

## The Systematic use of Torture and Ill-Treatment at Israeli Interrogation Centers

### Cases of Torture Committed at al-Mascobiyya Interrogation Center

Since its creation, the occupying state enforced and developed laws and practices that led to both the systematic use of torture and to absolute impunity for the perpetrator of this crime. Historically speaking, several torture methods were used against Palestinians, that included but were not limited to shaking, the baby chair, covering the head with a bag, forced listening to loud music, the closet, ripping of nails, and many other methods that were used to extract confessions from Palestinian detainees. In fact, since the beginning of the occupation in 1967, 73 Palestinian detainees were killed in Israeli interrogations.

The Israeli occupation authorities never stopped resorting to torture as the standard operating procedure in extracting confessions from Palestinian detainees. In point of fact, the crime of torture is systematic and widely-spread with the complicity of the Israeli judicial system. At the end of 2019, the intelligence agency "Shabak" subjected a number of detainees at al-Mascobiyya interrogation center to severe physical and psychological torture, without any form of monitoring and protection. Addameer is the legal representative for around 50 cases of the detainees in interrogations. Those detainees included university students, human rights defenders, and political leader, which were all subjected to severe physical and psychological torture and/or ill-treatment.

#### **The Complicity of Doctors**

The torture methods used against those detainees resulted in visible marks, and bruises on their bodies. Additionally, several of them were not able to walk or even move due to the harsh beatings and stress positions they were subjected to. However, doctors at the clinic in al-Mascobiyya interrogation center did not document the visible marks of torture on their bodies, and did not report any of these cases. In fact, the doctors approved the detainees' physical capability to be sent back to interrogations, ignoring the visible bruises, ulcer wounds, and torture marks on the bodies of those detainees who also verbally expressed their feelings of severe pain to the doctors. Furthermore, it was clear to Addameer, especially from the medical reports the lawyers managed to obtain, that the clinic's doctors do not document the cases of torture and ill-treatment, in accordance with the Istanbul Protocol manual.<sup>1</sup> These practices do not only reveal, but in fact proves the doctors complicity in the committed crime of torture, as they covered and disregarded the systematic use of severe torture at al-Mascobiyya interrogation center.

#### **The Ban on Lawyer's Visits**

According to Israeli military laws, a detainee can be held in interrogations for a total period of 75 days without receiving any official charges. According to these same laws, a detainee can be banned from meeting his/her lawyer for a total period of 60 days. Those detainees, in particular, were held for extremely long periods under interrogation, and were also banned from lawyers' visits and legal consultation. Around 200 orders of banning lawyers' visits were issued in three months, those order were constantly renewed several times. The duration of the ban on meeting the lawyers, ranged from 30 to 45 days in some cases. Detainees were denied the right to see their lawyer, even in the court sessions that were conducted while the lawyers' ban was effective. Those sessions were divided into two rounds, one with the lawyer without the detainee, and when lawyer would leave, the second round would start with the detainee who is banned from the lawyer's visit, where he would be brought

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<sup>1</sup> Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, United Nations, 2004.

into the court room without his lawyer. Those detainees were deprived of their right to counsel<sup>2</sup> in the most sensitive period of detention. Instead of receiving legal counseling, those detainees were only left with the interrogators who have been granted impunity for the crime of torture. Addameer's lawyers were unable to document and report on the crime torture and ill-treatment, the detainees have suffered from during the interrogation itself.

Addameer's lawyers filed 22 petitions to Israeli High Court against the ban orders prohibiting detainees from lawyers' visits. Out of all of these petitions, 18 were rejected and the other four were withdrawn based on an approval for a lawyer's visit. Addameer's lawyers have also filed 80 appeals to the Israeli military court of appeals against the detention periods for these detainees. Only 12 of these appeals were accepted to only shorten the detention period that was constantly being renewed. The rest of 68 appeals were all rejected, despite the fact that the judges have seen the torture marks on the bodies of these detainees and were informed in detail about their medical situations.

This reveals how the Israeli military court and High Court are not only irregularly constituted courts, but also not independent, nor impartial.<sup>3</sup> As they prioritize the requests and needs of the Israeli intelligence agency, without any consideration to the detainees' rights. Most importantly, the insistence of the Israeli judges at both courts to extend the interrogation periods with the knowledge of the committed torture proves the complicity of this legal system in the committed crimes. In fact, the judges also obstructed the documentation of torture by attempting to delay the delivery of medical reports and pictures of the bodies of those tortured detainees, instead of monitoring and preventing torture themselves, which is their legal obligation.

Addameer's lawyers succeeded in obtaining pictures that show the torture marks on the body of the detainee, in only one case, Walid Hanatsheh. The judge at the military court accepted the requests of Addameer's lawyer and ordered the detention center's doctor to document the torture marks on body of the detainee, by taking pictures, but still, extended Walid's detention. Unfortunately, Addameer was unable to obtain pictures for the other detainees who were also subjected to torture. For instance, in the case of Samer Arbeed, there was a clear rejection for the request to take pictures of his body from the interrogation center, although Samer at that time was still in the hospital. Nonetheless, Addameer managed to acquire medical reports for a number of these detainees, which do not include a detailed description of their medical situation from the severe torture they were subjected to.

