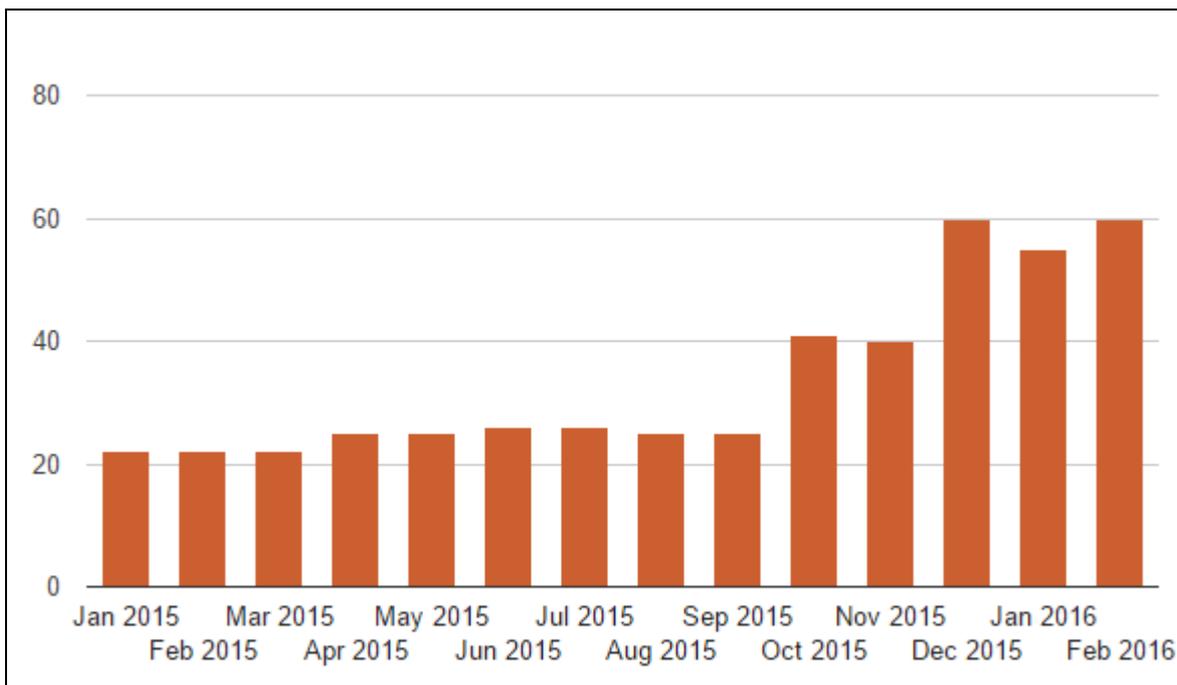


7 March 2016

OCCUPIED LIVES: IMPRISONMENT OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN AND GIRLS

Since the beginning of the occupation in 1967, approximately 10,000 Palestinian women have been arrested and detained by Israeli forces. Currently, there are approximately 60 Palestinian females held in occupation prisons and detention centers, including 10 female children and 3 administrative detainees. In 2015, occupation forces arrested 106 Palestinian women and girls, representing an increase of 70% compared with the number of women and girls arrested in 2013, and an increase of 60% from 2014. During October 2015, an escalation began in the occupied Palestinian territory in response to the Israeli occupation's widespread human rights violations and escalating incidents at Al-Aqsa Mosque, as well as the ever-growing settlement activity and alongside impunity to crimes by settlers, including the arson and murder of the Dawabsheh family in Duma, Nablus on 31 July 2015. In these recent events, Israeli occupation forces (IOF) intensified human rights violations against Palestinians including mass arrests, leading to a significant rise in the number of Palestinian women and girls held in Israeli detention. Among those arrested were 13 underage girls, some of them who were wounded at the time of their arrest. Since the onset of 2016, 26 Palestinian women and girls have been arrested by occupation forces.



