

**Special Reporter from Mandela institute for human rights**  
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The follow up visits carried by the Mandela Institute proved broad and serious deterioration in all Israeli detention facilities. The 11500 male and female political prisoners are subjected to systematic policies of oppression that deprive them of basic human rights. Prisoners, who were interviewed, reported serious shortages in canteen supplies, over-crowdedness in holding cells, deprivation of family visits and arbitrary transfers of prisoners.

The Mandela Institute registered serious deterioration in health conditions. This is due to intentional procrastination of medical treatment by the Israeli prison authority. The Institute is gravely concerned over the Israeli medical negligence and holds Israeli authorities responsible for the death in custody of several inmates. A total of 192 cases of death in custody occurred during the period of 1967-2008, including six in 2007. These were Hassan Abdallah Al-Sarahin who died on 16 January 2007 at the Negev Detention Compound; Maher 'Atta Dandan who died on 10 June 2007 at Jalbou' Prison; Shadi Sa'id Sulaiman Sa'aideh who died on 13 July 2007 at Nafha Prison; Omar Ayed al-Massalmah who died on 25 August 2007 at Ramla Prison; Mohammad Satti M. al-Ashqar who died on 22 October 2007 at the Negev Detention Compound and Fadi Abdel-Latif Abul-Rubb who died on 29 December at Jalbou' Prison. On 29 February 2008, Fadel Odeh Shahin died at the Eischel-Ber Sheva' Prison.

Despite concerted efforts and immense pressure, Israeli prison authorities continued their arbitrary policies of violating human rights of Palestinian prisoners. This was culminated with the death of Fadi Abul-Rubb. According to affidavits from colleagues, Fadi went to the prison clinic complaining of toothache. The prison doctor gave him a pill which he swallowed upon returning to the cell. Few minutes later, his color changed and his legs could not support him. He was taken to the prison clinic where they kept him for few hours. He remained like this for ten days. The night before his death, Fadi was in excruciating pain. He was taken back to the clinic. About midnight, soldiers came and took his personal belongings. At 7:00 A.M. on Saturday 29 December 2007, the administration pronounced him dead. Inmates returned meals in protest and wrote to the Israeli Minister of Internal Security demanding an explanation of what had happened to fadi. On 2 January 2008, a committee from the Israeli Prison Authority came and interrogated his colleagues. The warden informed the inmates that Fadi probably died of

Hepatitis. Prisoners complained the investigating committee was not neutral as it was formed from within the prison authority personnel. Abul-Rubb was the third Palestinian to die in Jalbou' Prison.

Furthermore, Israeli prisons witnessed a serious escalation of human rights violations by Israeli personnel as well as officials from the prison authorities. The worst campaign was against detainees at the Negev military compound. On Monday 22 October 2007, soldiers raided sections of the compound, burned tents and attacked prisoners using batons, tear gas and rubber-coated bullets. The Institute considered this as a blatant violation of the Geneva Conventions and other instruments of the international humanitarian law.

The Mandela Institute called upon the international community and international human rights organizations as well as United Nations bodies to act swiftly in order to safeguard the wellbeing of Palestinian prisoners and to put an end to Israeli repressive measures.

In its statement, the Institute affirmed about 300 prisoners were injured by rubber-coated bullets, live ammunition and tear gas in Section B. Witnesses affirmed soldiers had cuffed prisoners before beating them with batons, ransacked their personal belongings and cut off electrical and water supplies. Additionally, soldiers confiscated electrical cooking plates as well as other belongings. Mohammad Satti al-Ashqar, a 29 year old Palestinian from the village of Saida near Tulkarem, died from injuries sustained during the assault. Mr. al-Ashqar was due for release in January 2008. He was married and had a child.