The role played by the interrogators, the doctors, and the judges at both courts were complementary to each other, which was evidently revealed in the court sessions and its protocols. For example, in the case of the detainee, Mais Abu Gush, she informed the judge of her detention conditions and the torture methods she was subjected to. However, after the session, the lawyer noticed in the session's protocol that part of Mais's statement was withheld and covered in black. This is just another example of the constant attempt to hide the crime of torture and prevent the lawyers from documenting and protecting the detainee and thus obstructing the lawyer's defense for the case.

### **The Gag Order**

Addameer was banned from publishing any of the details of torture for over three months due to a gag order issued by the magistrate court in Jerusalem. This gag order was first issued on 9 September

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<sup>2</sup> First Geneva Convention, Article 49; Second Geneva Convention, Article 50; Third Geneva Convention, Article 84, and Article 96; Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 72, and Article 123; Additional Protocol I, Article 75(4)(a); Additional Protocol II, Article 6(2)(a). Also, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14(3).

<sup>3</sup> Third Geneva Convention, Article 84; Additional Protocol II, Article 6(2); Additional Protocol I, Article 75(4); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14(1); European Convention on Human Rights, Article 6(1).

2019 and renewed multiple times until it was violated by the Israeli intelligence agency itself on 19 December 2019. The issuance of this gag order was specifically granted to hide the crimes of torture committed against Palestinian detainees held at al-Mascobiyya interrogation center in Jerusalem. Addameer filed an appeal against the gag order but the appeal was rejected. It was difficult to argue against the gag order especially because it was issued in a one-sided court session, without the having the defendants and their lawyers at the session or even informing them after its issuance. Addameer and its lawyers knew about these gag orders and also about the violation of it mainly through the media.

### **Systematic Torture and lack of Accountability**

Despite the absolute and non-derogable prohibition against torture, enshrined under article (2) of the International Convention against Torture and ratified by Israel on 3 October 1991, torture against Palestinian detainees is systematic and widespread in Israeli occupation prisons and interrogation centers. These cases are just one proof of the gross systematic use of torture and most importantly the complicity of the Israeli judges at both the military and civil courts in committing the crime of torture. In fact, torture has been sanctioned by a series of Israeli High Court decisions. In High Court decision number 5100/94 in 1999,<sup>4</sup> the court did not make an absolute prohibition against torture. Despite the fact that this decision claimed to state that torture is ill-legal in Israeli laws, but still, the High Court made permissible the use of “special means of pressure” in the case of a “ticking bomb” scenario, where interrogators believe that a suspect is withholding information that could prevent an impending threat to civilian lives as stated in Article (1)34 of the Israeli Penal Code of 1972. This exception constitutes a grave legal loophole that legitimizes the torture and cruel treatment by the Israeli intelligence interrogators against Palestinian detainees and also protects interrogators who are granted impunity for their crimes.

Moreover, the Israeli High Court, in the Tbeish case number 9018/17 in 2018,<sup>5</sup> issued a ruling which expanded the concept of a “ticking bomb” scenario to include cases that are not imminent security threats. In this case, the judge based his ruling on previous decisions and broadened the element of immediacy not to be limited with a time frame.

Israeli High Court decisions made accountability difficult for the crime of torture and it gave impunity to those who commit this crime and/or are complicit in it. In point of fact, Addameer, in the last ten years, has annually submitted tens of complaints of torture, and only one of them, a sexual harassment case, was open for investigation. However, rather than pressing a list of charges against the perpetrators, in this case, it was closed without indictment. Furthermore, according to the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI), about 1,200 complaints of torture during Israeli interrogations have been filed since 2001. All the cases were closed without a single indictment.<sup>6</sup>

### **Physical and Psychological Torture and ill-Treatment used against Palestinian Detainees**

Palestinian detainees suffer from the occupation forces inhuman and degrading treatment from the first moments of the arrest. Detainees suffer from invasive body searches, humiliation and harsh

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<sup>4</sup> HCJ 5100/94, *Public Committee Against Torture in Israel et al. v. Government of Israel et al.*, Judgment. An English translation of the Court decision is available at: [http://www.hamoked.org/files/2012/264\\_eng.pdf](http://www.hamoked.org/files/2012/264_eng.pdf) [accessed 5 December 2019].

<sup>5</sup> HCJ 9018/17, *Firas Tbeish et al. v. The Attorney General*. An English translation of the Court decision is available at: [http://stoptorture.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/F.-Tbeish-Ruling-Nov.-2018.ENG\\_.pdf](http://stoptorture.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/F.-Tbeish-Ruling-Nov.-2018.ENG_.pdf) [accessed 22 December 2019].

