



Joint Statement on Palestinian Prisoners' Day:

Israel must heed international calls to respect human rights of Palestinians held in Israeli prisons

17 April 2014

Today, on 17 April 2014, Palestinians around the world commemorate Prisoners' Day in solidarity with thousands of Palestinian prisoners and detainees held in Israeli prisons.

To mark this important day in Palestinian society, four human rights organizations – Adalah, Al Mezan, Physicians for Human Rights-Israel, and the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel – are issuing this joint statement to call upon the international community to urge Israel to heed growing international statements and recommendations to guarantee and protect the human rights of Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli prisons.

Since 1967, Israel has detained and imprisoned over 800,000 Palestinians as a means of maintaining and consolidating Israel's control of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). Today, according to Addameer, [more than 5,200 Palestinian prisoners and detainees](#) – including women and children, pre-Oslo Accords prisoners, and elected Members of the Palestinian Legislative Council – are being held in prisons located inside Israel, in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Israel's [violations of Palestinian prisoners' basic human rights](#) include the use of administrative detention without formal charge or trial; severe restrictions on family visits, lack of access to healthcare and independent doctors, and access to education; collective punishments such as solitary confinement; forced strip searches; violent night-time raids on inmates; and other practices that constitute torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. In addition to these policies, Israel is proposing new laws, such as the Anti-Terror Bill and the Force-feeding Bill, which threaten to further infringe on the basic rights of Palestinian prisoners and detainees.

Despite these continued practices, this year's Prisoners' Day comes at a time of increasing international scrutiny and criticism towards Israel's treatment of Palestinians in Israeli prisons:

European Parliament: In March 2014, members of the European Parliament conducted a Fact-Finding Mission to assess the conditions and policies towards Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons. The mission was held in accordance with a [European Parliament Resolution](#) passed on 14 March 2013, following the [death of prisoner Arafat Jaradat](#) under Israeli custody. An investigation by a leading international forensic pathologist found that [Jaradat had suffered acts of torture](#) during custody and that this had led to his death, contradicting Israel's account that Jaradat died of 'natural causes'.

European Union: The EU also [issued its European Neighborhood Policy \(ENP\) report](#) on Israel in March 2014, in which it highlighted continued complaints of the use of torture by Israel and the lack of investigations into these complaints. The EU further expressed concern of the continued excessive use of administrative detention, and emphasized the need to implement the recommendations of the Turkel Commission Report to ensure accountability of Israel's security services. The EU ENP report echoed many of the issues highlighted in a [joint NGO input](#) submitted by the four partners in October 2013 regarding the human rights of prisoners and detainees in Israeli prisons.



United Nations: In June 2013, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) issued harsh [concluding observations](#) of Israel's treatment of Palestinian children detainees and prisoners, including harsh arrests and detentions of minors, night-time raids on Palestinian homes, denial of family supervision or contact during custody, solitary confinement against minors as punishment, and psychological and physical violence by police and security forces that constitute forms of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

We call upon the international community to demand that Israel incorporate these international recommendations in order to address the deteriorating human rights conditions of Palestinian prisoners and to end its breaches of international law. We demand that Israel end the practice of torture and ill-treatment against Palestinian prisoners, end its use of administrative detention, and end the severe tactics of arrest and detention of Palestinian minors. We further demand that Israel ends all discriminatory legislation that target the rights of Palestinians in Israeli prisons, and that it ensures transparency and accountability of Israeli security and prison authorities.

Read more: [Joint report on the human rights of Palestinian prisoners and detainees, October 2013](#)

Signing organizations:

Adalah - The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel
Al Mezan Center for Human Rights
Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHR-I)
Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI)



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