



Human Rights Council 20th Session

Item 7: The Human Rights Situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

Let Them Live In Dignity

Madam President, Distinguished Members of the Council,

I am speaking today on behalf of eleven Palestinian human rights organisations.

In the last two months, together with Khadar Adnan, Hana Shalabi, Mahmoud Sarsak, and some 2,500 lesser-known Palestinian prisoners, Akram Rikhawi and Samer Al-Barq embarked upon an open-ended hunger strike in protest of their ill-treatment and Israel's illegal practice of internment.

Mr. Rikhawi, today on his 82nd day of hunger strike, is facing imminent death, while Mr. Al-Barq, today on his 43rd day, resumed his hunger strike after Israel renewed his administrative detention order, contrary to the agreement ending the protest.

Madam President, Member States,

Mr. Al-Barq is one of the 303 administrative detainees currently held without formal charge or trial. Despite the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Human Rights Committee's repeated calls on Israel to end its widespread practice of internment, this continues unabated. This practice contravenes, amongst others, Articles 9 and 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, infringing upon the fundamental right to a fair trial.

Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli custody, currently some 4,659, are forcibly transferred outside of the occupied territory in clear violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. While imprisoned, despite the customary prohibition on torture and ill-treatment, they face daily inhuman and degrading treatment at the hands of the Israeli Prison Service.

In many ways, the prolonged isolation, physical abuse and the denial of family and lawyer visits represent a microcosm of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory. In the face of Israel's violations, the international community has consistently failed to adequately respond.

Today, while Mr. Rikhawi is at immediate risk of death, you are called to act with no delay.

Madam President, Member States

We call on you to pressure Israel to end its widespread practice of internment, and release all administrative detainees immediately. Additionally, Israel must abide by its obligations under international law and cease its violations of Palestinian prisoners' rights.

Thank you.

Palestinian Council of Human Rights Organisations



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