<sup>6</sup> Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, *Torture in Israel 2019: Situation Report*, it can be found here: [Situation Report 2019](#).

beating throughout the arrest and the transfer process to the prisons or the interrogation centers. During the interrogations, the detainees were subjected to different forms of both physical and psychological torture. The used methods against them included, but were not limited to harsh beating, severe sleep deprivation, solitary confinement, stress positions, the denial of basic hygiene needs, which for example was used against the detainees Ahmad Kharouf and Nael Halabi among others. Furthermore, several detainees were kept in cold air-conditioned cells for long periods of time, such as Mamdouh Amara. Also, intimidation and threatening and intensive psychological torture including the use of family members and/or other detainees, such as what Samah Jaradat and Hassan Hashem were subjected to. Many other detainees were subjected to continuous and lengthy interrogation sessions, and were not presented with any list of charges. For example, the detainee, Islam Bargouthi was already under administrative detention when he was taken to al-Mascobiyya, where he spent around 20 days in interrogation, then he was taken back to prison, without receiving any list of charges. As for the detainee Carmel Bargouthi, he was subjected to a long and extremely difficult interrogation period, but was only provided a list of charges that included incitement through "facebook".

Addameer's lawyer have started collecting hard evidence of the crime of torture and ill-treatment, committed against these detainees from the very first day, in which the lawyers were permitted to meet with the detainees.

Many detainees were subjected to severe physical torture in an attempt to extract confessions and force them into self-incrimination. This paper provides a description of the cruel physical and physiological torture and ill-treatment, number of detainees were subjected to.

### **Samer Arbeed / 45 years old**

Samer was arrested on the morning of 25 September 2019 by Israeli occupation special forces in front of his workplace. He was then transferred to Ofer prison where the interrogation started immediately with him. Samer was harshly beaten all over his body and was subject to several stress positions which included, sitting on a small chair, where his legs cuffed to the lower part of the chair, and his hand cuffed to each other and lifted above his head to be pulled back and cuffed to a table placed behind Samer. During this stress position, he was subject to harsh beating targeting his chest, he also suffered additional pressure on his arms and chest whenever the interrogators would pull back the chains cuffed to his hands. Samer was also subject to the Banana position,<sup>7</sup> squatting in front of a wall position.<sup>8</sup>

Samer was subject to harsh beating all over his body while being in the stress positions, interrogators also placed a pressure on his neck in an attempt to suffocate him. Samer has fallen on the floor from the intensity of the harsh beating, whenever he falls the interrogators would sit on his chest and continue to harshly beat and slap him. After one day of interrogation at Ofer prison, Samer was transferred to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center where interrogation continued and he was subject

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<sup>7</sup> The detainee's legs cuffed to the lower part of a chair (the back of the chair is positioned to the side) and his hands cuffed to each other and pressured by the interrogators to the lower part of the chair. This position would mean that the detainee's body forms an arch extremely harming the detainee's chest and stomach. The detainees are forced into this position for more than the body can handle, thus, the body falls to the back on the floor or on the knees of an interrogator sitting behind the chair.

<sup>8</sup> In this position the detainee is forced to stand in front of a wall and squat at a 45-degree angle. Two interrogators would be standing each on one side of the detainee to pressure the detainee from his/her shoulders in order to increase the pressure placed on the detainee's body.

to the same torture methods. As a result of this ongoing torture Samer was unable to walk, he was transferred to his cell leaning on the interrogators, he also was unable to swallow and eat due to targeting his neck. Samer also was not able to take a shower because he could not stand, so they brought him a chair to sit on while taking a shower. He also could not urinate.

In Samer's first court session, which was held after he was subject to several forms of torture, he informed the judge of his medical situation and his urgent need to see a doctor, he also showed the judge the bruises and marks on his neck. The judge requested that Samer would be taken to a doctor. However, Samer was taken back to interrogation at al-Mascobiyya directly following the court session, the interrogators continued to use the same torture methods until he fainted. Samer was transferred to a hospital with life threatening injuries, and after around two weeks he woke up to find himself in the hospital with 11 broken ribs, renal failure and several bruises on his whole body. Samer was on an artificial respiration for several weeks and despite his critical medical condition one of the police guards fired a tear gas bomb in his Intensive Care Unit room. Later on, Samer lost all of his nails as a result of the torture he suffered from.

It is worth noting that on the same day of Samer's arrest the Israeli occupation forces held his wife, Noura, at Qalandia checkpoint for hours. At this same time, the occupation forces raided his house and caused a great damage to its belongings and confiscated some of their possessions.

#### **Jamil Der'awi / 40 years old**

Jamil was arrested on 12 November 2019 in the course of a raid on his house. The Israeli occupation forces damaged his house's belongings and strip-searched him at his house. Jamil was taken to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center, where he has spent around 45 days in interrogation. He was subjected to physical and psychological torture and ill-treatment. Jamil was taken to the clinic upon his arrival to the interrogation center for the regular checkup. he informed the doctor that he suffers from a herniated disk in his back. The interrogations started directly after the medical checkups. The first eight days of interrogation were extremely intense and violent.

