in retaliation

**September 2017** - Sa'adat issues a letter to revolutionary Arab prisoner Georges Abdallah, jailed in France for 34 years, urging his liberation.

**September 2018** - Sa'adat leads message of solidarity from Palestinian political prisoners of the PFLP to U.S. prisoners engaged in a series of strikes and protests.



# Free Ahmad Sa'adat: A Resource Guide

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## STATEMENTS OF AHMAD SA'ADAT

The following statements of Ahmad Sa'adat were issued as messages to the Palestinian and Arab people and international progressive forces, confronting the Israeli military courts and calling for action. Larger collections of Sa'adat's statements, articles, and interviews are available at the website of Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, [www.samidoun.net](http://www.samidoun.net), and the Campaign to Free Ahmad Sa'adat, at [www.freeahmadsaadat.org](http://www.freeahmadsaadat.org). We present these statements to introduce the thoughts and vision of Sa'adat as a Palestinian national leader and a voice of the Palestinian prisoners and the Palestinian people.

**I. Ahmad Saadat, imprisoned PFLP leader  
January 14, 2007, during his trial at Ofer military base in occupied Palestine  
The following is a complete text of his court statement:**

This trial cannot be separated from the process of the historical struggle in Palestine that continues today between the Zionist Movement and the Palestinian people, a struggle that centers on Palestinian land, history, civilization, culture and identity. Therefore, any attempt to overlook this reality as we deal with the repercussions of the conflict would be an arbitrary attempt against facts and reason. An arbitrary judgment by the arrogant oppressors, those that try to subdue their Palestinian counterparts by using the systems of occupation that control the land in said conflict.

And if the function of any judicial apparatus is to obtain justice, then any honest, legal and ethical practice should allow arbitration by an independent authority and by laws that concur with international legality. And, international legality and its legislative organism [the United Nations], along with the whole of resolutions adopted by that body, did not legalize your occupation; it pressed to put an end to its status and to eliminate its consequences. Also, when it recognized Israel as a state, the introduction of the resolution of recognition established, as a condition, the return of the Palestinian refugees that were forced into exile. To this day, this condition has not been fulfilled; in addition, the conventions passed by the UN endorse the right of our people to resist the occupation, as a means to obtain national independence and to practice its right to self-determination.

As for your judicial apparatus, which is where this court comes from: it is one of the instruments of the occupation whose function is to give the cover of legal legitimacy to the crimes of the occupation, in addition to consecrating its systems and allowing the imposition of these systems on our people through force.

This judicial apparatus also supports the administration of this occupation - which is the worst form of state-organized terrorism - as if you were in a permanent state of self-defense. The legitimate resistance of our people is seen as if it were terrorism that must be combated and liquidated and judgment is placed upon those that practice or support it. And in the face of this contradiction between two logics, there would have to be a conviction.

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I do not find myself obligated to submit to you the pages of international law nor those of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in order to describe the situation, since a witness already exists among you, one who is a leader of the Labor Party that founded your state and who has already served as witness many years ago. This leader described the exceptional international laws legislated by the British occupation in 1945 as "worse than Nazi laws" and added: "It is true that the Nazis have committed crimes; nonetheless, they did not come to legislate for these crimes." Seeing as your court, like the list of accusations, is based on said laws and places the occupation and the particular accusers as the issuers of the conviction, perhaps indeed this is not a conviction?

Based on what has already been said, I consider your judgment against the combatants of our people as a crime and as a prolongation of the further crimes committed against the sons and daughters of our people, including the expropriation of their lands, the confiscation of their freedom and the assassinations of their children, women, elderly and political leadership.

Also crimes are the judgments against their fighters and leaders, like the assassinations of Abu Ali Mustafa, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and Yasser Arafat; and the detentions of ministers and legislators democratically chosen in elections legitimized by the international community, which had praised their transparency, honesty and freedom and which were approved, at that time, by your government. The crimes referred to continue to be committed, and it is for that reason that we urge the sponsor of international legality to stop them, to place the occupation and its leaders in front of an international court of justice as 'criminals of war.'

But most importantly, and which is even worse, the conduct of your successive governments continues to insist on practicing a failed logic in order to impose a solution, instead of looking for a political resolution, based on international legality, of a chronic conflict that has lasted for over a century. This way would open up a democratic, civilized, and humane path toward an end to the conflict. The Israeli leadership is based on the exploitation of the imbalance of international forces favorable to Israeli military interests, so that Israel continually resorts to the language of arrogance and pride as a way to try to eliminate a conflict that gains vitality at the base of objective historic realities.

