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## **ADDAMEER AND CODEPINK: 55 Palestinian Women and Girls In Israel Prisons on International Women's Day**



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This International Women's Day, there are 55 Palestinian females held in Israeli prisons and detention centers, including 12 female children and 2 administrative detainees held without charge or trial. Among these female prisoners and detainees, 16 are mothers of 58 children. In total, 42 are held in HaSharon Prison and 13 are held in Damon Prison. Both of these prisons are located inside Israel in contravention with the Forth Geneva Convention which prohibits the transfer of the population from the occupied territory.

### **ARREST AND DETENTION OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN AND GIRLS**

Since the beginning of the occupation 50 years ago in 1967, over 10,000 Palestinian women have been arrested and detained by Israeli occupation forces. In 2017, Palestinian women and girls are routinely arrested from the streets, Israeli military checkpoints, and during violent night raids on their homes during military incursions accompanied with the presence of Israeli soldiers, intelligence officers, and police dogs, during which destruction of household items and property damage takes place. They are blindfolded and their hands are tied, and they are forcibly taken to a military jeep.

Marah Bakeer, a 16-year-old girl from the city of Jerusalem, was arrested on 10 October 2015, after she was shot 10 times in her left arm by Israeli forces. She was later transferred in a degrading manner by an ambulance to Hadassah Ein Karem, while she was left with her body exposed despite her repeated requests to cover her body. Marah was subsequently taken to a hospital room, with her hand and leg tied to the bed, with the presence of two male guards, who cursed her and her mother. One of the guards told her to die, and another guard took a 'selfie' with her against her will. Marah insisted that she had no intent to carry out an attack - which is corroborated by video recordings at

the scene that indicate that she was unarmed – contrary to claims of Israeli prosecution. Despite this, in January 2017, Merah was sentenced by an Israeli court to 8 years and a half years in prison.

## **INTERROGATION**

Upon being taken to interrogation and detention centers, female Palestinian detainees are routinely denied an explanation of their rights and the reason for their arrests. Often, they are denied attorney access and held for several days under interrogation where they are subjected to torture and ill-treatment. The methods of torture and ill-treatment used against female Palestinian prisoners cause severe physical and mental suffering. Interrogation methods include prolonged isolation from the outside world, inhuman detention conditions, excessive use of blindfolds and handcuffs, sleep deprivation, denial of food and water for extended periods, denial of access to toilets, denial of access to showers or change of clothes for days or weeks, being forced into stress positions, yelling, insults and cursing, and sexual harassment.

22-year-old prisoner S.A. described her interrogation in Al-Moscobiyeh in an affidavit given to Addameer Attorney Mona Naddaf at Damon prison on 07/06/2016. She explained that after being arrested from her apartment in Abu Dis during a raid on 04/19/2016 at approximately 3:30 AM, she was subjected to shouting, being placed in *shabah* stress positions, sleep deprivation, prolonged interrogation sessions, threats of raiding her home, threats of assassinations, and threats of arrests of family members and friends. S.A, who was denied access to an attorney for 18 days also recounted that if her eyes would close due to sleep deprivation, the interrogator would hit the table in front of her or shout loudly to prevent her from sleeping. She also recounted:

*“At the end of the investigation on this [particular] day, the interrogator ‘Reno’ told me that he would stay with me all night, and then he tied my hands behind the back of the chair with strapped restrictions on the chair I sat in, and I was kept in this position from 10:00 PM to 4:30 AM.”*[\[1\]](#)

## **DEGRADING TRANSFERS**

Palestinian girls and women in Israeli detention are subjected to an exhausting and degrading transfer process between the place of their arrest, and the interrogation or detention center, and from their prison to and from the court. They are placed in painfully uncomfortable seating, after being placed in a *mavar*, a cage-like holding place before the time of their transport. An affidavit of 16 year-old N.S. taken by Addameer attorney Mona Naddaf on 28 July 2017 described her experience:

*“On April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016, The Nahshon Unit soldier asked me to take off my clothes and my shoes, but it was very painful for me to do because of my injuries that were not yet healed, and another detainee ... tried to help but the soldier would not let her... then came the restraints... My feet were cuffed and when they wanted to cuff my hands I was trying to tell her my hands are still injured and that it was too painful, but she did not listen to me and pulled the cuffs on my injured arm... We left HaSharon at 2.30 AM and were taken a vehicle with the Nahshon ... there was an iron cell inside... it was so hot... we got to Ramlah in the morning... We waited in Ramlah for a long time... between two and three hours... we were then taken to an uncomfortable cell with a low metal bar... The driver was driving fast causing me to hit the wall of the cell, causing more pain to the wounds.”*[\[2\]](#)

## **FEMALE PALESTINIANS IN CONTEXT OF OCCUPATION**

Israel is accountable for its actions in the occupied territories, including West Bank military checkpoints, particularly the ill treatment of women during arrests and transfers. Article 12 of General Recommendation 28 by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the Core Obligations of States Parties states that:

“Although subject to international law, States primarily exercise territorial jurisdiction. The obligations of States parties apply, however, without discrimination both to citizens and non-citizens, including refugees, asylum-seekers, migrant workers and stateless persons, within their territory or effective control, even if not situated within the territory. States parties are responsible for all their actions affecting human rights, regardless of whether the affected persons are in their territory.”[\[3\]](#)

In its General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, the Committee confirms the aforementioned paragraph, stating, “... the obligations of States parties also apply extraterritorially to persons within their effective control, even if not situated within their territory, and that States parties are responsible for all their actions affecting human rights, regardless of whether the affected persons are in their territory”. [\[4\]](#)

Testimonies by Palestinian women and girls highlight the brutality of the arrest process as well as conditions inside Israeli interrogation, detention and prison centers, and even hospitals while in custody. The abuse, ill-treatment, and torture of Palestinian women and girls take place within the context of the **ongoing occupation of 50 years** and annexation of Palestinian lands. In the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against women, States Parties emphasize “that the eradication of apartheid, all forms of racism, racial discrimination, colonialism, neo-colonialism, aggression, foreign occupation and domination and interference in the internal affairs of States is essential to the full enjoyment of the rights of men and women”. [\[5\]](#)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **The United Nations and all States Parties call upon Israel to respect, uphold and strive to surpass the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against women, and UN Security Council Resolution 1325, in regulating the treatment of women and girls during interrogation and detention, and their lives of women and girls in prison.**
- **States Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention call for an end to physical and psychological abuse in the hands of soldiers during the arrests of Palestinian women and girls and their illegal detention in occupying territory, accountability.**
- **All states of the International Community call for sanctions until the end of the Israeli occupation.**
- **States Parties call for an end to the practices of physical and psychological torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian women under interrogation.**
- **States Parties to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination**

**against women call upon Israel to develop a gender-sensitive policy for the treatment of Palestinian female prisoners.**

**States Parties, women's organizations, and human rights organizations call for the immediate release of female prisoners and an end to their ill treatment.**

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[1] Affidavit to Addameer Attorney Mona Naddaf at Damon prison on 07/06/2016 with 22-year-old prisoner S.A.

[2] Affidavit taken by Addameer attorney Mona Naddaf on 28 July 2017 with prisoner N.S.

[3] UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), General Recommendation No. 28 on the Core Obligations of States Parties under Article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 16 December 2010, CEDAW/C/GC/28.

[4] UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, 1 November 2013, CEDAW/C/GC/30, paragraph 8.

[5] UN General Assembly, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 18 December 1979, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1249, p. 13. - See more at: <http://www.addameer.org/publications/violations-continue-against-palesti...>

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