Der'awi suffered from harsh beating, around ten interrogators were all beating him all over his body while his hands were cuffed to the back. In fact, interrogators focused on targeting his face with violent slaps and punches that resulted in dislocating his jaw from its place. Despite this injury, the interrogators continued to grab his jaw and deliberately moving it from its place to make sure it was displaced. Jamil was suffering from excruciating jaw pain while the harsh beating continued for another two hours. The interrogators also splashed him with water for a number of times, despite the fact that he was only wearing an undershirt covering the upper part of his body. They also pulled his hair and body then dragged him all over the interrogations room. Furthermore, the interrogators put iron chains on the ground in a longitudinal position and forced him to lie on the ground, then an interrogator would sit on his stomach and another interrogator would start moving the chains under his back causing extreme pain due to the desk condition he suffers from. Interrogators put extreme pressure on Jamil's neck and shoulders using their knees.

In one of the interrogation sessions, one of interrogators hit Jamil on his head which caused him to fall on the ground and lose his ability to see and speak. Jamil gradually retained his ability to see slowly, he managed to see in his left eye, however, he still cannot see in his right eye till this day. Jamil could not identify whether the interrogator hit him with his hand or using a tool.

Jamil was also subjected to cigarettes' burns in his body, mainly on the left and right side of both of his arms.

Those torture methods were repeatedly used in the first eight days of interrogation, despite the excruciating pain he suffered from all over his body and the mentioned jaw injury. After another few days, Jamil was transferred to Hadassah hospital where he received a screening for his head and jaw. In the hospital, the interrogators asked the doctors not to open a medical file for Jamil to document his condition and injuries on the basis that he was “a dangerous detainee and need to be transferred back to interrogations”. Which is exactly what happened. Jamil was brought back to interrogation where he continued to suffer from sleep deprivation and was prohibited from resting, despite his jaw injury and inability to, eat, walk and even move. Jamil was transferred to another cell with other detainees to help him move and assist him in eating mashed food using a straw.

Jamil Der’awi continue to suffer from injuries and consequences of the extreme torture he was subjected to. He suffers from un controlled shake in his body, extreme backpain, neck pain and inability to move it to the left, and blurred vision in his right eye.

### **Walid Hanatsheh / 51 years old**

Walid was arrested on 3 October 2019, at around 2:00 am from his apartment in Ramallah. He was taken to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center around 4:30 am where the interrogation started immediately. Walid was taken to a clinic at the interrogation center, he was asked several questions by a doctor without medical examinations. The doctor granted an approval that Walid is physically capable to handle the interrogation. The interrogation sessions were none stop, each one of them lasted for eight continuous hours, followed by a break for eating, and using the bathroom. Walid was taken to the clinic almost once every day. The prison services’ doctor approved Walid’s physical capability to continue the interrogation in every single medical checkup, despite the obvious signs of torture. He was provided with meals inside the interrogation room and not in his own cell. This continued for more than two weeks, he was suffering from sleep deprivation during this whole period, he was unable to sleep or only allowed to sleep in his cell for one to two hours a day. During the interrogation sessions, three to four interrogations were present with Walid, and at some of the sessions there were around ten interrogations.

In addition to sleep deprivation, Walid was subjected to several forms of physical torture, such as, harsh slapping on his face while his eyes are blindfolded and his hands are cuffed, so he could not anticipate when he is going to be struck or know where is it coming from. Those harsh prolonged beatings where interrogators would use their knees, feet, hands and even finger tips to beat Walid mainly targeting his chest and thighs. Walid felt that one of his ribs was broken, his face was severely swollen almost the whole period of the interrogation. He still suffers from injuries in his thighs to this day.

Israeli integrators also used positional torture (stress positions) against Walid. They forced his into several different positions. The first one, Walid’s hands were cuffed to a table positioned behind him,<sup>9</sup> The second was squatting in front of a wall position,<sup>10</sup> the third one was the rounded chains position;

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<sup>9</sup> Sitting on a chair while handcuffed to the back where the hands are positioned on the table behind the detainee’s chair. In this position the pressure would be mainly on the detainee’s shoulders. In Walid’s case, in specific, interrogators used to sit on his knees to pressure his chest to the back, and/or interrogators would pull his hands to the back to inflict further pressure on his shoulders, at the same time other interrogators would forcefully push his head (face) to the back.

<sup>10</sup> In this position, the detainee would be standing in front of a wall. Hands would be cuffed to the back, and two interrogators would be standing each on one of the sides of the detainee. The detainee would be forced to squat and the interrogators would be pushing the detainee from his/her shoulder. After sometime the detainee would fall on the ground. Also see footnote 8 for more details.

where the detainee would be lying on the ground and his hands cuffed to a set of chains in a rounded shape that is placed under his back,<sup>11</sup> and the banana position.<sup>12</sup> During all of these positions, the interrogators would be pulling Walid's hair and facial hair from the roots, yelling, cursing, humiliating him, splashing him with water, placing pressure on his neck and harshly beating and slapping him. Walid had several injuries in different parts of his body during the interrogations, including face and head have bled several times during the interrogations. Moreover, his whole body was covered with massive bruises. Walid lost his ability to walk as a result of excruciating torture, he was also transferred on a wheelchair between the court and interrogation center.