Monthly figure of female Palestinian prisoners inside Israeli prisons

ARREST AND DETENTION OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN AND GIRLS

Palestinian women and girls are regularly arrested from the streets, Israeli checkpoints, and during violent night raids on their homes during military incursions, accompanied with the presence of Israeli soldiers, intelligence officers, and police dogs, during which destruction of household items and property damage takes place. They are subsequently forcibly taken to a military jeep, where they are blindfolded and their hands are tied behind their backs, and where they are subjected to torture and ill-treatment. In her testimony to Addameer's attorney, [Jureen Qadah](#), who was arrested in October 2015, described her arrest after a raid on her home.



On Thursday, 29/10/2015, a large number of IOF forces raided the home of Qadah family in Shuqba at 2:00 AM. After identifying Jureen (19 years old), the soldiers shackled her hands, blindfolded her and arrested her. Jureen stated that a female soldier pushed her to the ground causing a painful leg injury. Jureen told Addameer's lawyer during a visit in Ramleh prison that the IOF detained her for about 18 hours in a military jeep, taking her from one place to another, in inhumane conditions before taking her to HaSharon. On the next day she was taken to Ramleh prison again and then to Ofer where she was interrogated. The interrogation lasted for half an hour, and it revolved around her posts on Facebook. Afterwards, she was transferred back to HaSharon prison. On 1 November 2015, a three-month administrative detention order was issued against her.

Upon arriving to the interrogation or detention center, female Palestinian detainees are routinely denied an explanation of their rights and the reason for their detainment. Often, they are denied attorney access, and kept for several days or months under interrogation where they are subjected to torture and ill-treatment. The methods of torture and ill-treatment used against female Palestinian prisoners cause severe physical and mental suffering. Interrogation methods include prolonged isolation from the outside world, inhuman detention conditions, excessive use of blindfolds and handcuffs, sleep deprivation, denial of food and water for extended periods of time, denial of access to toilets, denial of access to showers or change of clothes for days or weeks, being forced into stress positions, yelling, insults and cursing, and sexual harassment.

DETENTION CONDITIONS OF FEMALE PRISONERS

Abuses against Palestinian female prisoners and detainees inside Israeli prisons continue despite the Israeli government's obligations under the Convention Against Torture to ban cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Addameer has documented numerous cruel acts committed by Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF), Israeli interrogators, and even medical staff against female Palestinian prisoners. Addameer documentation indicates that Palestinian women and girls frequently report denials of basic rights including health services, food and water, strip searches as a punitive measure, unsanitary confinement conditions, and sexual assault. The dehumanizing and degrading experiences that Palestinian women and girls are subjected to leave a long-term impact on their psychological, physical, and mental wellbeing.

Marah Bakeer, a 16-year-old girl from the city of Jerusalem, was arrested on 10 October 2015, after she was shot 10 times in her left arm by an Israeli soldier. Marah was not carrying anything, and when the soldier asked her to raise her hands, she did so, but he pushed her which made her fall on the ground. When the police attended the scene, a police officer pushed her to the ground again, causing her to hit her head with the ground. The police officer started searching her body with his hands, took her headscarf off and took her clothes off until he reached the underwear.

She was later transferred in an unprofessional manner by an ambulance to Hadassah Ein Karem, while she was left naked despite her requests to cover her body. Later, an investigator from the police attended the hospital, while she was naked and her body bleeding, and asked her if she tried to stab a soldier, which she denied. Later she was forced to enter the operating room without being informed of the nature of the operation or her medical status. She was then put in a room, with her hand and leg tied to the bed all the time, with the presence of two male guards, who cursed her and her mother repeatedly. One of the guards told her to die, and another guard took a 'selfie' with her against her will.

Marah was taken to the court on a wheelchair with the legs cuffed, and currently she is suffering from fractures in her arm. Marah was transferred to Ashkelon prison on 20 November 2015, where

the prison conditions were poor and where she was subjected to medical neglect. She was later transferred to the section for criminal prisoners in Ramle prison.

