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After Months of Serious Deterioration of Detention Conditions: Palestinian Prisoners and Detainees in Israeli Prisons Start an Open Hunger Strike

09 April 2019



Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons started yesterday, 8 April 2019, an open hunger strike after several days of negotiations between the prisoners' representatives and the prison administration. The negotiations failed which led the prisoners to launch an open hunger strike on the evening of Monday, 8 April 2019.

Since September 2018, the prison administration carried out a series of repressive measures against prisoners, based on the recommendations of the "Erdaan committee". The Israeli Minister, Gilad Erdan, had explicitly declared that his committee aims at restricting the life conditions of the Palestinian prisoners. The oppressive restrictions started by re-operating surveillance cameras in the Palestinian female prison, Hasharon. The female prisoners were later transferred to Damon prison, characterized by its old, inadequate infrastructure, lack of proper sanitary services, of privacy and of basic hygiene needs. The prison administration then installed cell-jammers in the Naqab and Rimon prisons. Since the beginning of the year, the occupation forces also conducted several violent raids on prisoners, in the prisons Ofer, Rimon, and Naqab, using excessive force and causing numerous injuries. The prison administration also confiscated books, personal belongings, and reduced the quantity and quality of meals. Furthermore, several prisoners were transferred from their sections or prisons and a number of prisoners received a ban on family visits as punitive measures.

After several negotiation meetings, the prison administration agreed on installing public phones in a number of prison sections. However, the prison administration drew back and introduced a new condition on Monday, 8 April 2019. The condition forces the prisoners to provide the prison administration with the numbers that they want to call. As a result, the prisoners rejected this condition and launched the open hunger strike, because it was an attempt from the prison

administration to circumvent their demands.

The hunger strike started with five prisoners, WaelJaghoub, Mohammad Arman, Zaid Bisisi, Hussein Derbas, and Akram Abu Baker. Since the launch of the strike until this moment tens of prisoners have joined the hunger strike and we expect the numbers to increase in the coming week.

The hunger striking prisoners' demand include: to remove the cell jammers; to return the prisoners who were recently and punitively transferred from their sections back to their initial sections; to install a public telephone; to allow visits for the families who are banned visits for security reasons including the families from Gaza Strip, proper medical care; transfer female prisoner from Damon prison to another prison where women prisoners' needs are met in accordance with international law standards; to improve the conditions of bosta (prisoner's transfer) and waiting sections; and to end all restrictive measures from Gilad Eran's committee.

The Palestinian Human Rights Organization's Council (PHROC) stands by the prisoners in their hunger strike, supports their legitimate demands and affirms that the occupation authorities bear full responsibility for the lives and safety of prisoners.

PHROC demands that the international community and in specific the International Committee of the Red Cross intervene to ensure the security and safety of prisoners.

PHROC also call upon all contracting states to the Geneva Conventions and The Hague Regulations to fulfill their responsibilities in order to guarantee that the lives of prisoners and their detention conditions are protected under international law.

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