

Quarterly Newsletter

This quarter, which covers the months of July, August, and September 2015, has witnessed important developments in the human rights situation of Palestinian prisoners and detainees. At the wake of the quarter, on 30 July 2015, the Israeli Knesset passed a force-feeding bill legalizing force-feeding of Palestinian detainees and prisoners on hunger strikes. The quarter also witnessed continuing arrest campaigns carried out in Palestinian villages and cities, and the continued and systemic use of administrative detention under which Palestinians are held without charge or trial on grounds of "secret evidence". Hunger strikes took place by administrative detainees from 30 August 2015, in protest of their continued detention without charge or trial based on secret information.

Detention in Numbers

In the onset of the quarter, in the beginning of July 2015, there were approximately 5700 Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli detention and prison centers. These included approximately 400 administrative detainees, including 3 Palestinian Legislative Council Members. At the beginning of August 2015, there were approximately 5520 Palestinian political prisoners, including 350 administrative detainees, including a Palestinian Legislative Council Member. The slight decrease in the total numbers between July and August 2015 and in administrative detainees is due significantly to the release of prisoners and detainees who had been arrested during the Gaza War in the Summer of 2014, during which mass arrests took place. Some administrative detainees were subjected to two six-month administrative detention orders, followed by their release one year later, this quarter. At the beginning of September 2015, there were 5621 Palestinian political prisoners, including 343 administrative detainees, one of whom was a Palestinian Legislative Council Member, signifying a rise in the total number of Palestinian political prisoners from the beginning of August 2015.


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Force-feeding Bill Passed by Israeli Knesset

On 30 July 2015, the Israeli Knesset approved a bill that allows the force-feeding of Palestinian hunger strikers. Addameer, which has long advocated against the proposed bill since its initial readings in the Israeli Knesset, holds that this new law allows institutionalized torture to take place at the hands of the Israeli Prison Service, and any medical staff members or therapists who take part in such practice.

The act of force-feeding itself violates the inherent human rights and bodily integrity of prisoners, allowing for the feeding of prisoners against their will. The International Committee of the Red Cross has condemned the use of force-feeding as against the human dignity of detainees, and the World Medical Association has also condemned the use of force-feeding and underlined the practice as incompatible with medical ethical standards. Additionally, the Malta Declaration, adopted by the World Health Organization, states that "Hunger strikers should not be forcibly given treatment they refuse. Forced feeding contrary to an informed and voluntary refusal is unjustifiable. Artificial feeding with the hunger striker's explicit or implied consent is ethically acceptable ... Forcible feeding is never ethically acceptable."

The law entitled the "Law to Prevent Harm Caused by Hunger Strikes" is purportedly based on concerns for the health of prisoners and detainees who are on hunger strike. However, the act of force-feeding itself may put the lives of Palestinian prisoners and detainees at risk, as has taken place in the 1980s when the force-feeding "Zonda" technique left several Palestinians dead, including Ali Ja'fari, Rasem Halawa and Ishaq Maragha, who died as a result of ill treatment during his hunger strike in 1983. The continued ill treatment and medical negligence of Palestinians in Israeli detention significantly puts to doubt the stated claims for the backing of this bill to be aimed for the safety concerns of the prisoners and detainees.

In total, more than 207 Palestinians have died in Israeli prisons since 1967, including 73 Palestinians who died as a result of torture under interrogation.

Mass Arrest Campaign in Palestinian Villages



Israeli forces carried out raids and arrests in various villages throughout the quarter. In the early hours and dawn of 26 August 2015, homes were raided and about 24 Palestinians were arrested across various cities of the West Bank. Nablus and Bethlehem were the two main municipalities targeted during the raids – approximately 13 Palestinians were arrested from the villages of Salem, 'Azmout, Deir Al-Hattab, and 'Aourta, near Nablus and 11 Palestinians from the village of Husan, west of Bethlehem city.

The following patterns were reported during the raids: A large military presence by occupation forces armed with weapons. The raids began at approximately 1.00 AM and ended at approximately 5.00 AM. Additionally, destruction and damage was done within the homes during the raids, the presence of police dogs was also reported. In addition, direct physical violence and hitting was perpetrated against members of the households. Women were also searched and interrogated, seen to be a measure exerted pressure against entire families.

In this Issue

- Administrative Detainees on Hunger Strike
- Children in Israeli Detention
- Palestinian Female Prisoners
- Palestinian Legislative Council Members
- Addameer Training and Awareness Activities
- Military Court Updates

Quarterly Newsletter— July to September 2015

Mass Arrests in Palestinian Villages

On 26 August 2015, Deir Al-Hattab village was raided by Israeli occupation forces in the late hours of night. Six homes were forcibly entered and searched, and deliberate destruction was carried out within the homes. In the village of Salem, approximately 12 homes were raided and families were forced to wait outside their homes. Five Palestinians were arrested. The village of 'Azmout was also raided, with several homes raided and five Palestinians arrested. The village of 'Arouta was also raided and three Palestinians were arrested.

