



Call of Freedom and Dignity To Free Palestinian Political Detainees in Israeli Jails Palestinian Expatriate Affairs Department

On April 17, 2017 which marked Palestine Detainees day, over a thousand and a half Palestinian Detainees across the political spectrum began a mass hunger strike - the largest in recent years, which came after a long series of individual and partial strikes, in light of the arbitrary policies and procedures of the Israeli occupation and Prisons Service designed to deny Palestinian Detainees from the most basic human rights. The demands of the Strike for Freedom and Dignity are straightforward: for their basic human rights – to no longer be denied family visits, to have the ability to contact their families via telephone, to receive appropriate medical care, to not be subject to isolation or to imprisonment without charge or trial under administrative detention, which Israel used as a bargaining chip to compromise the Palestinian people and their leadership over their national rights.

This strike is marked by the participation of a number of high-profile leaders of the prisoners movement, spearheaded by MP Marwan Barghouti, member of the Fatah Central Committee, Ahmed Saadat, the leader of the Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and hundreds of Detainees who demand a number of vital living conditions such as medical treatment, visits, as well as putting an end to solitary confinement and administrative detention.

The experience of the captive movement, its glorious history of struggle, the steadfastness of its leaders, as well as its unity, provided the objective basis for launching a serious and effective steps that deem the issue of Detainees as a matter of freedom and human rights and an integral part of the Palestinian people freedom. The success of the strike largely depends on the mobilization of the Palestinian masses at home and in the Diaspora.





Our Palestinian communities abroad, especially in Europe, have played a prominent role in supporting the captive movement and internationalizing their cause, which is reflected in many events, among them three principal conferences that took place in the European cities and Capitals.

It is very important to highlight the legal, political and humanitarian dimensions of the issue of Detainees who are the heroes of freedom of the Palestinian people, and their detention is merely an Israeli political decision that flagrantly violates the international humanitarian law. Some of the major aspects of this strike are:

- A. The number of the Palestinian Detainees in the Israeli jails and prisons is estimated at about seven thousand, and it is on the rise due to mass arrests campaigns.
- B. Six hundred Detainees are arrested under the so-called renewable administrative detentions, without charge or trial, due to opinion and political-related issues.
- C. Seven hundred Detainees suffer chronic diseases. Eighty five of them are in serious health conditions.
- D. Thirty Detainees were detained prior to the Oslo Accords and have served more than 25 years, and Nael Barghouthi has served thirty seven years in detention, breaking all world records.
- E. Five hundred Detainees are serving life imprisonment.
- F. Three hundred Detainees are children under the age of eighteen, fifty two of them are females.
- G. Eight Detainees are elected members of the Palestinian Legislative Council.

The hunger strikers are calling for several basic demands:

1. End the policy of solitary confinement.
2. End the policy of administrative detention.
3. Improving living conditions.





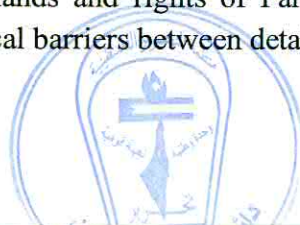
- A. Install a public landline for Palestinian detainees in all prisons and sections in order to communicate with their families.
- B. Add satellite channels that suit the needs of detainees.
- C. Install air conditioner in prisons, especially in the prisons of Megiddo and Gilboa.
- D. Restore the kitchens to all prisons and place them under the supervision of Palestinian detainees.
- E. Allow them to have books, newspapers, clothes and food.

4. Visitation

- A. End the International Committee of the Red Cross' reduction of family visitation to once a month. Resume offering family visitation twice a month.
- B. Establish the opportunity for family visitation twice a month as irrevocable.
- C. Allow all first-degree and second-degree relatives of prisoners to visit them.
- D. Increase family visitation from 45 minutes to 1.5 hours.
- E. Allow the prisoners to have a photos with their families every three months.
- F. Build facilities for the comfort of visitors and families at the prisons' gates.
- G. Allow children and grandchildren under the age of 16 to visit detainees.

5. Medication

- A. Close the so-called Ramla prison hospital because it lacks basic Medical equipment and medication.
- B. End medical negligence.
- C. Allow regular medical checkups.
- D. Allow surgery as needed.
- E. Allow specialist doctors to check prisoners.
- F. Release sick detainees, especially those with special needs and chronic illnesses.
- G. Exempt prisoners from paying for their medication
- H. Respond to the demands and rights of Palestinian female *Detainees*, Especially in regards to transfer conditions and Physical barriers between detainees and family members during Visitation.





6. Prisoner transfer "Bosta":

- A. Treat Detainees in a humane manner while transferring them in the Bosta.
- B. Return Detainees visiting clinics and courts to prisons; do not to hold them at crossings.
- C. Prepare crossing for human use, and to provide meals for Detainees.

7. Education

- A. Re-start the education program at the Hebrew Open University.
- B. Allow Palestinian Detainees sit for Tawjihi [high school] matriculation exams in an official manner.

The hopes of our Detainees, armed with their empty stomachs, the triumph of their human struggle and the fulfillment of their legitimate human demands, are pinned on the support of the free world and the human conscience, which by its very nature rejects oppression and deprivation realizing that the hunger strike is the harshest thing a human can do when all dialogues, words and legal and administrative ways to achieve his legitimate demands are impossible.

In order to achieve the widest campaign of solidarity with the Palestinian Detainees, the Department of Expatriates Affairs urges all supporters of Palestine and friends of justice to come together to take action and to stand with Palestinian Detainees striking for freedom and dignity and to collect as many signatures as possible from human rights organizations, civil society organizations, parliamentarians, parties, human rights, social and media activists, and solidarity movements, academics and artists, and all other segments of European societies, hoping that their empty stomachs and their sacrifice will help the message resonate beyond the confines of their dark cells.

With due appreciation and respect



**Palestinian Expatriate Affairs Department
Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)
Ramallah 26/04/2017**