SOLITARY CONFINEMENT AND ISOLATION OF FEMALE PALESTINIAN PRISONERS

Palestinian female prisoners are subjected to isolation and solitary confinement within Israeli detention and prison centers, which has long-term psychological effects on those subjected to this punitive measure. The practice is a historic one, as Israeli forces have utilized the policy of isolation since 1967. Currently, the Israeli Prison Service exercises the policy of isolation based on the recommendation of the occupation intelligence services. Prisoners in isolation report anger, stress, boredom, losing a sense of reality, difficulty concentrating, sensitivity to stimuli and hallucinations. Based on mental health research, the rates of psychological and psychiatric problems are higher among those exposed to solitary confinement than among others.¹ A 2008 [study](#) conducted by Addameer and Physicians for Human Rights – Israel found that Palestinian prisoners are placed in isolation under purported security measures or as a result of mental illness, and that solitary confinement is used as a disciplinary measure during interrogation and imprisonment. The study also found that “isolation causes mental and physical damage, both among mentally healthy prisoners and among prisoners with a history of mental illness.”² The practice of isolation continues, and is applied to Palestinian female prisoners and detainees, even prior to any convictions.

Rawan Abu Ziyada, a 23 year old woman from Ramallah, was arrested on 15 July 2015, for allegedly trying to stab an Israeli soldier. Rawan was transferred to Hasharon in mid-December, and on 13 January 2016 she was summoned by the Intelligence Office in the prison, which she refused. A disciplinary hearing was held the following day, leading to a decision to place her in isolation for a week. She was additionally denied visitations for two months and was subjected to provocation by interrogators.

TRANSFER

Palestinian girls and women in Israeli detention are subjected to an exhausting and degrading transfer process between the place of their arrest, and the interrogation or detention center, and from their prison to and from the court. They are placed in uncomfortable seating, after being placed in a *mavar*, a cage-like holding place before the time of their transport. During the transport, which often takes several hours, they are denied access to restrooms. Excerpts from the affidavit of Palestinian Legislative Council member Khalida Jarrar, who suffers from multiple ischemic infarctions and hypercholesterolemia, describe the mentally and physically exhausting transfer process.

On April 29, 2015 at around 2:15 am, the guards entered the cell to woke us up to go to court. I was with prisoner H. We woke up and prepared ourselves to go to Ofer military court. At 3:30 they took us out of the section after shackling our hands and legs. It should be mentioned that according to the medical report they should put the shackles over the clothes on the wrists. The Nahshon forces did not do that, but they did not tighten the shackles.

¹ Peter S. Smith, The Effects of Solitary Confinement on Prison Inmates: A Brief History and Review of the Literature, Crime and Justice Vol. 34, No. 1, 488 (2006).

² The Sounds of Silence: Isolation and Solitary Confinement of Palestinians in Israeli Detention. July 2008, Addameer and Physicians for Human Rights – Israel. Available at <http://www.addameer.org/sites/default/files/publications/isolation-eng.pdf>

H. and I entered the Nahshon vehicle and sat in a 1.5 x 0.5 meter space (a cell inside the vehicle). We sat on leather chairs opposite to each other and then the cell's door was closed. This was at around 3:45. The vehicle moved at around 5:00 am. We sat inside the car for an hour and 15 minutes without moving. We arrived at Ramleh at 5:30. We were taken to a huge Nahshon vehicle, the cell inside it was 50 x 80 cm. There were other prisoners with H. and I (political prisoners and criminal prisoners).

The seats were very small and made of iron. We were forced to sit in a 90 degree angle because otherwise we couldn't fit. We couldn't move at all while sitting, and the cell had surveillance camera. The distance between HaSharon and Ramleh, "the waiting area" is an hour and a half drive. And from Ramleh "waiting area" to Ofer military court is 45 minutes drive. We stayed in the car from 5:30 until around 8:45.

...