And so, this leadership has tried to hijack any attempt or movement to resolve the conflict peacefully and through political means, demonstrating its predisposition to reject any initiative toward building a balanced political project that reflects international resolutions. In this way, the French-Spanish-Italian initiative to facilitate an international conference was rejected even before any attempts to delimit its functions. This policy may correspond to the interests of this or that North American leadership or administration, but it does not serve the slogans that the Israeli leadership tries to sell to the Jewish population of Palestine and to the peoples of the world, with reference to the theme of security and the fight against terrorism. Because security can never be obtained in an area where there is a conflict between the military machinery and brutality of an occupying force and the people whose land is occupied.

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Security cannot be achieved if not through peace based on an objective look at the realities of the conflict, and this peace then begins to put an end to the occupation and to recognize the national rights of an occupied people. It begins with respect for international law, and not through treating the occupation as if it were above the law, reverting to the logic of arrogance and pride, represented by the quote: "That what Mussolini thinks, is truth," which fosters the cycle of conflict. Your government will be responsible for the lives of the people that will waste away and for the loss of personal, social, and economic stability on both sides of the conflict. This reality should compel the Jews in Palestine and the peoples of the world that aspire to promote justice and peace, to understand the causes and impulses of this policy.

We understand, with certainty, that the reasons for the policy of occupation are not based on political ignorance, or on fear of the future, or to preserve the security of the Jews (like some suggest). What moves the policies of your government is the purpose decided for Israel by imperialism. This purpose converts the slogans raised by the Israeli leadership for the Jewish masses into deceitful slogans, and chooses as its logic, not just the justification for crimes of the occupation, but also the policy of racial discrimination practiced against the masses of our people in the parts of Palestine occupied in 1948. This discrimination is a characteristic that, given their distinct cultures, does not exclude the Oriental Jewish community or the Jewish immigrants originating from Africa and Ethiopia especially. The top of the political pyramid in Israel was always occupied by those in favor of the interests of a handful of local and international Zionist capitalists, allied with the imperialist monopoly companies of the world that today manage and guide the policies of the U.S. and Israel. The peace, security, democracy and welfare for the Jews in Palestine, besides being already exhausted slogans, are no more than ingredients for the imposition of the U.S. imperialist project in the 'Greater' or the 'New' Middle East, as Shimon Peres calls it. The members of the extremes of international imperialist globalization, with the U.S. as their head, now do not even deny this or try to cover it up.

Based on all that I have said, and in defense of the justice of our cause and in defense of the legitimate struggle of our people against the occupation, I refuse to recognize the legitimacy of your court or to legitimize your occupation or to stand before either of these. Because what you call a list of accusations and 'security infractions' are in reality my patriotic duties, "whether they were effective or not," and would have to be framed within the context of the general duty of resistance against occupation.

At the same time, and as the General Secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, I would like to reaffirm my pride in belonging to the Palestinian Revolutionary Movement and to the extensions of this movement in the regional, national and international planes that form the components of the international movement against the imperialist system of globalization. This is the leading framework of the peoples of the world and their oppressed social classes that struggle for freedom, democracy, socialism, global progress, the just distribution of wealth, equality among peoples and peace - rejecting repression and the concept of imperialist freedom based on plunder, injustice and racial discrimination. This movement supports the construction of a global, humanist and progressive culture and civilization in order to return to man his humanity and to open up to him the path toward free development.

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I am proud to be a combatant fighting to end the Israeli occupation, to achieve national independence, to guarantee the Return of our people and to build the necessary mechanisms that drive a democratic solution to the conflict in Palestine. A solution capable of obtaining a permanent peace for all the population of Palestine, be they Arab or non-Arab. A solution capable of achieving historical reconciliation, equality and impartiality, as much in duties as in rights, within the framework of one single democratic state sustained by a system that detests all forms of discrimination based on religion, nationalism, ethnicity, social class or sexual orientation.

To close, it may be that this court would not wish to listen to this position; it may consider this position as being outside the framework of its functions; to maintain a theory within a certain narrow perspective. However, my position is pressured with logic, the fundamentals of the conflict and its objective causes; as the simple solution is that which deals with the causes, rather than the results. And before this fundamental counter-position, I would like to end my statement by saying the following: This is your court and you possess the force to celebrate the trial and convict me on the basis of your lists of accusations, the public one and the secret one, and you can dictate a sentence prepared by the political and security apparatuses that are behind this trial.

But I too possess a will obtained from the justice of our cause and the determination of our people to reject any decision from this 'kangaroo court,' and to preserve a logical and cohesive balance, and to continue my determination to resist your occupation alongside the sons and daughters of our people, in spite of the limited space that you impose on my already-limited movements as a 'prisoner for freedom '

### **II. Ahmad Sa'adat statement before sentencing Ofer military base, occupied Palestine December 25, 2008**

To start, I do not stand to defend myself in front of your court. I have already confirmed that I do not recognize the legitimacy of this court as it is an extension of the illegal occupation under international law, and as well as the legitimacy of our people's right to resist occupation, and that this court is based on the British emergency laws of 1945 about which one of the leaders of the Zionist Labor Party said after their approval, It is one of the worst of the Nazi laws. He added, "It is true that the Nazi crimes committed did not reach the degree of crime of this legislation."

