

Palestinian Political Prisoners: Hungry for Freedom

Life in Palestine under Israeli occupation and apartheid means that Palestinians are subject to a constant threat of mass imprisonment. For Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, 40% of Palestinian men have spent time in Israeli prisons. For Palestinian families, everyone has a son, daughter, father, mother, brother or sister who has spent time or is currently held in an Israeli jail. Checkpoints pose a constant and daily threat of arrest as do night raids, attacks on demonstrations, and home invasions. Every Palestinian, at any time, is vulnerable to arrest and administrative detention - imprisonment without charge or trial for renewable six month periods - or the military court system, in which 99.74 percent of its Palestinian defendants are convicted. There are over 4,600 Palestinian prisoners currently held in Israeli jails. Some have launched hunger strikes to demand their freedom. *Learn more about some of the Palestinians currently held in Israeli jails - and what you can do to support them.*

SAMER ISSAWI - over 6 months of hunger strike

Samer Issawi was released from Israeli prison in the October 2011 prisoner exchange. A Jerusalemite - a Palestinian who carries Jerusalem ID - Issawi was re-arrested on July 7, 2012, launching his open hunger strike on August 1.



Samer Issawi is trapped within the geographies of occupation. He is accused of nothing more than entering the West Bank and leaving Jerusalem - however, according to Israel's own maps, the place where he was arrested is part of Israel's definition of the Jerusalem municipality, to which Israel claims Issawi was restricted under the terms of his release.

Samer Issawi is now under threat of spending 20 years in Israeli prison for traveling to Hizma, which Israel itself defines as part of Jerusalem - except in this case. Issawi's six brothers and sisters have all spent time in Israeli prisons. His health condition is progressively more severe after six months of partial and open hunger strike.

JAFAR EZZEDINE - over 55 days of hunger strike



Jafar Ezzedine is 41 years old, from Arraba, a town near the city of Jenin. He is currently held in administrative detention - without charge or trial. Rounded up in a mass arrest of Palestinians in the West Bank following the Israeli attack on Gaza in November 2012, he launched his hunger strike on November 28, along with Tareq Qa'adan and Yousef Shaaban Yassin, fellow administrative detainees.

For Jafar, this is not his first time refusing food in an Israeli prison. He was just released from administrative detention - again, held with no charge or trial - in July 2012, following an agreement to end a mass prisoners' hunger strike involving thousands of Palestinian prisoners. He launched his last hunger strike on March 21, 2012 and joined the mass hunger strike. His release was part of ending the mass strike. Now, he is once again held with no charge or trial, and refusing all food and supplements. His belongings are confiscated and he is denied family visits.

TAREQ QA'ADAN - over 55 days of hunger strike

Tareq Qa'adan, 40, is, like Jafar Ezzedine, from the town of Arraba near Jenin. He is also held in administrative detention - without charge or trial. Rounded up in a mass arrest of Palestinians in the West Bank following the Israeli attack on Gaza in November 2012, he launched his hunger strike on November 28, along with Jafar Ezzedine and Yousef Shaaban Yassin, fellow administrative detainees.



Tareq Qa'adan was also released from Israeli jail in July 2012, where he had been held for 15 months for speaking at an event at the Arab America University in Jenin. While serving his sentence, he participated in the April-May 2012 mass hunger strike involving thousands of Palestinian prisoners. Rounded up in the mass arrest raid of November 22, he is now held without charge or trial. He has spent years in Israeli prisons, often without charge, in over 15 arrests since 1989. He is once again held with no charge or trial, and refusing all food and supplements. His belongings are confiscated and he is denied family visits.

YOUSEF SHAABAN YASSIN - over 55 days on hunger strike



Yousef Shaaban Yassin, 29, from Aneen, also near Jenin, was last arrested in February 2012 and served eight months in prison. He was also rounded up once again - shortly after his release - on November 22 and has been held in administrative detention without charge or trial since that time.

Yousef Yassin is being held in isolation in a cell at Ramleh prison clinic, with a guard placed outside his door 24 hours a day, and is subject to daily inspections. He is also being denied family visits and has also had most of the belongings, such as clothes, cigarettes and electronics confiscated. Alongside Tareq Qa'adan and Jafar Ezzedine, he has been refusing all food and supplements since November 28.

"Our open hunger strike is to protest the Israeli Intelligence and their policies, our goal is not just to gain our individual freedom but to end the practice of administrative detention, the pointed sword on the neck of the Palestinians. This is a battle in the fight for freedom and dignity..." - Jafar Ezzedine, Tareq Qa'adan and Yousef Yassin, Dec. 19

Learn more and take action:

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