

# Monthly Newsletter

October 2020



## Top October Topics

- Turning Grey in Israeli Prisons
- Human Rights Organisations Send Urgent Appeal to UN Special Procedures on the Imminent Threat of Forcible Transfer/ Deportation of Salah Hammouri for “Breach of Allegiance”
- LPHR and Addameer Submit a Joint Complaint to the UN WGAD on the Ongoing Israeli Military Detention of the Three Palestinian Female Birzeit University Students
- Urgent Intervention to Immediately Release Hunger Striking Administrative Detainee Maher Al-Akhras Amid Imminent Threat to Life
- Palestinian Disability and Human Rights Groups Welcome the List of Issues Report of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on Israel
- UN: Israel Attempts to Silence Growing Condemnation of Its Apartheid Policies
- New Israeli Legislation to Criminalize Anti Occupation Human Rights Work
- UN Expert Calls for Israel to End Practice of Administrative Detention and Immediate Release of Maher Al-Akhras

With the continuous escalation of unjustified administrative detention orders against Palestinians, hunger strikes have become a means for Palestinian political prisoners and detainees to challenge such policy. Also, hunger strikes have been a defining aspect of Palestinian prisoners' opposition against the illegal practices Israeli Prisons and detention centers. Recently, Maher Al-Akhras underwent an open hunger strike protesting against his most recent unfair arbitrary detention order. After 103 days of striking, the Israeli occupation authorities agreed to release him on the 26th November without further extending the administrative detention order against him. The suffering of Palestinians is not strictly bound to prison walls. Even outside of prison, they continue to be subject to the Israeli occupation's harassment and injustice.

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# News

## Overview of the Situation of Palestinian Prisoners in Israeli Prisons:

During the month of October, 446 Palestinian prisoners were arrested by the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF), of which are 63 children, and 16 women. The Israeli occupation's campaign of arbitrary arrests against Palestinians included on 26 October 14 ,2020 Palestinians were arrested, most of whom are former prisoners. Later, on 27 October 2020, IOF arrested four -17-16year-old Palestinian children, a -42year-old Palestinian woman, and an elderly Palestinian man aged 68 years from A'roub refugee camp. In addition to a journalist and a film director from Nablus on the same day.

Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association followed up on five cases of children detainees this month. The Israeli occupation neglects the vulnerable status of Palestinian children and continues to treat them as adults. All five children were detained at dawn after IOF raided their homes, some were beaten in front of their family and were not allowed to get dressed or change clothes. One of the children had a critical medical condition which was not taken into account during the arrest and later detention.

Also, in light of the coronavirus pandemic the IOF continues to jeopardize the health of Palestinian children with early dawn raids and arrests, and the lack of sanitation and preventative methods. In addition to holding infected children harsh conditions in isolation and restricting them from seeing their parents for long periods of time, and violating the privacy of children detainees and their lawyers during zoom trials.

## Update on Salah Hammouri's Residency Revocation:

On 30 September ,2020 13 Palestinian and regional human rights organizations submitted a joint urgent appeal to the UN Special Procedures on the imminent threat of forcible transfer/ deportation of Mr. Salah Hammouri for "breach of allegiance" to the State of Israel. Addressing six UN Special Rapporteurs, the organizations highlighted Israel's policy of silencing those who seek justice and accountability for violations committed against the Palestinian people as a tool to maintain its apartheid regime.

On 13 October 2020, the Israeli Minister of Interior approved a -30day extension for Mr. Hammouri to challenge the Minister's intentions through written submission and later an oral hearing. Consequently, after 13 November 2020, the submissions will be examined to decide on Mr. Hammouri's residency status.

In a joint oral intervention before the 45th Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council under Item 56 ,7 Palestinian, regional and international human rights organizations called on the international community to take immediate action to protect Palestinian human rights defenders and to hold Israel accountable, including to ensure the protection of Salah Hammouri, including his right to reside in Jerusalem.

## Ongoing Military Detention of Three Female Palestinian Students:

Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights (LPHR) and Addameer Prisoner Support submitted a joint complaint to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention regarding the Israeli military authorities arrest and arbitrary detention of three young female Palestinian university students from the occupied West Bank: Ms. Layan Kayed, Ms. Elyaa Abu Hijla and Ms. Ruba Asi aged 21 ,23 and 20 respectively. All three detainees have been similarly charged with: affiliation to an illegal group, being present during an illegal gathering, and allegations of stone-throwing, all of which have been denied. This is the repressive context for the unjust imposition of criminal charges for affiliating with a legitimate university student group and being present at one of its meetings. They are being criminalized and held in prolonged pre-trial detention for the peaceful exercise of their fundamental rights to freedom of assembly, association, and expression. The three female detainees have been subject to dire conditions during their detention periods; some conditions appear to amount to degrading treatment.

Numbers of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli occupation prisons by the end of October 2020.