So I stand to defend my people and their legitimate right to national independence and self-determination and return. These rights are guaranteed by international law and humanitarian law and the resolutions of the United Nations, as well as the most recent recommendations of the Hague Tribunal on the wall.

I defend the right of our people to peace and stability not only in this region, but also in the whole world. Security and stability can never be achieved in Palestine or in the region and the world as long as there is a policy based on the logic of the occupation and imposition of things on people, whether by force through military invasion or occupation, as in Palestine.

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I stand before this court again today, as a mechanism for the suppression of our people and a tool of oppression, that is unable to end the resistance and is an example of the inability of the occupation and its policies imposed on the peoples to do so. If you review the files of the prisoners of the Zionist occupation of Palestine, you will find that many of the prisoners are held a second time or a third time, because this mechanism has failed to deter our people or our activists fighting for our rights.

This, like many other examples of the failure of the occupation and its tools to suppress of our people and abolish our resistance, and these courts, will remain as long as the occupation exists and will also remain in the resistance of our people.

The existing policy of the occupation and the logic of imposing by force will not bring security to Israel or other countries engaged in occupation. The main route to achieve security, stability and peace in the region is to end the occupation and the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy for the Palestinian cause, to provide a climate in which a democratic, peaceful and humane solution to the Palestinian crisis and the Arab-Zionist conflict is established from the roots is the only way to end violence and bloodshed.

Finally, I have already stressed in my previous statements from the so-called indictment, to the trial that has been formulated, and now reiterate the same position after your court concluded, that this is one-sided and farcical way to achieve its resolution under a mere image of a "court." The convictions were known in advance, and pre-determined by the terms of the political and security mechanism, which is made "legitimate" by the court.

The essence of my position is that I am proud of the Palestinian people and their political and national resistance and their just struggle to achieve their national rights and also I am proud of the trust given me by the Central Committee of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, by electing me as Secretary-General, and I'm sorry that I have not yet been able to fully perform my duties, first: because of the detention of the Palestinian Authority and the loss of my freedoms to work for more than four years, and second because of this abduction, in which more than one party - the U.S., Britain and the Palestinian Authority - were complicit; and notwithstanding anything that could hamper you or force you, you cannot stop the struggle, along with my people, in whatever space of movement.

Long live the struggle of the Palestinian people

### **III. Sa'adat issues letter from isolation cell calling for action for prisoners November 9, 2009**

Ahmad Sa'adat, imprisoned Palestinian national leader, General Secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Palestinian Legislative Council member, issued a letter from his isolation cell in response to the international day of action on October 22, 2009 and the efforts of political, social, legal and media organizations in solidarity with Sa'adat and all Palestinian prisoners, particularly those confronting isolation in the jails of the occupier, calling for ongoing actions against isolation and in support of the prisoners.

Sa'adat's letter expressed his support for these actions and said:



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"The policy of isolation is a flagrant violation of international humanitarian and human rights law, and the law of prohibition of torture. This policy is also a systematic practice of killing and destruction of the human personality, and in some cases, a mechanism for carrying out a living death sentence against freedom fighters, particularly those who have served many long years in isolation, such as Hassan Salameh, Jamal Abu Hija, Ibrahim Hamed, Ahmed al-Maghrabi, Abdullah al-Barghouthi and others.

"The policy of isolation, this death penalty imposed upon prisoners and detainees, are not based on any legal grounds. It is a decision of the occupation intelligence services under a secret file that may be seen by nobody but for the judge, who has never denied any decision to isolate a prisoner or made clear any mechanism for the use of isolation.

"The policy of isolation targets the essence of human rights and humanity - the right to social relationships - through isolation from the surrounding environment, and means deprivation of even the minimal rights under the laws of the Israeli Prisons Administration, including access to newspapers, books and clothes. It is collective punishment of prisoners' families as well, as every decision to isolate a prisoner is accompanied by a 3 month prohibition on family visits."

Sa'adat concluded his letter with a call: "The struggle of the prisoners for freedom is part and parcel of the ongoing struggle of our people which will end only with the defeat of occupation across all of the soil of Palestine. I call upon all institutions, activists and organizations to develop an action plan to support the struggle of prisoners in general, and, in particular, the prisoners suffering in isolation."