At 3:45 I was taken to the court room, and back to the cell at 4:30. At 7:15 the Nahshon forces came to take us in order to transfer us back to prison. A female Nahshon officer shackled us and tightened them. I told her that she should put the shackles over the clothes as it is written in the report (one of the Nahshon officers said earlier that if something is written in the report they will do it, but if it's not they won't). When they read the officer loosened the shackles but she refused to put them over the clothes.

When we arrived to the cell in the Bosta vehicle, it was very warm. After a long argument with the prisoners and the Nahshon forces they put a fan... The vehicle moved at 8:00. At 8:45 we arrived at Ramleh waiting area. Here more suffering began. We stayed inside the car's cell until 11:15pm. During that time we didn't have access to a bathroom or clean air. We weren't even allowed to rest our bodies. Our bodies were hurting severely because of sitting in the same place for hours without moving. The prisoners started knocking heavily on the doors to the point that the car started shaking but no one came to see what was going on. Of course this was done on purpose. The prisoners were held in small iron cells like animals which is torture by itself.

We reached the prison at 11:50. The Nahshon forces took us to the room, a man unshackled us... Our legs were shackled from the beginning of the journey until the end. Our hands were unshackled only at the cell in Ofer and inside the court.³

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS: FEMALE PALESTINIANS ARRESTED IN CONTEXT OF OCCUPATION

Israel is accountable for its actions in the occupied territories, including West Bank checkpoints, particularly the ill-treatment of women during arrests and transfers. Article 12 of General Recommendation 28 by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the Core Obligations of States Parties states that:

"Although subject to international law, States primarily exercise territorial jurisdiction. The obligations of States parties apply, however, without discrimination both to citizens and non-citizens, including refugees, asylum-seekers, migrant workers and stateless persons, within their territory or effective control, even if not situated within the territory. States parties are responsible for all their actions affecting human rights, regardless of whether the affected persons are in their territory."⁴

³ Affidavit taken by Addameer attorney, 30 April 2015.

⁴ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), General Recommendation No. 28 on the Core Obligations of States Parties under Article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 16 December 2010, CEDAW/C/GC/28.

In its General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, the Committee confirms the aforementioned paragraph, stating, "... the obligations of States parties also apply extraterritorially to persons within their effective control, even if not situated within their territory, and that States parties are responsible for all their actions affecting human rights, regardless of whether the affected persons are in their territory".⁵

The previous testimonies highlight the brutality of the arrest process as well as the detention conditions for female Palestinians prisoners inside Israeli interrogation, detention and prison centers and even hospitals while in custody. The abuse, ill-treatment, and torture of Palestinian women and girls take place within the context of ongoing occupation and annexation of Palestinian lands. The imprisonment of women and girls is a practice used by the Israeli government to repress Palestinian women across sections of society, including students, mothers, political leaders, and children. In the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against women, States Parties emphasize "that the eradication of apartheid, all forms of racism, racial discrimination, colonialism, neo-colonialism, aggression, foreign occupation and domination and interference in the internal affairs of States is essential to the full enjoyment of the rights of men and women".⁶

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. The United Nations and all States Parties call upon Israel to respect, uphold and strive to surpass the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against women, and UN Security Council Resolution 1325, in regulating the treatment of women and girls during interrogation and detention, and their lives of women and girls in prison.

II. States Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention call for an end to physical and psychological abuse in the hands of soldiers during the arrests of Palestinian women and girls and their illegal detention in occupying territory.

III. States Parties call for an end to the practices of physical and psychological torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian women under interrogation.

IV. States Parties to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against women call upon Israel to develop a gender-sensitive policy for the treatment of Palestinian female prisoners.

V. States Parties, women's organizations, and human rights organizations call for the immediate release of female prisoners and an end to their ill-treatment.

⁵ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, 1 November 2013, CEDAW/C/GC/30, paragraph 8.

⁶ UN General Assembly, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 18 December 1979, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1249, p. 13. - See more at: <http://www.addameer.org/publications/violations-continue-against-palestinian-women-and-girls-international-women%E2%80%99s-day#sthash.azluMPCM.dpuf>