Total Number of Political Prisoners

4500



Administrative Detainees

370

(4 PLC members)



Child prisoners

170



Female prisoners

40

# Individual Case

**Maher Al-Akhras on an Open Hunger Strike:** On 27 July 2020, Mr. Maher Al-Akhras, a 49 year old Palestinian, was arrested by the Israeli Occupation Forces from his home in Jenin. An administrative detention order was issued against him on 7 August for six months until 26 November 2020. Upon prior knowledge of this order, Mr. Maher announced his hunger strike the day he was arrested. As of Friday 6 November 2020 the Israeli authorities agreed to release Mr. Maher on the 26th November without any renewal of the administrative detention order against him. Consequently, Mr. Maher has ended his hunger strike after 103 consecutive days facing imminent threat to his life and severe deterioration in his health condition at Kaplan hospital. On 23 September 2020, Mr. Maher's legal attorney, submitted a petition to revoke the administrative detention order, and in response, the Israeli High Court decided to "freeze" the order against Mr. Maher. The court explained that, at the moment, bearing in mind Mr. Maher's critical health status, there exists no "security threat" or the

possibility of a future threat. On 25 October 2020, the Israeli High Court rejected yet another petition for Mr. Maher's immediate release. The Court emphasized that the administrative detention order is "frozen" and he will remain under the Israeli custody at Kaplan hospital. The Court's decision to "freeze" the administrative detention order does not in any way cancel the order, or eliminate the risk of having it renewed, or even finishing the remaining duration of detention afterward. Such a decision illustrates the intention to maintain and prolong Mr. Maher's administrative detention at all costs. On 23 October 2020, the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, Mr. Michael Lynk emphasized the urgency to immediately release Mr. Maher. Furthermore, Mr. Lynk urged Israel to "abolish its practice of administrative detention,... and strictly follow international law in the application of its security operations."

## EVENTS

### **Israeli Military Courts and Administrative Detention Workshop/ Birzeit University**

**4 October 2020:** Mrs. Ehteram Ghazawneh, Research and Documentation Unit Coordinator at Addameer, gave a lecture on documenting human rights violations according to the international standards of human rights.

**11 October 2020:** Adv. Sahar Francis, Director of Addameer, gave a lecture on Israeli military courts, highlighting the violations of fair trial standards, and the excessive use of torture in Israeli prisons and detention centers.

### **Documenting Human Rights Violations Joint Workshop/ Heinrich Boll Foundation**

**12 and 14 October 2020:** Mrs. Ehteram Ghazawneh, Research and Documentation Unit Coordinator at Addameer, lectured on the international human rights standards and methods of documenting human rights violations, discussing the legal standards of documentation, ethical considerations and example practices.

### **Al-Haq International Law Summer School Program 2020/ Al-Haq**

**14 October 2020:** Adv. Sahar Francis, Director of Addameer, had an intervention on Israeli military courts and Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli prisons and detention centers.

### **Al-Quds Human Rights Legal Clinic (AQHRC)/ Al-Quds University Law School**

**18 and 27 October 2020:** Adv. Sahar Francis, Director of Addameer, held two virtual interventions: one on the military courts system and the other on the Israeli occupation's practice of torture, and the laws relating to torture in detention centers.

**20 and 25 October 2020:** Adv. Mahmoud Hassan, Legal Unit Manager at Addameer, held a lecture on the Israeli civil court system, discussing the levels of civil courts and their jurisdictions (Magistrate and District courts). Moreover, Adv. Mahmoud covered arrests and detention under the pretext of incitement.

### **Self-care Methods, and Psychological and Social Empowerment of Female Ex-prisoners Joint Workshop with (UPWC)**

**31 October 2020:** Addameer organized a workshop with UPWC and female released prisoners. The workshop included a lecture by Ms. Raneem Al-Idawi regarding the various ways of self-care through personal and societal empowerment of former female prisoners.

## Publication

### **Opened Books on Cuffed Hands: The Cultural and Educational Life of Palestinian Political Prisoners in Israeli Prisons and Detention Centers**

Throughout the years, the Israeli occupation authorities have continued to systematically deny Palestinian prisoners of their most basic human rights while incarcerated. It can be said that the Israeli Prison Service regulations constitute a reflection of the political reality, hanging over the prisoners' heads in service of Israel's agenda and best interest at the occupation's convenience.

This study aims at exploring the cultural and educational life of the Palestinian prisoners including women and child prisoners, highlighting the similarities and differences between their experience and that of the male prisoners. Moreover, it explores the Israeli Prison Service (IPS) regulations that only allow for the minimum education of the prisoners, and the politicization of the educational process in prisons, in violation of Israel's obligations as the occupying power in accordance with the Geneva Fourth Convention. The study also touches on the international legal texts that guarantee the prisoners' right to education and cultural activities. Importantly, it aims to compare the educational and cultural life before and after the Oslo Accords, exploring the various methods to which Palestinian prisoners have resorted to in order to pursue their education. Such methods included sitting in the secondary education certificate exam, previously known as "tawjihi", enrolling in the Open University of Israel and Palestinian universities, establishing libraries and bringing newspapers inside the prisons, as well as holding cultural discussions.

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### **LOCATION:**

Ramallah- AlMasyoun, Rafiden Square, Mousa Tawasheh Street, Sebat building, 1st floor

P.O. Box Jerusalem 17338

[info@addameer.ps](mailto:info@addameer.ps)