The testimonies of some prisoners that al-Ashqar He was killed with bullets during the storming operation carried out by the force and follows a sworn statement to the prisoner Sufian Jamjoum of Hebron, around the time of the events in the Negev Prison:

The sound of gunfire and grenades woke me up around 02:30 in the morning of 22 October 2007. I could tell that soldiers of the Massada Unit have stormed our detention tent in a barbaric manner. My inmate, Samer al-Hashlamon, who is suffering from a disc hernia was in the tent. He was supposed to go for treatment the following day. I was lying on the ground. They asked us to sit up. We did and showed them our open hands. I told them in Hebrew that there was no resistance in this tent. But, they kept yelling and went on shooting. They were about one meter from us. Soldiers pulled Samer and other inmates out of the tent. They used a rifle, similar to those used in hunting that fires shells like an egg full with small metal balls. I was hit in the leg. The bullet left a wound of 5 square centimeters. The pain was unbearable and went on yelling that I was bleeding. Instead of providing me with medical aid, soldiers handcuffed me and pulled me on the floor to the visiting area where other inmates were held. The area was overcrowded with hundreds of prisoners. Some were also bleeding. The area was poorly ventilated. Inmates were yelling for help and for a chance to breathe. I passed away after bleeding so much. I woke up to find myself inside the prison clinic. Medical staff used a liquid to cleanse the wound. I insisted they treat me with anti-biotics. I demanded be transferred to hospital. The staff was

indifferent. I asked them whether they were there to provide medical treatment or behave as judges. When I was hit, I overheard soldiers call upon one of them by the name "Vaknanna" and asked him if the situation is under control. He answered, ironically, that every thing was fine.

About 120 prisoners are held in section 12 A. Five-seven of the thirty-two inmates that were injured had suffered severe injuries. Most of the injuries were to the faces, heads and shoulders. Many were refused treatment. I could remember the force was quite large and they could establish control very easily and without having to use gunfire. When I was in the clinic, I saw some soldiers bring in an inmate who was unconscious. They treated him carelessly. They only wanted to know his name. They asked me if I knew him and I told him that I don't. At the same time, there was an inmate lying on the floor. I recognized him as Tayseer Ju'obah. He was crying for help as he was in severe pain. The soldiers kept yelling at him to shut up. Tayseer was lying under a sign that read "Severe Injuries". Later on, he asked to go the bathroom. I could see he was bleeding heavily as he walked out of the room. Even the medical staff were careless and indifferent took him on 31/10/2007 .

The Mandela Institute published a report on the incidents of 22 October at the Negev Prison and held the Israeli prison authorities responsible for the death of al-Ashqar. The Institute called upon the international community and human rights NGOs as well to immediately intervene with the Israeli authorities to save the lives of Palestinian prisoners. Additionally, in a wide-spread campaign, the Institute wrote letters to the UN Security Council, the Quartet and dozens of international human rights organizations calling for an end to Israeli arbitrary and oppressive measures against the Palestinian prisoners.

The Mandela Institute took up the case of 'Allam Hussein 'Attary, a 35 year old Palestinian from the village of 'Arraba near Jenin, held at Jalbou' prison. Mr. 'Attary's condition deteriorated gravely, because of eye injuries, he had sustained at the time of his arrest on 17 June 2003. He had no medical problems prior to arrest. He was interrogated for three months at the Jalama interrogation section. Mr. 'Attary reported he was subjected to torture and ill treatment by Israeli interrogators. He was sentenced to 25 years.

Shortly after his trial, Mr. 'Attary began complaining of eye problems. He developed glaucoma in the left eye. He was examined by prison doctors but no treatment was provided. The prison administration refused to allow examination by a specialist. The delay in treatment affected the right eye too. The Mandela Institute tried to arrange for a specialist to examine Mr. 'Attary but the administration adamantly rejected the attempts. Prison authorities then kept moving Mr. 'Attary from one prison to another despite relentless complaints. After several attempts, the Mandela Institute succeeded in arranging a visit by an eye specialist, Dr. Moti'e al-Asmar, to examine the prisoner. The specialist affirmed Mr. 'Attary's vision is deteriorating rapidly. He

strongly recommended a surgery and a prescription. This was also confirmed by an Israeli doctor from the Israeli section of Doctors for Human Rights. Despite all this, the prison authority continued to restrict appropriate medical treatment for Mr. 'Attary threatening him with total blindness.