#### **IV. Ahmad Sa'adat's message to the Landless Workers' Movement congress in Brazil February 3, 2014**

Dear comrades,

I salute you and convey to you the greetings of the comrades in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and I look forward to the great success of your conference that will strengthen your march along the road, and build your role and presence, in the deepening of democratic and socialist transformation in your beloved country and throughout your continent. You carry the legacy of a rich history of revolutionary experience, sanctified with the blood and suffering of great leaders: Bolivar, Zapata, Salvador Allende, Fidel Castro, and the list goes on.

Dear comrades,

The systematic imperialist war on the oppressed peoples and classes continues, while at the same time forces of democracy and socialism continue to achieve many concrete accomplishments in your continent. It is clear that Latin America will never again be the "back yard" for U.S. imperialism, and your rich experience is a foundation for an international revolutionary alliance that works to manifest a concrete revolutionary vision, and which pushes to strengthen the unity of all forces of the camp of world revolution, on the road to defeat imperialism and build a new revolutionary world that establishes relationships between peoples on the basis of peace, equality, parity and equitable distribution.

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Perhaps one of the repercussions of your achievements has been felt in the Arab region, where the people of our nation struggle to achieve revolutionary democratic change and break the shackles of political, economic and cultural imperialism. Despite attempts to re-shuffle the cards and block the path of popular democratic movements, and despite their success in Libya and partially in Syria in entering their people into the labyrinth of sectarian and civil war; the masses of the people in Tunisia and Egypt refuse to be pushed aside. In Tunisia, the alliance of democratic and left-wing forces pushed the troika government led by the Ennahda Movement to recognize their demands, including the adoption of the draft constitution and preparing for general elections amid many positive indicators that indicate that coalition of left and democratic forces may achieve advanced results in these elections in order to safeguard the achievements of the revolution.

In Egypt, young people who were from the beginning the main force of the revolution, toppled the government of the Muslim Brotherhood after their attempts to impose their agenda and dominate the process of change. However, we do not express our support for the actions of the army or the military resolution of the conflict, and there are many negative factors that have arisen, in particular the pivoting between right-wing forces: the army and the remnants of the old regime and the abuses of the right-wing Muslim Brotherhood and other forces. We hope that Egypt will emerge from this period and toward a transition and transfer of power to a democratic government elected by the people.

In Palestine, the aggression continues, which combines traditional forms of colonial violence and the apartheid-style practice of the white minority regime in South Africa before its liberation, and which deeply affects the masses of our people wherever they are located, whether through the seizure of land and the expulsion of its rightful owners or the division of the occupied territories into isolated areas. At the same time, the violence of occupation attempts to destroy all of our initiatives to build Palestinian national unity, while the parasitic bourgeoisie bet on the path of negotiations that they have tried for over two decades, producing nothing but the current crisis experienced by our people. In order to confront this reality, our front is struggling to emerge from Palestinian internal division, restore unity, and build the institutions and mechanisms of our people - in particular, to rebuild the militant structures of the PLO and the unity of our people inside and outside Palestine. Furthermore, we are struggling to build a national democratic front to accommodate a broad spectrum of political and social forces under a national program of struggle that adheres to resistance in all of its forms.

The enemy's violence ensures that we must confirm our commitment to the resistance option as it closes all doors to lead to a political solution of the conflict. Our vision and strategy, as the Popular Front, to resolve the conflict in Palestine, is the dismantling of the Zionist racist colonial project and building a democratic state, one state on the entire land of Palestine, governed by a democratic system that rejects all forms of discrimination on the basis of color, race, nationality or religion and builds relationships among the inhabitants of Palestine, Arabs and Jews, on the basis of citizenship and equality in rights and responsibilities.

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However, we also work with the rest of the national and Islamic forces on the basis of the common program of the rights of our people to return, self-determination, and to establish their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital on all territories occupied in 1967 and see this as an event, which if achieved, could lead in the direction of the completion of the democratic solution through a comprehensive struggle to establish one democratic state.

Dear comrades,

In the past months, our Front completed its Seventh Conference and confirmed its decisions on the need to consolidate national unity and to build our struggle on the class, Palestinian, Arab and international fronts. The Front also elected its leadership, with a rate of renewal exceeding 70% at all levels of leadership, which requires us to advance and respond to the tasks before us and before our people.

Dear comrades,

Exacerbated by the general crisis of capitalism, and the tangible achievements of the forces of world revolution which we see clearly in your continent, these achievements present a new model of distinctive democratic and socialist transformation. This should prompt all international revolutionary forces to promote unity and reformulation of our theories of international revolution and building mechanisms of internationalist leadership. I am confident that we will achieve a transformation from capitalism to socialism through the new-democratic revolution and political transition phase, and I am confident that this victory will be one for all oppressed classes and peoples. If the dawn of the new world does not come today, then it will come tomorrow. Congratulations to your conference and we stand hand in hand with you, fists raised to the highest level to hit every imperial castle.