Testimony from I.E., wife of a prisoner from Deir Al-Hattab village:

"At around 1.00 AM we were woken to the sounds of forcible removal of the doors at my brother-in-law's home. Fifteen minutes later Israeli occupation forces raided our home. They began breaking through the windows and tried to enter through the side window for the main door. Then my husband went to go open the door so that they don't break it. About seven soldiers entered wearing military uniform and carrying weapons. Four of them were masked. They asked all the family members to stay in one place, where I live with my husband and his mother and my three children (L, a seven year old girl, A., a four year old boy, and M., a one year old girl). My children were afraid of this scene and began to scream and cry."

Addameer's Research and Documentation Unit visited the raided villages on 26 August 2015. The children, seven year old L, four year old A. were still visibly in a state of fear and terror from what they witnessed by occupation forces and the raid on their home at the time of the visit by the Research and Documentation Unit. The Research and Documentation Unit also witnessed the damage and destruction within the home. The occupation forces also reportedly used an electronic search robot at the time of their raid.



Photo by Addameer's Research and Documentation Unit, 26 August 2015

Testimony from the mother of a detainee Silman Imran from Deir Al-Hattab:

"At 2.15 in the morning, my husband's brother called telling me that the Israeli occupation forces were in the home of my son Salman. I got up quickly and changed my clothes and hurried to my son's home. When I got near the home, I saw a large number of occupation forces inside the building that my son lives in. At the beginning they would not let me enter, but a short while later they did. When I entered I was shocked from the sight of the scene. I saw my son, his wife, and their three children, among them a baby not older than 40 days old all kept in a room inside the house. The soldiers ordered them not to move from there. I was shocked by the damage and destruction. I didn't know where to put my foot. The sofa was turned upside down and the soldiers had taken out all the clothes that were in the closets and thrown them on the floor and they broke the wood from the back of the closets. And in the bedrooms they had overturned the mattresses and the blankets."

Violence during Raids

The testimony of 17 year old A. J. from Salem village whose home was raided and searched with no arrests made:

"On Wednesday at 1.00 in the morning our home was raided by Israeli occupation forces and they forced my family to leave the house. We were 9 people outside the house. At around 1.30 AM an Arabic-speaking officer came and he told me to get out of the house by myself, before my family was told to come outside. He had me stand outside of the house and he began to kick me on my foot. Then he began searching me in a provocative way. He took me to a place where I saw my family and then after a short while they took them to a different place, and it was the parking lot of the house between the cars. There were four soldiers without weapons. They then began to ask about weapons and when I told them I didn't know what they are talking about, one of the soldiers began hitting me very hard on my face and then held me from my neck. He then began pulling me and he threatened me with arresting me for 10 years if I don't give him the weapons he claimed were in the house. After a number of questions he asked about the neighbors and their homes. The same soldier came back. He was short and masked and he hit me with his weapons on my chest. He began pushing me on the fence and hit my back on the wall. This continued for 15 minutes during which I felt strong pain in my chest and hands."



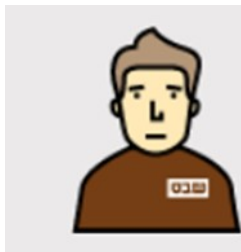
Photo by Addameer's Research and Documentation Unit, 26 August 2015

M.S. from the Salem village stated:

"Occupation forces entered our house at 1.15 AM. When I first saw them I told them my son is sleeping. He asked me to meet them outside the home, and when I got down with my son and husband, one of the soldiers asked me very loudly if there was anyone else in the house. I answered that everyone has come down and asked him not to yell. The soldier answered 'Shut up and don't raise your voice' and he then tried to attack me. I began to scream in fear. He then told another soldier to take me to another room in the house ... When I got into the room the soldier who was yelling at me was there with another soldier. The soldier began to ask me questions about my husband's family and about the neighbors and my personal life, about my education and other things. After that they took me to another room. There was a female soldier in it and she searched me in a provocative way and 20 minutes later they took me outside where the rest of my family members were."

Quarterly Newsletter— July to September 2015

Children



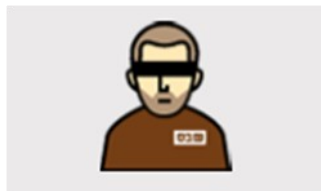
The quarter has witnessed persisting violations against children, particularly in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem and Palestinian villages near Israeli settlements and bypass roads. The Research and Documentation Unit at Addameer met with several children and they indicated that they experienced viola-

tions ill treatment and abuses while in detention, in the absence of their parents. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Israel on 3 October 1991, states in article 37 that "No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." The article also states that "No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily" and that detention, imprisonment or arrest should be used only as a last resort.*

| Month | No. Child Prisoners | Special Age Categories |
|-----------|---------------------|------------------------|
| July | 160 | (22 from 16-14) |
| August | 153 | (19 from 16-14) |
| September | 156 | (21 from 16-14) |

* UN General Assembly, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 20 November 1989, United Nations

Administrative Detention



Administrative detention is a procedure that allows the Israeli military to hold prisoners indefinitely based on secret information without charging them or allowing them to stand trial. Administrative detention is used almost exclusively to detain Palestinians from the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT), which includes the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. This quarter has witnessed a slight decrease in the numbers of administrative detention, partly due to the release of administrative detainees who were arrested during mass arrest campaigns during the 2014 Summer war on Gaza, during which mass arbitrary arrests were carried out.