In addition to physical torture, Walid was subjected to various forms of psychological torture such as threats, blackmailing and manipulation. Israeli interrogators, arrested his daughter and kept her at al-Mascobiyya interrogation center for three days in an attempt to pressure Walid. Until this day, Walid suffers from the severe torture he was subjected to throughout the 63 days he spent in interrogations which included 45 days of ban on lawyer's visits.

### **Abed al-Raziq Farraj / 57 years old**

Farraj was arrested on 27 September 2019 and was issued a six-months administrative detention order. On 23 October 2019 Abed al-Raziq was transferred from Ofer prison to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center. He spent around 40 days in interrogations and suffered from both physical and psychological torture and ill-treatment throughout this period. Upon his arrival he was taken to the clinic at the interrogation center for medical tests (blood pressure) then directly taken to the interrogation room.

Abed al-Raziq was threatened constantly with harming his family members, specifically his youngest son, Wadee' Farraj, who was arrested and taken to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center in same period as his father. The interrogators also made explicit to Walid that he is the oldest detainee since 2002 that undergoes these violent intense interrogation methods.

Each interrogation session lasted for around eight hours and then a break would be given to Farraj that would be used for eating, using the bathroom. This continued for more than ten days where Farraj was sleep deprived for this entire period. He was subjected to harsh beating and extreme slaps on his face that resulted with swollen on his face. He was also beaten on his neck in different forms including the finger tips which caused a difficulty to eat and swallow. The interrogators also used a number of stress positions on Farraj, such as squatting in front of a wall position,<sup>13</sup> squatting in one specific square on the ground without moving,<sup>14</sup> and the rounded chains positions.<sup>15</sup> In each one of the sessions, five or six interrogators were present with Abed, and throughout the sessions while Abed was cuffed and

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<sup>11</sup> The detainee is forced into lying on the ground with the hands chained to each other with iron chains (a rounded half a meter of chains) and positioned behind the detainee's back. This position also includes officers sitting on the detainee to place pressure on the body causing severe pain to the chest and stomach. Interrogators would also put their knees on the detainee's shoulders and at the same time other interrogators would sit on the detainee's legs.

<sup>12</sup> See footnote 7 for the details

<sup>13</sup> See footnote 8 for the details. In Abed's case: the interrogators were harshly beating him on his thighs while being in this position. Every time Walid would fall on the ground the interrogators would lift him up and continue harshly beating him.

<sup>14</sup> See footnote 8 and 10 for the details. In Abed's case: in addition to the squatting, his cuffed hands were lifted to above his head, and whenever Abed fell down on the floor he was lifted up by the interrogators from his neck.

<sup>15</sup> See footnote 11 for the details

forced into a stress position, the interrogators were harshly beating and slapping him with a focus on his face, neck, and thighs.

Abed al-Raziq decided to start a hunger strike during his interrogation and he stopped eating and taking his medications for three days while being tortured in different methods and forms. Not even the hunger strike caused the interrogators to stop torturing Abed.

#### **I'teraf al-Rimawi / 44 years old**

I'teraf was arrested on 23 September 2019, he was taken to Ofer prison where he was issued a six-month administrative detention order. Following one month of his detention, on 23 October 2019, I'teraf was transferred to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center. I'teraf was subject to severe physical and psychological torture and ill-treatment for around 40 days. The interrogation sessions with him started immediately upon his arrival to the interrogation center. He was subjected to lengthy interrogation sessions and sleep deprivation. During the second day of interrogation he was subjected to intensive physical torture. I'teraf was forced into several stress positions which included the banana position,<sup>16</sup> and squatting in front of a wall position.<sup>17</sup> He was taken to the clinic several times on a wheelchair as a result of the harsh beating he suffered from throughout the interrogation period. Furthermore, he suffered from a swelling in his feet and an extreme back pain. I'teraf lost his balance several times and also his ability to walk as he was moved in a wheelchair.

Moreover, I'teraf suffered from intensive psychological torture and ill-treatment that included threatening, cursing, humiliation and shouting at him. He was also forced to watch a video for Samer Arbeed being unconscious at the hospital to intimidate him through informing him that he will be tortured like Samer.

#### **Qassam Bargouthi / 26 years old**

Qassam was arrested from his house on 26 August 2019, by an Israeli special force. In the course of the arrest, Qassam was that brutally attacked by trained security dogs. The dogs attacked Qassam's legs and genitals area resulting in serious injuries. Qassam was taken to the hospital where the wounds in the genital area were stitched and he was transferred directly from the hospital to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center where he spent around 80 days in interrogations.