Victory is inevitable

Ahmad Sa'adat  
Secretary-General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine  
Gilboa Zionist Prison

### **V. Public Letter from Ahmad Sa'adat to Georges Ibrahim Abdallah September 2017**

Public Letter from Ahmad Sa'adat to Georges Ibrahim Abdallah

Dear comrade,

I send my warm greetings to you, with the most beautiful words and sincere declarations of pride, respect and appreciation, in my name and in the name of my comrades in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine prison organization. These sincere words reflect our unity of thought and common suffering in the face of the tools of oppression and our common struggle for a better world in which the people regain their stolen humanity.

Dear comrade,

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I feel pain when you feel pain, and you are always a source of great pride and respect. From your principled steadfastness through decades in prison, we build our determination, our will and our intellectual conviction; from your head held high, always accelerating our steps to become nearer to the sun of truth and liberation, with you, by you, and with all of the forces of freedom in the world. Together, our strength is multiplied dozens of times, renewed in our hope and confidence in the inevitability of victory, the victory of daybreak over the night, the truth over lies and hypocrisy. You are a living witness to the falsity of the claims about the "free world," "democracy," "separation of powers" and "independence of the judiciary" of which the ruling class brags in media forums and lecture halls. We are chained by the common injustices manufactured in the United States of America, which are the same ones used in Palestine, and I do not doubt that there are many examples in all of the strongholds of imperialism.

You and those who unite with you in support and solidarity, the true comrades in France, Lebanon, Palestine and all over the world, are the natural extension of those who once carried hammers, stormed the Bastille and broke into the prison walls. the extension of those who turned the cells of the Zionist occupation into revolutionary schools from which successive generations learn the meaning of will, determination and commitment. the extension of all of the forces and movements for liberation in the world who resist for true democracy and a world free of exploitation, tyranny and subjugation, where the values of social justice, liberation and dignity prevail.

Until we meet one day in the world of freedom, you remain a symbol and a model for us to follow.

Your comrade  
Ahmad Sa'adat "Abu Ghassan"  
Ramon Prison  
5 September 2017

### **VI. Ahmad Sa'adat on Prisons, the Black Liberation Movement and the Struggle for Palestine November 2017**

*The following are excerpts from the article, by imprisoned Palestinian national liberation movement leader Ahmad Sa'adat, originally published in French as the preface to the new French-language edition of "Revolutionary Suicide" by Huey Newton.*

It is an honor to write an introduction to this book by a great leader of the Black liberation struggle in the United States, Huey P. Newton. From inside the occupier's Ramon prison, on behalf of myself, my comrades and the Palestinian prisoners' movement, we extend our clenched fists of solidarity and salute and arms of embrace to our Black comrades whose struggle for liberation in the belly of the beast continues today against fierce repression.

From Ansar to Attica to Lannemezan, the prison is not only a physical space of confinement but a site of struggle of the oppressed confronting the oppressor. Whether the name is Mumia Abu-Jamal, Walid Daqqa or Georges Ibrahim Abdallah, political prisoners behind bars can and must be a priority for our movements. These names illustrate the continuity of struggle against our collective enemy - their legacies of organizing that reach back to the anti-colonial, liberation movements of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s to today.

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Political prisoners are not simply individuals; they are leaders of struggle and organizing within prison walls that help to break down and dismantle the bars, walls, and chains that act to divide us from our peoples and communities in struggle. They face repeated isolation, solitary confinement, cruel tortures of the occupier and jailer that seek to break the will of the prisoner and their deep connection to their people.

So when we witness the escalation against our movement as we see today in the Philippines, as we see the murderous and orchestrated attacks on our Palestinian resistance, as we see the criminalization of Black people and movements, it is clear that we are still facing the situation that Huey Newton identified and confronted. We are still seeking to defend our peoples from the relentless assaults of capitalism, Zionism and imperialism and their police and military forces. We have not yet been able to realize our dreams and transform the prisons into museums of liberation. Revolutionaries across the world struggle and dream for this future, in every movement of oppressed people. Indeed, when we speak of the prisoners' movement, we are in essence speaking of Resistance.

Prisons exist for a reason, for the needs and interests of those with power. And when there are prisons to lock up the people, when there is occupation, colonialism, oppression; where there is occupation and colonization, there will be prisons and all of the laws and legal frameworks erected to legitimize exploitation, oppression and injustice and criminalize resistance and liberation. From the Fugitive Slave Acts of the 1800s to the "terrorist lists" that seek to criminalize and isolate the resistance movements of the peoples of the world, these are reflections of a war on the people. We salute sister Assata Shakur, still struggling and free in Cuba, while facing renewed threats and "terrorist" labeling to justify hunting down this global symbol of freedom.

