

Israeli Occupation Forces Mass Arbitrary Arrests in Al-Aqsa Mosque During Ramadan

Date: 26 April 2022

Over the past two weeks, Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) have launched large-scale and brutal attacks against Palestinians across the occupied territories, most notably the repeated storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem during the holy month of Ramadan. Israeli attacks on Al-Aqsa Mosque reached a peak on 15 April 2022, when IOF raided the mosque before dawn during *fajr* prayer, firing sound grenades, tear gas, and rubber-coated steel bullets inside the mosque and in the compound, in addition to beating worshippers, paramedics, journalists, and mosque staff.

During the same attack in the early morning of 15 April, IOF carried out mass arbitrary arrests of about 470 Palestinians, the largest number of any single day in 2022, many of whom were children, according to documentation collected by lawyers, Palestinian prisoners, and human rights organizations, including Addameer. Following the arrests, during which many were beaten and physically assaulted, IOF transferred the detainees en masse in buses to detention centers. About 200 detainees were taken to the Mascobiyah interrogation and detention center in Jerusalem, whereas another 270 detainees were taken to a detention center in the illegal settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim, near Jerusalem.

On the evening of the same day, all Palestinian child detainees between the ages of 15-and 18 were released without charge. Among the detainees who were not released on Friday, 114 Palestinian detainees held in Ramleh prison had their detentions extended until Sunday, 17 April 2022. The charges leveled against those arrested mainly revolved around “illegal assembly” and “disrupting public order.” The majority of detainees were released on monetary bail and/or the condition that they are not allowed near the Old City, Damascus Gate, and/or Al-Aqsa Mosque for a certain period. Currently, 10 detainees remain in detention.

Below are the cases of three detainees arrested during the Al-Aqsa attacks on 15 April 2022, collected through interviews by Addameer.

Naseem Hassan

Residence: Issawiya, Jerusalem

Age: 23 years

Date of Arrest: 15 April 2022

Occupation: Worker

On 15 April 2022, between 8:30-and 9 am, Naseem was inside the Al-Aqsa (*Qibali*) Mosque, where he was reading Qur'an after praying *Fajr* prayer. Suddenly, large numbers of IOF, about 60-70 soldiers, raided the mosque and began attacking everyone inside. While Naseem was close to the exit of the mosque, several IOF attacked him, beating him with batons as he lay on the floor. IOF then proceeded to handcuff him with plastic ties and his hands to the back, before gathering all the detainees and transferring him with the group that was sent to the Ma'aleh Adumim Detention Center near the illegal settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim. During transport, IOF shove and beat the detainees as a form of instigation and repression.

Once they reached Adomim Detention Center, IOF transferred the detainees to an open yard, where they sat handcuffed under the sun for hours until about 6 pm and were questioned about their activities. Afterward, they were transferred again to Mascobiyah Detention Center in

Jerusalem, and then to **Beersheeva** prison, where they were strip-searched and sent to a cell, that was 16 detainees in total. It wasn't until midnight that they were only provided with water and bread to break their fast. On the second day, they were given extremely poor and undercooked food to break their fast, which the detainees refused to eat.

On Sunday 17 April, Naseem was released without charge or trial under the condition that he stay away from Damascus Gate and Al Aqsa Mosque for 15 days.

Mazen Qar'an

Residence: Al-Bireh, Ramallah

Age: 33 years

Date of Arrest: 15 April 2022

Occupation: Worker

On 15 April 2022, between 8:30-9 am, Mazen was inside the Al-Aqsa (*Qibali*) Mosque, after *Fajr* prayer. When IOF raided Al-Aqsa compound, those in the mosque were stuck for four hours in the mosque before IOF entered, attacked the mosque, beating worshippers with batons, and conducted mass arrests. Everyone who was arrested was laid on the floor and handcuffed with plastic ties to the back. Mazen, who was barefoot at the time, was not allowed to wear shoes.