During the interrogation, Qassam was subjected to extreme harsh beating all over his body, in which the interrogators specifically targeted the injuries he obtained in the genitals area during his arrest. The harsh beatings and pressure on his injuries resulted in reopening his wounds and caused constant bleeding. Israeli Interrogators subjected Qassam to a number of stress positions. He was also subjected to extreme violent slaps on the face. Israeli interrogators pulled Qassam's facial hair from its roots. As a result, Qassam's body was covered with serious bruises, and ulcer wounds and severe swelling in his feet, which lasted for a long period of time. Qassam was also forbidden from using the toilet for a long period of time, which forced him into defecating/urinating in his place, while being cuffed on the interrogation chair.

Qassam was repeatedly threatened with the arrest of his family members and friends. The Israeli occupation forces arrested Qassam's mother and brother Carmel who were both subjected to interrogation at al-Mascobiyya. Qassam's father was also brought for questioning to the interrogation center. Israeli interrogators used Methods of psychological torture. Qassam was forced to see his family

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<sup>16</sup> See footnote 7 for details

<sup>17</sup> See footnote 8 and 10 for details



members while being detained and interrogated. He was forced to hear the sounds and voices of other detainees being harshly tortured.

### **Yazan Mugamis / 26 years old**

Yazan was arrested on 11 September 2019 from his house in Birzeit. The Israeli occupation forces attacked him during his transfer to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center.

Yazan was subjected to both physical and psychological torture and ill-treatment for around two months. During the interrogations, Yazan's sessions lasted for 22 – 23 continuous hours with only one to two hours of sleep and rest a day. After 2 weeks in interrogation, Israeli interrogators increased the intensity of physical torture by subjecting Yazan to several stress positions, including the Banana position,<sup>18</sup> and harsh beating with a focus on targeting his thighs. Yazan was also subjected to extreme harsh slaps on his face.

In addition to this, Yazan's mother was arrested from her house after the middle of the night and taken to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center, where she was held for a whole day for questioning. Yazan was forced to watch his mother being interrogated in an attempt to pressure him.

### **Mais Abu Gush / 23 years old**

Mais was arrested on 29 August 2019 in a raid on her house. Mais's family house was violently raided by a large number of Israeli occupation forces that were heavily armed and escorted by trained security dogs. The occupation forces thoroughly searched the house, damaged the family's belongings and confiscated laptops and cell phones. Mais was brutally treated by soldiers while being transferred to Qalandia military checkpoint. She was also strip searched and threatened to be strip searched by a male soldier. Israeli soldiers cursed Mais, humiliated her and threatened her with rape.

Abu Gush was then transferred to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center, where she was subjected to severe physical and psychological torture and ill-treatment, for around one month. Mais was subjected to lengthy interrogation sessions that deprived her from sleeping and resting. Mais was threatened with the arrest of her family members and the demolition of her house for the second time.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, she was threatened and blackmailed with her personal relationships. Mais was forced into taking a polygraph test several times. Moreover, Mais's younger brother, Suliman was arrested and she was forced to meet with him at al-Mascobiyya interrogation center. Both her parents were also brought for questioning at al-Mascobiyya interrogation center where they have also met with her in an attempt to pressure her.

Mais was subjected to intensive physical torture, which included extreme harsh slaps on her face while her eyes were blindfolded. She was also forced into several stress positions, such as the banana position,<sup>20</sup> hands cuffed to a table position to her back,<sup>21</sup> the squatting in front of wall position.<sup>22</sup> The physical torture Mais was subjected to resulted in injuries in her hands and legs. Mais obtained several bleeding wounds in her legs and hands due to the tight iron cuffs.

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<sup>18</sup> See footnote 7 for details

<sup>19</sup> The Israeli occupation forces demolished Mais's house around four years ago after her brother was accused of committing an alleged attack.

<sup>20</sup> See footnote 7 for details

<sup>21</sup> See footnote 9 for details

<sup>22</sup> See footnotes 8 and 10 for details. "interrogators used to pressure me from my shoulders when I was in this position, and whenever I used to fall on the floor, they used to harshly lift me up."

Mais was also deprived from her basic feminine needs throughout the interrogation period. She was provided with one sanitary napkin a day. Also, she was also not allowed to use the toilet or to shower when she needed, she was only allowed to when the interrogators pleased to.

After around one month, Mais's was transferred to Damon prison and was provided with list of charges, which included participating in university activities and coordinating a summer camp.

#### **Nitham Imtair / 22 years old**

Nitham was arrested on 25 September 2019, by Israeli occupation special forces. He was taken to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center where he spent around 40 days in interrogations. Nitham was subjected to both physical and psychological torture and various forms of ill-treatment.

Imtair was harshly beaten in different areas. He was violently slapped and spited on his face. Israeli integrators also pulled his facial hair from its roots. Additionally, he was prohibited from using the toilet for long periods. He was also not allowed to eat meals in his cell, interrogator used to bring his meals to the interrogation room and remove it after a couple of minutes before being able to finish the meal. Nitham was subjected to a number of stress positions as well, in which interrogators put extreme pressure on his shoulders and harshly beaten him on his thighs. Nitham was brought back to a cell on a wheelchair as he was unable to walk and even move his parts from torture.