Every political prisoner, whether they are currently in prison or not in prison, carries within them the dream and reality of liberation and what it can and must mean in practice. Today, when we look at the Black Liberation movement or the Indigenous and Native struggle in the United States and Canada, we are talking about the same camp of enemy that we confront in occupied Palestine. The bullets that assassinated Malcolm X or Fred Hampton could have been used to kill Ghassan Kanafani or Khaled Nazzal or Mahmoud Hamshari, and today we see the same tear gas and bullets shipped around the world for use against the people. We see corporations like G4S profiting from the attacks on our movements and the mass imprisonments of our people and U.S., European and Israeli police forces exchanging training with one another to escalate racism, "counter-insurgency" and repression on the streets of our cities, camps and villages.

The political prisoner is not weak and is not broken, despite all of their best efforts. The responsibility of the political prisoner is to safeguard the flame. This is not a role that we have sought out or worked for. But now that we are in this position we must hold our position to set an example, not to our people, who are rooted and steadfast, but to the enemy, to show that imprisonment will not work to defeat us or our people.

We carry a cause, not simply an individual search for freedom. Israel or France or the U.S. would free us, or Georges Abdallah, or Mumia Abu-Jamal, if we were willing to become tools of the system or betray our people. But instead, the prisons have generated striking examples of a culture of resistance, from art, to literature to political ideas.



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The imposition of consumerism, the stripping of peoples from their humanity, the isolation of peoples are all forms of coercion alongside the prisons that act to undermine our movements, our peoples and our visions of liberation. They want to see all of our movements isolated from one another, through the terror of the "terrorist list" and the silence of solitary confinement. Capitalist and imperialist media blankets the world, so even here in Israeli prison we hear about the latest technologies in the U.S. while the repression of Black people is rendered invisible. But the reality today is that every day, a little Huey or Assata or Khalida or Ishaq is being born that can carry forward the vision of their people.

Huey Newton and the Black Panthers stood for socialism, for social justice, against racism, imperialism and war, from the streets of Oakland to the refugee camps of Lebanon. Huey Newton said, "We support the Palestinians' just struggle for liberation one hundred percent. We will go on doing this, and we would like for all of the progressive people of the world to join our ranks in order to make a world in which all people can live."

Of course, I cannot speak as an expert about incarceration in the United States today. But just looking at the numbers is a stunning illustration of what is deeply wrong with the system. As Palestinians, we also face an experience of negation, of attack on our existence, as being treated as lesser or non-humans for our designated racial identity. We understand through our own experiences how occupation and capitalism are all about profit and the example that U.S. prisons are creating for the world, where prisons are seen as a source of cheap and coerced free labor and a profit for capitalism. We see how incarceration is used to control, divide and threaten communities and peoples under attack. Incarceration means a lot of money for corporations at the same time that it means a direct threat to Black children and their futures. And this is the "security solution" that Trump and U.S. imperialism is marketing to the world as a solution to the crisis of capitalism, a solution built on bloody and brutal exploitation.

From Ireland to the United States to France to Palestine, political prisoners continue to be leaders in movements fighting racism, imperialism and colonialism. We also see the prisoners of the Palestinian movement facing political imprisonment around the world in the jails of the enemy - from the heroic Rasmea Odeh forced from the United States to the Five prisoners for Palestine, called the Holy Land Five, held in extreme solitary confinement alongside Black strugglers, for engaging in charity work for our people, to our dear comrade Georges Abdallah who has suffered for 34 years in French prisons..

Political prisoners are jailed because they fear our actions and they fear our ideas, our power to mobilize our peoples in a revolutionary way against their exploitation and colonization. They fear our communication and they fear the powers of our people. They fear that if we come together that we will build an international front for the liberation of oppressed peoples. They know, and deeply fear, that we can truly build an alternative world. For them, this is the terror of defeat, but for us, and for our peoples, this is the hope of freedom and the promise of victory.

Ahmad Sa'adat  
Ramon Prison  
November 2017

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## **INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY**

Since his imprisonment, the case of Ahmad Sa'adat has inspired support and solidarity from around the world. We provide these resources as guides for your own work, and encourage you to contact us directly to coordinate initiatives and provide reports of your own work in solidarity with Ahmad Sa'adat and Palestinian prisoners.

## **Draft Resolution**

The resolution, provided below, has been approved by the National Lawyers Guild, the national progressive lawyers' association in the United States, as well as the National Assembly Against the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars and Occupations, a major national antiwar coalition. We encourage organizations around the world to utilize this draft resolution, with your own organization's name, in support of Ahmad Sa'adat and all Palestinian prisoners.

