

News

Addameer Urges to Safeguard Palestinian Political Prisoners' Rights against Collective Punishment and Retaliatory Measures by the Israeli Prison Services

Date: 7 September 2021

On 6 September 2021, in the early hours of the morning, six Palestinian political prisoners escaped from the high security Gilboa Prison via an underground tunnel. Among the escaped prisoners, three were classified as maximum-security prisoners, four had been serving life sentences, and two were held under detention awaiting military trial and sentencing. Moreover, one of the escaped political prisoners had previously been tied to a similar failed attempt in 2014, for which he was subsequently placed under solitary confinement for one year. Immediately following the escape, Israeli Prison Services (IPS) and occupation forces began the forcible transfer of over 350 Palestinian prisoners in Gilboa Prison to unknown locations.

Addameer expresses grave concern regarding the institution of a series of collective, punitive, retaliatory, and arbitrary measures by Israeli occupation authorities against Palestinian political prisoners—amounting to over 4,700 Palestinian prisoners—arbitrarily held in Israeli prisons.

As reported by the Palestinian Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs, Israeli occupation authorities have already completed the forced transfer of over 350 Palestinian prisoners in Gilboa Prison to unknown locations across Israeli prisons. Specifically, Palestinian political prisoners serving life sentences in Section 2 of Gilboa Prison were sent to the notorious maximum security desert prisons of Ramon, Nafha and Naqab. In addition, IPS launched large transfers of Palestinian prisoners associated with the Islamic Jihad movement held in various Israeli prisons; among them, several prominent leaders were taken to the interrogation wings of Kishon Detention Center. Notably, IPS and Shin Bet forces [routinely employ](#) torture during interrogation, including physical assaults, beatings, [positional torture](#), and psychological torture, despite the absolute prohibition on torture under international law.

The large-scale measures adopted by the IPS, at the behest of the Israeli occupation authorities, regarding the transfer and interrogation of prisoners constitute a clear form of collective punishment prohibited under Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Furthermore, IPS instituted a lockdown of all Israeli prisons and detention centers, prohibiting outside access to over 4,700 Palestinian prisoners, including visits from family members and lawyers. On the same day, a lawyer from Addameer was unnecessarily harassed and prohibited from a scheduled prison visit to Damon Prison. The de facto ban on attorney visits raises concerns regarding the monitoring of human rights violations of prisoners, particularly torture and ill-treatment. Already, the Palestinian Prisoners Club reported that IPS refused to distribute meals to Palestinian prisoners in various prisons and interrogation centers, exemplifying the ongoing and imminent arbitrary, punitive, and retaliatory crackdown by Israeli occupation authorities against Palestinian prisoners.

The Israeli occupation regime systematically exploits any excuse to deploy its special forces into prisons to attack and harass Palestinian prisoners and detainees. In 2020 alone, Addameer documented more than 25 attacks. During these attacks, Israeli special forces shackle prisoners, often physically assaulting them without regard to their medical conditions, extensively deploy tear gas and pepper spray, alongside a plethora of other tactics to further abuse them. In addition, Israeli forces often confiscate the prisoners' belongings and all electronics and appliances in the prison rooms afterward. Prison raids by Israeli Occupation Forces special units, extremely violent in nature, give way to a host of abuses and human rights violations and serve as one method of collective punishment, torture, and ill-treatment of Palestinian prisoners and detainees.

Addameer warns of such measures as they stand in stark contrast to Israel's responsibility as an occupying power under the Fourth Geneva Convention, serving as collective punishment against all Palestinian prisoners. Addameer emphasizes that without third-party supervision of IPS policies, the rights of Palestinian prisoners will continue to be violated with impunity, and the gravity of the situation will only increase.

In light of the urgency of the situation, Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association sent a letter on 6 September 2021 to the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Jerusalem calling on the ICRC to monitor the transfer of the remaining Palestinian prisoners in Gilboa Prison, follow up with the relevant occupying authorities to provide information confirming the location of the transferred prisoners, and inform the prisoners' relatives of their whereabouts. Addameer further calls on the ICRC to safeguard the rights of all Palestinian prisoners held inside Israeli prisons from arbitrary, retaliatory, and collective punishment imposed by the IPS following yesterday's escape.

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