#### **Rebhi Karajeh / 24 years old**

Rebhi was arrested on 26 August 2019 by Israeli occupation special forces and was taken directly to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center. In the first week of interrogation, he suffered from lengthy interrogation sessions and extreme sleep deprivation, followed by cruel physical torture. Rebhi was subjected to extreme violent and harsh beatings all over his body, focusing on his thighs. The interrogators forced Rebhi to stand with being blindfolded and handcuffed while harshly beat him until he falls on the ground, to force him into standing again and continue with the harsh beating. Rebhi was subjected to several stress positions, such as the banana position,<sup>23</sup> the squatting in front of a wall position,<sup>24</sup> and hands cuffed to a table positioned behind Rebhi.<sup>25</sup>

Rebhi could not move his mouth as a result of the extreme violent slaps on his face. Rebhi also fainted during the interrogation session, as he suffered from excruciating back pain and could not physically stand and walk. The interrogators forced Rebhi to hear the sounds and voices of other detainees being tortured to scare and pressure him. He was also held in solitary confinement for a long period.

Rebhi was held under interrogations for around 60 days, before being provided with a list of charges. Shortly after his indictment, Rebhi was taken back to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center, for a second interrogation period. He spent over 100 days at al-Mascobiyya, where he was subjected to severe physical and psychological torture and ill-treatment.

#### **Aysar Ma'rouf / 29 years old**

Aysar was arrested on 26 August 2019 by Israeli special forces, he was taken to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center. Aysar has spent around one month under interrogation. He was subjected to severe physical and psychological torture and ill-treatment. Aysar suffered from lengthy interrogation sessions, and sleep deprivation. He was also forced to sit for a polygraph test several times.

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<sup>23</sup> See footnote 7 for details

<sup>24</sup> See footnote 8 and 10 for details

<sup>25</sup> See footnote 9 for details

Furthermore, he was forced into several stress positions, that included the banana position,<sup>26</sup> the squatting (frog) position,<sup>27</sup> and standing on one leg position.<sup>28</sup> Aysar was harshly slapped on his face and beaten on his thighs while being forced into the stress positions.

Israeli interrogators used extensive psychological torture against Aysar, particularly when both his mother and wife were brought for questioning to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center, in attempt to pressure him and make him believe that they were arrested. The interrogators repeatedly forced him to listen the sounds and voices of other prisoners being cruelly tortured in nearby cells.

Aysar's brother, Tal'at Ma'rouf was arrested along with him on the same day, and issued a three-months administrative detention order. Tal'at was recently released recently after the end of the administrative order.

### **Israr Ma'rouf / 21 years old**

Israr is a third-year law student at Birzeit university. He was arrested on 24 August 2019 and issued a four-month administrative detention order. On 7 September 2019, Israr was transferred from Ofer prison to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center. Israr was held under interrogation for around 70 days.

Throughout his interrogation, he suffered from lengthy interrogation sessions and extreme sleep deprivation. Israr was sent to the prison cell for short periods in the early morning hours to sleep, where interrogators would deliberately disrupt his sleep by playing loud music or putting another person with him in the cell. Throughout the whole interrogation period, Israr was threatened with the arrest of his mother, sister and sister in-law, who were brought to the interrogation center for questioning. Israr was also subjected to a number of stress positions, which included, hands cuffed to a table position behind,<sup>29</sup> the banana positions,<sup>30</sup> the squatting (frog) position.<sup>31</sup> While being in these different positions, Israr used to fall on the ground after sometime and/or on the knees of an interrogator sitting in front on him. Israr used to fall from the extreme pain and exhaustion. The positions also included the rounded chains positions.<sup>32</sup>

Israr fainted several times during his interrogations from the excruciating pain. He was also moved on a wheelchair during the interrogation because he lost his ability to walk for a number of days.

### **Ameer Hazboun / 22 years old**

Ameer is a fourth-year Engineering student at Birzeit university. He was arrested from Birzeit dormitory on 10 September 2019, at around 1:00 am. Ameer was harshly beaten by the soldiers while being transferred to Al-Mascobiyya interrogation center, using their feet, knees, and machine guns,

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<sup>26</sup> See footnote 7 for details

<sup>27</sup> The detainee in this position is forced into squatting (on his toes) his hand would be cuffed to each other and placed in front of the detainee. One interrogator would be standing in front of the detainee and another would be standing behind the detainee to prevent him from falling down. In this position the pressure is mainly placed on the detainee's legs and feet. Also, this position lasted for around 40 – 50 minutes.

<sup>28</sup> In this position the detainee is forced to stand with his back to a wall and one of his legs lifted in a shape of 90-degree angle. Two interrogators would be standing each on one side of the detainee to pressure the detainee from his shoulders in order to increase the pressure placed on the detainee's thighs. The detainee's hand would be cuffed to his back with a chain that is around half a meter long. The detainee would not handle the pressure on his body and fall down on the ground, after he/she falls the interrogators would force the detainee back into the stress position.