## **RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE CAMPAIGN TO FREE AHMAD SA'ADAT AND ALL PALESTINIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS**

**WHEREAS**, Israel currently holds over 5,000 Palestinians as political prisoners, including men, women and children, and one out of every four Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza has been subject to political arrest or detention, including 40% of Palestinian men from the West Bank and Gaza, and

**WHEREAS**, the arrest, detention and imprisonment of Palestinians is directed by a series of over 1500 Israeli military regulations that can be changed at any time by the regional military commander, and Palestinians arrested by the Israeli military are often relocated to Israeli military prisons outside the West Bank and Gaza, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and as the Israeli military continues to abduct Palestinians on a daily basis and imprison them in these military prisons, and

**WHEREAS**, Palestinians abducted by the Israeli military are subject to psychological and physical torture and abuse, especially during the period of interrogation, which can last for up to 180 days, including up to sixty days in which a Palestinian prisoner may not be seen by an attorney, and

**WHEREAS**, over half of all Palestinian political prisoners and detainees have not been tried, and

**WHEREAS**, nearly five hundred Palestinians are held in "administrative detention," a system of detention without charge or trial, that is indefinitely extensible for successive six-month periods, confronted only by secret evidence that is impossible to refute, and

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**WHEREAS**, those Palestinian detainees that are tried are brought before an Israeli military court, in which Palestinians' rights to a fair trial are systematically violated, presided over by three judges, only one of which is required to have any legal training, and

**WHEREAS**, the Israeli military courts exist only as a function of the illegal military occupation, and thus can never provide a legitimate or fair trial to Palestinian political prisoners, and

**WHEREAS**, Palestinian national leaders, including Ahmad Sa'adat, General Secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Marwan Barghouti, and numerous other members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, are systematically targeted for political arrest and imprisonment, and

**WHEREAS**, the most basic of political activities, including simply being a member of most Palestinian political parties, are sufficient to serve as "charges" against Palestinian political prisoners and are met with substantial sentences, and

**WHEREAS**, Ahmad Sa'adat and five other Palestinian political prisoners were arrested by the Palestinian Authority in 2002, and were transferred to Jericho Prison under U.S. and British guard as a condition of a settlement between then PA President Yasser Arafat and Israel in May 2002, and

**WHEREAS**, during his time in PA prison, Sa'adat was never charged with any crime nor tried for any offense; his release was ordered by the Palestinian High Court, and supported by numerous international organizations, including Amnesty International, and

**WHEREAS**, on March 14, 2006, the U.S. and British monitors at Jericho Prison left their posts, shortly before the inception of a ten-hour siege of the prison by the Israeli military that ended in the death of two Palestinians, the injury of twenty-three more, and the abduction of Ahmad Sa'adat and five other political prisoners from Jericho to Israeli military prisons, and

**WHEREAS**, Ahmad Sa'adat was sentenced by an illegitimate military court to 30 years in prison for 19 political offenses, including membership in a prohibited organization, holding a post in a prohibited organization, and incitement, for giving a speech after the Israeli assassination of his predecessor, Abu Ali Mustafa, in 2001, and

**WHEREAS**, Ahmad Sa'adat and his attorneys consistently refuse and refused throughout his trial to recognize the authority of a military court that is an instrument of occupation, and

**WHEREAS**, political imprisonment has been one part of a deliberate strategy to deprive Palestinians of their leaders, educators, writers, journalists, clergy, unionists, and popular activists from all political orientations, as part of the dispossession and repression of the Palestinian Arab people in the interests of colonialism and occupation for over sixty years, including the denial of millions of Palestinian refugees' right to return home, and

**WHEREAS**, as Ahmad Sa'adat said in his statement to the court of January 14, 2007, " This trial cannot be separated from the process of the historical struggle in Palestine that continues today

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between the Zionist Movement and the Palestinian people, a struggle that centers on Palestinian land, history, civilization, culture and identity," and

**WHEREAS**, Ahmad Sa'adat has been a leader among Palestinian prisoners and recently completed a nine-day hunger strike against Israeli policies of isolation and solitary confinement against Palestinian prisoners, and is currently in isolation until September 17, has faced serious health problems, and has been denied family visits from his wife for months and from his children for years, and

**WHEREAS**, the United States government bears direct responsibility for the situation of Ahmad Sa'adat, and oversaw his imprisonment in PA prison for four years and was complicit in his abduction and kidnapping by the Israeli military during its attack on Jericho prison, and

**WHEREAS**, there is an international campaign to free Ahmad Sa'adat, and all Palestinian political prisoners, and as the National Assembly has a history of supporting struggles for justice and freedom, and

