

# Palestinian Political Prisoners

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## Facts about Palestinian Political Prisoners

According to statistics released by prisoner support organizations in the summer of 2007, there are more than 11,250 Palestinians imprisoned for political reasons by the “Israeli” colonial regime. 385 are children.

Some 800 hundred prisoners are being held in what is known as “administrative detention.” This means that they have never been formally accused or gone to trial, but are held under a

military detention order that can be renewed every three months indefinitely. Some prisoners have been held in “administrative detention” for years.

A report by the Palestinian Ministry of Detainees reveals that 50,000 residents of the West Bank and Gaza have been detained since the beginning of the Al-Aqsa intifada in September of 2000. 5,000 of these detainees have been children.



**The Zionist regime arrests an average of 700 Palestinians each month. At least 700,000 people—25% of the total population—have been detained since 1967. It is estimated that this includes more than 40% of the total male population. For adult males, the number is probably higher than 80%.**

**The Palestinian Prisoner Society reports that at least 90% of detainees have been tortured. 183 prisoners have died as a result of torture and medical neglect.**

Detention routinely involves torture. Torture includes beatings of sensitive organs, choking, pulling of hair off the body, prolonged solitary confinement, subjecting detainees to noise, screams, and threats against their families, forcing Palestinian detainees to stand hooded and handcuffed for long periods of time, the use of electric shock, burning, beatings with hands, fists, truncheons, and boots, deprivation of sleep and basic hygiene; and starvation. Prisoners are also tear-gassed in confined spaces.

Of the current prisoners, more than 100 are women and more than 500 women have been detained since September of 2000. Several women have been detained while pregnant and denied adequate prenatal care. Pregnant women are typically handcuffed to their beds during labor and birth. Some have given birth in prison and continue to be detained along with their infant children. Other women have been separated from their children altogether. In addition to imprisoning women for their political activities, according to a report from Palestinian authorities, “Israeli” occupation forces have recently been detaining a growing number of women as hostages in order to pressure their husbands and relatives into making confessions.

At the end of June 2006, the colonial regime shocked the world by imprisoning 27 members of the Palestinian Legislative Council and eight ministers from the elected Hamas government. In fact, this action corresponds to a long-standing practice of imprisoning and assassinating Palestinian political leaders from all sectors of Palestinian society, including elected members of local governments, student leaders and others.



**Protests in Gaza in support of resistance. Left: Women in Rafah flash the victory sign. Right: A demonstrator waves the Palestinian flag in Gaza city.**



## Political Prisoners from '48 Occupied Palestine

Most discussions of Palestinian political prisoners have concentrated on prisoners from the West Bank and Gaza—territories occupied by the colonial regime in 1967. Prisoners from territories occupied in 1948 (often referred to as “Arab citizens of Israel”) have received considerably less attention. Some have been imprisoned for engaging in military resistance activities, others for expressing support or developing organizational ties with Palestinian resistance organizations in the West Bank and Gaza.

Like Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza who are held in prisons within territories occupied in 1948, they are classified as “security prisoners,” and systematically discriminated against within the prison system.

In September of 2006, the Prisoners Supporters Society—with headquarters in Majd Al-Krum—announced that these prisoners should be involved in any negotiations concerning a prisoner exchange. The colonial regime responded by outlawing the

organization, raiding and closing offices on both sides of the Green Line, and imprisoning several of its members.

Since the beginning of the Al-Aqsa Intifada—which began with killing of 13 Palestinians protestors inside the Green Line—Zionist authorities have increasingly invoked Emergency Defense Regulations to criminalize Palestinians with “Israeli” citizenship who express support for Palestinians resisting in the West Bank and Gaza.

**These actions correspond to a general pattern of suppressing movements that try to forge links between Palestinians resisting in both '48 and '67 occupied zones in order to assert their full national rights as a people.**

### Steadfast in Resistance

Every family in Palestine experiences the effect of political imprisonment. Although “Israel” attempts to use prisoners as hostages to force Palestinians into surrendering their fundamental rights, the Palestinian people have remained steadfast in their support for resistance. When the Popular Resistance Committees captured a colonial occupation soldier near Gaza in June of 2006, Palestinian residents of Gaza—under aerial bombardment and a starvation blockade—held mass demonstrations demanding that the soldier not be released until the colonial regime agreed to a prisoner exchange.



By Zohdi el-AAqawi, former Palestinian political prisoner. This drawing was done with coloring pencils on a handkerchief while detained in prison in 1984.

#### End of a Discussion with a Jailer

From the window of my small cell  
I can see trees smiling at me,  
Roofs filled with my people,  
Windows weeping and praying for me.  
From the window of my small cell  
I can see your larger cell.

**Samih Al-Qasim, former Palestinian political prisoner**

#### For More Information:

Addameer

[www.Addameer.org](http://www.Addameer.org)

The Mandela Institute for Human Rights-Palestine

[www.Mandela-Palestine.org](http://www.Mandela-Palestine.org)

Women's Organization for Political Prisoners

[www.wofpp.org](http://www.wofpp.org)

New Jersey Solidarity – Activists for the Liberation of Palestine

[www.newjerseysolidairty.org](http://www.newjerseysolidairty.org)

The New England Committee to Defend Palestine  
[www.OnePalestine.org](http://www.OnePalestine.org)