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## **On International Day to Support Victims of Torture, the Israeli Occupation continues systematic torture by considering a bill to force-feed prisoners**

26 June 2015

Ramallah – 26 June 2015 On International Day to Support Victims of Torture, Addameer confirms that the Israeli Occupying Forces continues to use all forms of physical and psychological tortures against Palestinian prisoners and detainees as exemplified by the first reading of a force-feeding bill that took place in the Israeli Knesset. The Israeli Knesset is expected to present the force-feeding bill for voting in its second and third readings so that the law can be instated despite opposition from international organizations. The bill is being passed under the pretext that it protects the lives of hunger strikers, despite force-feeding being widely considered a form of torture by the international community, including the World Medical Association. The text of the Malta Declaration states: “Forcible feeding is never ethically acceptable. Even if intended to benefit, feeding accompanied by threats, coercion, force or use of physical restraints is a form of inhuman and degrading treatment. Equally unacceptable is the forced feeding of some detainees in order to intimidate or coerce other hunger strikers to stop fasting.” The deliberations of this bill occur as Sheikh Khader Adnan enters his 53rd day on hunger strike with three other detainees. Systematic Torture of Children The Occupying Forces also continue to systematically torture Palestinian children, as exemplified by M.M., a 15-year old child who was arrested from his home in Issawiya, Jerusalem on 15 June 2015. M.M. told Addameer: “During the interrogation, the interrogator insulted and cursed at me and my family. He threatened to arrest my sisters and family members. While I was walking out of the interrogation room he started to beat me, especially on my head. He hit me three times. He started kicking me in the legs really hard until they started to really hurt. This was my situation until two other [detainees] came into the room. They asked us to stand facing the wall, and we stayed that way for three hours.” “In the waiting room in Moscobiye Interrogation Center, two Israeli criminal prisoners entered, and suddenly they attacked me and started beating me with all their strength on my head and the rest of my body. After that they threw me on the ground and stretched my body out. They kneeled next to me and continued to beat me. First, they slapped me in the face with all their strength until blood started pouring out of my mouth. Then, one of them got an electric shaver and beat me in the back of my head, which was really painful, and my head started bleeding a lot and I lost consciousness immediately. When I woke up, I was in the doctor’s room and my body hurt all over.” The child was released on 21 June 2015 due to a lack of any incriminating evidence. He was released on the condition that he remain in house arrest at his sister’s home in Sur Baher for an indefinite period. Torture as a war crime The Occupying State has a long history of legalizing mental and physical torture of detainees long before the deliberation of the force-feeding bill. Despite the fact that Israel

has joined international treaties denouncing and outlawing torture, it has managed to continue the use of torture with impunity against hundreds of thousand of Palestinian prisoners and detainees. The Landau Commission permitted the Israeli intelligence (Shabak) to subject Palestinian detainees to torture, which the Shabak relied on to continue their aggressive tactics. Furthermore, in 1999, the Israeli Supreme Court made a decision to prohibit the use of torture, the Israeli intelligence developed and changed the forms of torture and ill treatment of detainees. The 1999 decision allowed for "moderate pressure" to be used against detainees considered "ticking bomb cases." The use of moderate pressure allows the use of torture on a wide scale whilst providing legal protection for the interrogators who torture detainees. In the past decades, Palestinian prisoners and detainees have not had any form of protection within the Israeli judicial system or from the international community which has allowed for their systematic torture and ill-treatment. There is a third-state responsibility for all those who have signed the Geneva Convention IV to uphold the rights and dignity of prisoners and to also hold Israel, a signatory of the convention, responsible for its blatant disregard of international law. Violations of Geneva Convention IV are considered war crimes, and Israel should be held responsible as war criminals for the legalized and systematic torture of Palestinian detainees. Since 1967, 205 Palestinian prisoners and detainees who have been killed by the Israeli forces, 73 of them from direct torture during interrogation. The latest martyr is Arafat Jaradat who was subjected to extensive torture until he died in an interrogation center in February 2013. Addameer demands that the United Nations, signatories of the Geneva Conventions and the International Criminal Court prosecute the Israeli war criminals for their systematic torture against the Palestinian people. Addameer also highlights the importance of the Palestinian Authority to respect their obligations and responsibilities as signatories of the Convention against Torture, Geneva Convention IV, and all conventions regarding human rights.

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