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Israel/OPT: Palestinian administrative detainees complete 100 days of boycotting Israeli courts

The 100-day boycott of Israel’s military courts by hundreds of Palestinian administrative detainees — those detained without trial or charge — underscores the need to end this cruel, unjust practice which helps maintain Israel’s system of apartheid against Palestinians, Amnesty International said today.

Nearly all the 490 Palestinian administrative detainees currently being held by Israel began a collective boycott on 1 January 2022, by refusing to participate in military court procedures that lack due process and are used merely to rubber stamp arbitrary detention. Their act of disobedience highlights the long-standing complicity of military courts in the use of administrative detention against Palestinians, where individuals are held for months without charge or trial, often on the whims of military officials or the Minister of Defence and based only on secret information provided by the Israeli Security Agency.

“Palestinian human rights defenders, journalists, academics and others have suffered from this cruel and inhuman practice and have been protesting it for decades including through hunger strikes. This boycott is a renewed collective call saying enough is enough,” said Saleh Higazi, Amnesty International’s Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa.

“This courageous boycott highlights Israel’s inhuman treatment and punishment of Palestinians. The international community, particularly states with close relations to Israel, must now take concrete action and pressure Israel to end its systematic use of arbitrary detention as a step towards dismantling apartheid.”

According to Palestinian human rights group [Addameer](#), Israeli authorities issued 5,728 administrative detention orders against Palestinians across the Occupied Palestinian Territories between 2017-2021. In 2021, there was a surge of 1,695 orders, which were tied to a campaign of mass arrests by Israeli authorities during weeks of violence in May and June.

For decades, Israel has intentionally used administrative detention to detain individuals, including prisoners of conscience held solely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association, to punish them for their views and activism.

[Salah Hammouri](#), a French-Palestinian lawyer, has been in administrative detention since 7 March 2022. For years, the Israeli authorities have repeatedly harassed him, forcing him into multiple periods of administrative detention as well as taking action to revoke his residency status in East Jerusalem.

The Israeli authorities have increased the use of administrative detention in recent years, consistently detaining around 500 Palestinians, including children. On 28 March 2022, a day after two Israeli police officers were shot and killed by two armed Palestinian citizens of Israel, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett [ordered](#) security services to hold anyone suspected of being involved in the attack under administrative detention.

Amal Nakleh, an 18-year-old Palestinian who joined the boycott, has been held in administrative detention since 21 January 2021. He suffers from a rare neuromuscular disorder that causes weakness in skeletal muscles; he was 17 at the time of his initial detention. He has since seen his detention renewed three times, including most recently on 18 January 2022, when a military court extended his detention for another four months.

“Amal Nakleh turned 18 after spending nearly a year in detention without charge. It is already tortuous enough for a family to fret about their child’s deteriorating health without having to suffer the cruelty of limbo in administrative detention. He must be immediately released,” said Saleh Higazi.

The international community, particularly states with close relations to Israel, must now take concrete action and pressure Israel to end its systematic use of arbitrary detention as a step towards dismantling apartheid.

Saleh Hijazi, Amnesty International

Islam al-Taweel, mayoral candidate for al-Bireh, a city in the West Bank, was arrested by Israeli forces on 21 March after a raid on his home at 1:30 in the morning. On 27 March, he received a four-month administrative detention order. His arrest took place five days before municipality elections took place, in which his electoral list won a majority of seats in al-Bireh municipality.

The Israeli authorities’ widespread and systematic use of arbitrary arrest, administrative detention and torture against Palestinians forms part of the state’s policy of domination and control over the Palestinian population. These actions amount to the crimes against humanity of apartheid, imprisonment and torture.

Background

The Israeli authorities have used administrative detention orders ever since the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967.

Israeli military commanders can issue administrative detention orders of up to six months to detain Palestinians if there are “reasonable grounds” that an individual is a risk to “the security of the area” or to “public security”.

The commander can extend the detention orders indefinitely, yet detainees must be brought before a military judge within eight days of the issue or renewal of a detention order — or released.

Although administrative detainees have the right to appeal every detention order and are entitled to legal counsel of their choice, neither the lawyer nor the detainee is informed of the details of the evidence against them. A military judge has the power to uphold, shorten or cancel the order. If the order is upheld, Palestinian detainees can contest the military judges’ rulings by petitioning the Supreme Court of Israel.

Israel’s Supreme Court has noted the importance of appeals and stated that administrative detention should only be used as a preventative measure against an individual who poses a danger to security that no other means will prevent.

The Court, however, has yet to introduce any clear rules for reviewing administrative detention, rarely questions the information on which detention orders are made, and generally fails to examine the decisions made by military court judges.

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ecoi.net summary:

Nearly all 490 Palestinians held in Israeli administrative detention have been refusing to participate in Israeli military court procedures since 1 January 2022

Countries:

Israel, State of Palestine

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