| Month | No. held under administrative detention |
|-----------|---|
| July | 400 |
| August | 350 |
| September | 343 |

Female Prisoners



Over the last five decades, an estimated 10,000 Palestinian women have been arrested or detained under Israeli military orders. Palestinian women are held mainly in Hasharon prison, located outside the 1967 occupied territory, in direct contravention of Article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which states that an Occupying Power must detain

residents of occupied territory in prisons inside the occupied territory. Throughout the quarter, Palestinian women have continued to be detained in Israeli prisons.

| Month | No. Females held |
|-----------|------------------|
| July | 26 |
| August | 25 |
| September | 25 |

Palestinian Legislative Council Members



The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 2, states that states parties are to ensure "to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status" (United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966). However, Palestinian political leaders, including Palestinian Legislative Council members, are routinely arrested. The following chart indicates the numbers of Palestinian Legislative Council members detained at the onset of each month:

| Month | No. PLC Members held |
|-----------|--------------------------------|
| July | 7 (3 Administrative Detainees) |
| August | 4 (1 Administrative Detainee) |
| September | 4 (1 Administrative Detainee) |

Quarterly Newsletter— July to September 2015

Administrative Detainees Hunger Strike

This quarter, administrative detainees embarked on an open hunger strike in protest of administrative detention policy and their continued detention without charge or trial.

Five hunger striking administrative detainees began a partial hunger strike on 20 August 2015. They then embarked on a complete hunger strike starting on 30 August 2015, which ended on 29 September 2015. This was also met with other prisoners and detainees on partial hunger strikes in solidarity with these hunger strikers, refusing meals twice or three times a week. After almost one month without taking any food, the 5 administrative detainee hunger strikers ended their strikes after reaching an agreement with Israeli authorities.

Throughout the hunger strikes, detainees were met with ill treatment at the hands of Israeli Prison Service (IPS). Munir Abu Sharar, Bader Al-Ruzzeh and Shadi Maali, were placed in isolation in the cells of Al-Naqab prison. The detainees informed Addameer's attorney on 16 September 2015 that they had been denied access to cold drinking water, and were therefore forced to drink water from the faucets in their cells. Openings in cell gates were also blocked, thus limiting supply of fresh air into their cells.



Detainees also reported to attorneys that the Israeli Prison Service confiscated the belongings of the hunger striking detainees, who were placed in solitary confinement immediately following the commencement of their hunger strikes. It was also reported that the hunger striking detainees were denied access to pillows, blankets, and books. Furthermore, the detainees were transferred multiple times throughout their hunger strikes, despite their fragile health conditions.

Addameer considers these acts to be inhumane and in violation of the Convention Against Torture and the Fourth Geneva Convention particularly under Common Article 3 which prohibits cruel treatment and outrages upon personal dignity, specifically humiliating and degrading treatment. Furthermore, inhumane punishment and treatment constitute a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and a war crime under Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Throughout the hunger strikes, Addameer has consistently demanded an immediately halt to all inhumane punitive measures imposed on the hunger striking detainees and has called upon the International Committee of the Red Cross to undertake immediate visits to the hunger strikers to monitor their detention conditions and pressure the IPS to end all forms of inhumane, degrading and cruel treatment the IPS uses against the hunger strikers to push them to end their strike.

Human Rights and Awareness Raising Activities

This quarter, Addameer Training and Awareness Unit carried out several Human Rights awareness raising activities, particularly on the issue of Palestinian prisoners in light of recent and ongoing rights- violations.



A poem about Palestinian prisoners is read on 18 September 2015 in Dura Al Khalil (Hebron).



Addameer carries out "Know your Rights" session in Hebron on 13 August 2015

Quarterly Newsletter— July to September 2015

Human Rights and Awareness Raising Activities

Addameer volunteers from the Addameer program hang posters on 23 September 2015 in Ramallah town center, to raise awareness about administrative detention, a process in which Palestinians are held without charge or trial on grounds of "secret information".



Volunteers hang posters at Rukab Street in Central Ramallah.



Volunteers hang posters on Al Manara Square in Ramallah Town Center.



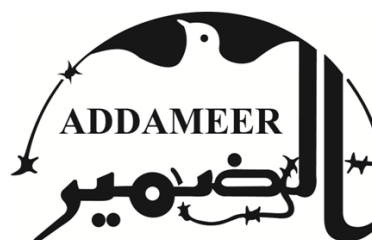
Poster hanging near near roundabout of Al Manara Square in Ramallah Town Center.

Military Court Updates

Legal Unit Coordinator at Addameer Ayman Nasser has been released from Israeli detention, after having spent about one year in administrative detention without charge or trial. He was arrested on 18 September 2014 and placed under administrative detention. An administrative detention renewal order was issued on 08 December 2014, and this order was set to end on 16 March 2015. It was then renewed again and set to end on 15 June 2015. On 7 June 2015, the order was renewed an additional 3 months, and **he was released on 13 September 2015, after having spent about one year in detention without charge or trial.**



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