<sup>29</sup> See footnote 9 for details

<sup>30</sup> See footnote 7 for details

<sup>31</sup> See footnote 27 for details

<sup>32</sup> See footnote 11 for details

which resulted in bruises all over his body, and an injury in the forehead. Upon his arrival to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center, he was taken to the clinic, where he informed the prison's doctor that he has a previous injury in his left hand and that it has platinum in it.

The interrogation sessions with Ameer in the first two weeks lasted for 22 hours, with two or three hours break a day for sleeping. He was severely sleep deprived in the interrogations and has fallen asleep several times during the sessions. Whenever he fell asleep, interrogators would either loudly shout at him or extremely shake him.

Following one week of intense interrogation, the interrogators threatened Ameer with harming his father who was brought to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center for questioning in an attempt to pressure Ameer. During the second week of interrogation, one of Ameer's interrogation sessions lasted for two continuous days, with only ten-minute breaks for the meals. Interrogators used a number of stress positions against Ameer. These positions included the banana position,<sup>33</sup> and another position, in which Ameer would be standing on his toes and hands cuffed above his head to a wall behind him. This position would inflict extreme pressure on Ameer's hands, arms and shoulders, which would physically affect Ameer's ability to balance himself and stand, not only on his toes, but even his ability to stand on his feet.

Ameer spent a total of 50 days in interrogations where he suffered cruel torture and ill-treatment methods. He was then given a list of charges at the Israeli military court which included university activism.

#### **Tariq Matar / 31 years old**

Tariq was arrested on 2 October 2019, while crossing a checkpoint in the West Bank. He was transferred to Ofer prison where he was issued a six-months administrative detention order. On 19 November 2019, Tariq was transferred to al-Mascobiyya interrogation center, where he has spent around 35 days under interrogation.

Tariq suffered from continuous interrogation sessions for 6 days, with only one hour break a day for sleeping. On the sixth day of interrogations, Israeli interrogators started using more extreme physical methods of torture with Matar. Those included a number of stress positions. For example, Tariq was forced into the banana position,<sup>34</sup> the squatting (frog) position,<sup>35</sup> the squatting in front of a wall position,<sup>36</sup> and hands cuffed to the back on a table position.<sup>37</sup> Matar was harshly beaten and slapped while being forced into the stress positions. The Israeli interrogators pulled Matar's facial hair from its roots. Moreover, at a certain point, Matar was prohibited from using the toilet, and when the interrogators eventually allowed him to use it, he had to be moved on a wheelchair because of his inability to walk or even move from torture.

#### **Kan'an Kan'an /33 years old**

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<sup>33</sup> See footnote 7 for details

<sup>34</sup> See footnote 7 for details

<sup>35</sup> See footnote 27 for details

<sup>36</sup> See footnote 8 and 10 for details

<sup>37</sup> See footnote 9 for details

Kan'an was arrested on 26 August 2019 from Kobar village, near Ramallah. He has spent a month under interrogation, at al-Mascobiyya interrogation center and was released on 26 September 2019 without receiving any charges.

Kan'an was subjected to severe physical and psychological torture and ill-treatment in interrogations. He was humiliated, harshly beaten, sleep deprived, threatened and pressured. Furthermore, He was subjected to a number of stress positions. Some of the positions that Kan'an suffered from included; the banana position,<sup>38</sup> the yoga position,<sup>39</sup> and sitting on an imaginary chair position,<sup>40</sup> and squatting in front the desk position.<sup>41</sup> Interrogators cursed, yelled and spit on Kan'an, while being cuffed in a stress position. Additionally, interrogators used to put Kan'an in a cell that is close to other interrogation rooms, to force him to hear the sounds of torture committed against other detainees.

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<sup>38</sup> See footnote 7 for details. "In addition to the banana position which was extremely painful, the interrogators used to sit on my legs and harshly punch me on my thighs. I fall down several times on the ground. Interrogators used to tell I have to count to 50 in order for the session to end but I used to fall down on the ground before even reaching the number 50. Every time I would fall down the interrogators would harshly beat me on my face."

<sup>39</sup> "my hands and legs are cuffed with iron cuffs, they forced me to put my hands in front of me and lift them above my head while squatting at the same time. Two interrogators were pressuring me from my shoulders but I wasn't allowed to move or fall on the ground or otherwise they will harshly beat me up."

<sup>40</sup> "behind me was a wall but I'm not allowed to touch, then they would force me to sit on an imaginary chair, while sitting on an unexciting chair one of the interrogators would sit on my legs. In addition to this, other interrogators would be pressuring me from my shoulders as well."

<sup>41</sup> "the interrogators forced me to squat in front of a desk, my hands were cuffed to each other with big and long chains and placed to my back. I was kept in this position for almost an hour and whenever they ask a question, they would putt back my cuffed hands using the long iron chains."