Mazen was among the detainees taken to Ma'aleh Adumim Detention Center near the illegal settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim, where they were taken to the open yard and stayed on their knees under the sun for a few hours. They were questioned by an officer while in the yard. Around sunset, they were taken to Mascobiyah Detention Center to another yard and then taken one by one to be photographed and asked a set of questions, after which they were taken to Ramleh Prison.

At Ramleh Prison, they were subjected to a search and medical questions, including a COVID-19 test. They were detained in Ramleh Prison until Saturday, 16 April, under the pretext that they had an impending court hearing at 8 pm that evening. In the hearing, the court ruled to extend their detention for another two days until Monday. At Ramleh Prison, they were held in a cell with four dirty mattresses and a small dirty bathroom with no door. On the first day, they were given a meal that consisted of rotten eggs, leading them to not eat for the entire day. On Monday 18 April, Mazen was released after signing a bond of 3000NIS if the incident took place again.

Asadalddin Bani Maflah

Residence: Beitunah, Ramallah

Age: 28 years

Date of Arrest: 15 April 2022

Marital Status: Married

On 15 April 2022, between 8:30-9 am, Asadalddin was inside the Al-Aqsa (*Qibali*) Mosque, after *Fajr* prayer when IOF raided the Al-Aqsa (*Qibali*) Mosque. During the raid, IOF broke the doors of the mosque's clinic and threw sound grenades, and tear gas, addition to rubber-coated steel bullets, and arrested people. There were dozens of injured worshippers who were arrested while there was still blood on their heads and they weren't given any medical attention for long hours, and they were put alongside us under the sun.

IOF also broke the mosaic glasses of the mosque near the roof, throwing tear gas inside the mosque from above. During the mass arrests, they Brough all 400-450 of us together in the mosque, violently beating us with batons, kicking, and punching and they confiscated our phones and put them in bags. Most of the beatings targeted the head and the upper body.

During the arrest, IOF forced Asadalddin to the floor before handcuffing him with plastic zip ties, pulling on them painfully to the point that he still suffers from pain days later. Similarly, while being transported to Adomim Detention Center, IOF and the interrogation officers would beat the detainees throughout. At Adumim, they forced the detainees on their knees in the sun for hours. When one detainee objected to the tightness of the handcuffs, he was beaten by IOF. One group of detainees stayed in the yard until 4 pm, Asadalddin among them, whereas another group stayed longer. The former group of around 70 detainees was taken to Mascobiyah Detention Center and placed in an open yard for another 3 hours.

Later, they were taken to Beersheeva prison at around 9:30 pm the next day, and despite it being the time of *Iftar* (breaking fast), they did not give us anything except water. On arrival, Asadalddin was subjected to a strip search, and it wasn't until 11:30 pm that they were given a meal that consisted of bread and cream cheese; for *suhoor*, they were given the same meal.

On Saturday, 16 April, Asadalddin was taken with other detainees to Mascobiyah Detention Center, where their detention was extended and they were transferred to Ramleh prison. During their transfer, they spent hours sitting, handcuffed, and crammed together in cages.

On Monday morning, they were taken again to Mascobiyah, where they were physically assaulted and beaten. In court, the Israeli military prosecutor tried to separate Asadalddin's file, along with a few others, from the charges levied against the majority of detainees. Later that day, the court ordered their release and they were released from the detention center at around 10 pm.

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Since the beginning of 2022, IOF [arrested](#) over 2,140 Palestinians, the majority of which took place in Jerusalem and Jenin. Arrests escalated during March 2022 and with the beginning of the Holy month of Ramadan, reaching their peak on April 15, during the mass arrests of 470 Palestinians.

Alarmingly, the scale of attacks and arbitrary arrests in Jerusalem is reminiscent of Israeli attacks preceding the May 2021 *Palestinian Unity Uprising*, leading to the expansion of [mass arbitrary arrests and detention](#) and heightened violence against the Palestinian people all across occupied Palestine. The repeated attacks on Al-Aqsa Mosque take place alongside escalated IOF violence and extrajudicial killings of Palestinians in Jenin, Nablus, Bethlehem, and Silwad. Up until the end of March 2022, 34 Palestinians have been killed by occupation forces.