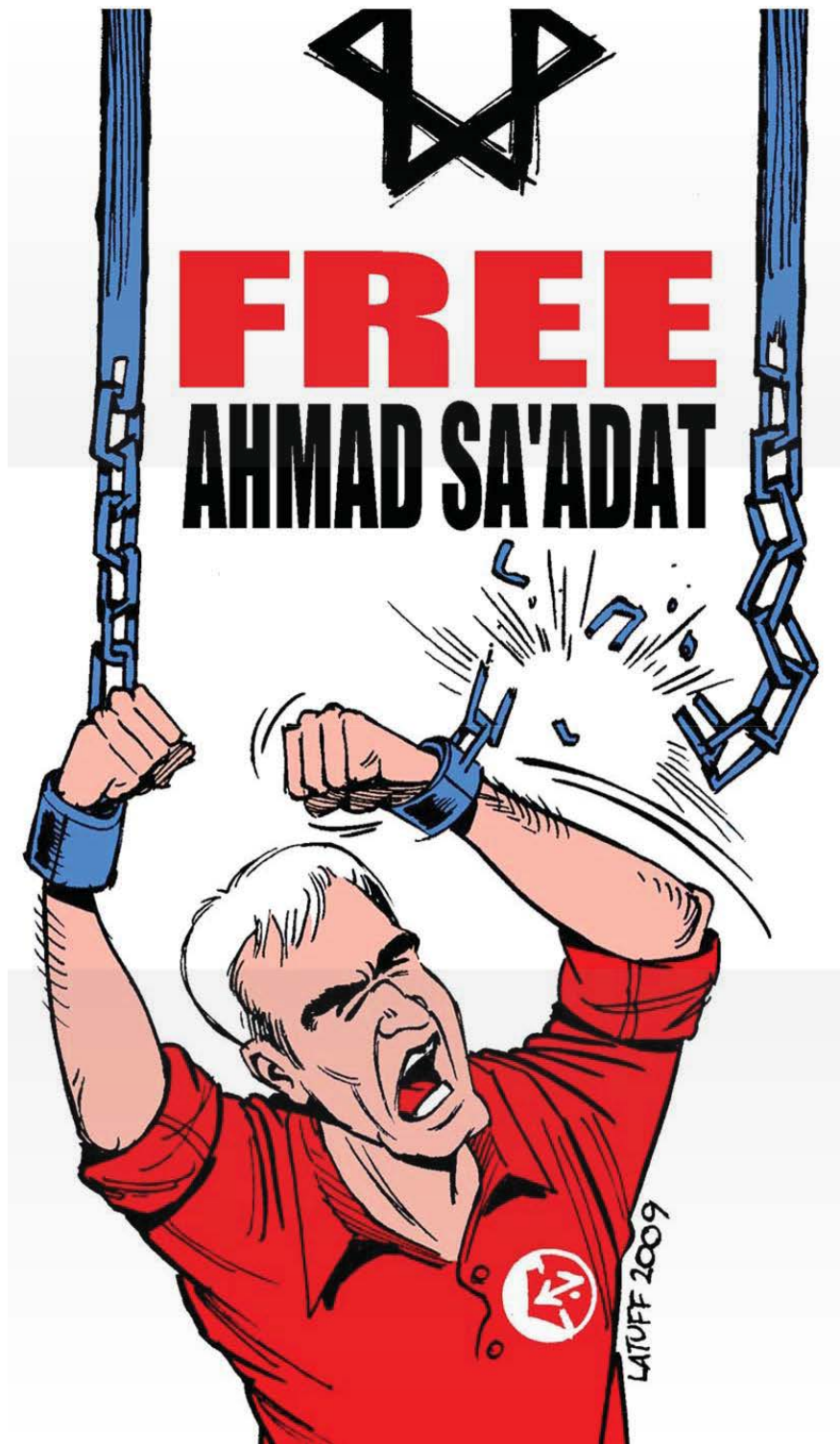
**WHEREAS**, the political imprisonment of thousands of Palestinians is made possible by the billions of dollars in economic and military support as well as the vast political and diplomatic support given to Israel by the United States,

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that this organization calls for the immediate freedom of Ahmad Sa'adat and all Palestinian political prisoners and detainees, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this organization shall actively support the Campaign to Free Ahmad Sa'adat and all campaigns to free all Palestinian political prisoners and detainees, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the this organization shall endeavor to issue statements and publicize the cases of Palestinian political prisoners and detainees, and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that this organization shall endeavor to support the struggles and organizing of Palestinian political prisoners, and the work of activists and organizations on the ground working for justice and freedom for Palestinian political prisoners and the cause of freedom for which these thousands of prisoners are held - of self-determination, liberation and return for all Palestinians in exile and in all of historic Palestine.



Artwork produced for the Campaign to Free Ahmad Sa'adat by Brazilian cartoonist, Carlos Latuff. Available in high-resolution at [www.freeahmadsaadat.org](http://www.freeahmadsaadat.org).

**Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network + [www.samidoun.net](http://www.samidoun.net)  
The Campaign to Free Ahmad Sa'adat + [www.freeahmadsaadat.org](http://www.freeahmadsaadat.org) +**