The Mandela Institute also followed up the case of Sultan al-Walei, a Syrian national from the Occupied Golan Heights, and is sentenced to 27 years. After a long process of agony caused by medical negligence and deliberate procrastination of medical treatment, Mr. al-Walei underwent a surgery to remove his right kidney at 'Affoula Hospital on 12 May 2008. Laboratory tests confirmed he had a 12 centimeters long malignant tumor. Dr. Wajdi al-Safadi ordered continued and close observation of the patient. He was transferred to the Ramla Prison Hospital. Dr. al-Safadi stated: "The ailing prisoner needs strenuous medical care both physically and emotionally". Advocate Majd Abu Saleh initiated legal procedures for the release of Mr. al-Walei. The Mandela Institute joined the campaign with other human rights organizations. An Israeli court ordered the release of Mr. al-Walei four years before the end of his sentence. Ever since his arrest in 1985, Mr. al-Walei and thirteen others from the Occupied Golan Heights, were subjected to all forms of torture and ill treatment by Israeli authorities. These violations contravene the 1977 UN Minimum Standard Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and the UN Convention against Torture.

## **Torture**

According to affidavits collected from prisoners, the Mandela Institute could conclude that torture and ill treatment are used systematically by the Israeli General Security Services (GSS or Shin Bet), Israeli soldiers and prison guards against Palestinians. The use of torture and ill treatment is widely spread since 1967. Several cases of death in detention were reported. Many Palestinian prisoners affirmed they had suffered physical and psychological damages due to these unlawful practices. Torture and ill treatment contravene international human rights instruments, particularly Article 3 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 3 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Council of Europe 1950), Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 4 of the 1984 UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Furthermore, the Mandela Institute, after thorough documentation, realized Israeli occupation authorities practice torture and cruel degrading ill treatment against Palestinians even before arrest. Whenever Israeli soldiers raid a house for the purpose of arresting someone, they beat up family members, neighbors and use some of them as "Human shields". Military authorities usually enforce a siege on a whole district, a village or a refugee camp. They force individuals to strip naked often in cold temperatures and subject to all forms of humiliation.

Israeli occupation authorities often use family members as “Human shields” or “Hostages”. Israeli soldiers arrested the father and brother of Mahmoud Mnawer Mohammad Mahktoub. Mahmoud is 17 years old and is “Wanted” by the occupation authorities. The intelligence officer, accompanying the force that carried out the arrest, left his phone number with the family for Mahmoud to call him if he wants to see his father and brother free. Mahmoud turned himself two hours later. He was assaulted by Israeli soldiers and was subjected to different forms of torture.

Isra’a Ibrahim ‘Amarnah, a Palestinian female, was arrested on 13 January 2008. Israeli soldiers did not give any consideration for the extremely cold weather as they ordered her family out in the snow including her two years old sister. They told her father that Isra’a will be their “Guest for a while”. A female soldier searched her thoroughly. Soldiers ordered her to keep the bathroom door opened when she had to use it. Her father yelled at the soldiers as they were putting her in a military vehicle. She screamed when she saw the soldiers beat him up. Soldiers took her to the detention station of Gosh ‘Atzion. She was forced to walk in the snow. A medical test was conducted while her clothes were on. Someone asked her whether she supports Mahmoud Abbass [The Palestinian President] or Ismail Haneyya [The deposed pro-Hamas prime minister]. When she arrived at Tal Mund prison, she was subjected to degrading strip search. When she refused to undress, they threatened to bring in male soldiers to search her. She was transferred to an empty cell but for a small metal cot with no mattress or covers. Female inmates volunteered to lend her some but the administration refused. The Military Tribunal at ‘Ofar renewed her detention by eight days. Soldiers put her in a military vehicle with a police dog inside. They were making fun of her fears. She complained to the tribunal but nothing was done. She asked to call her family but the administration again refused. Ms. ‘Amarnah complains of infections in the urinary tract.

Ahlam Jawhar, a Palestinian female from Nablus, was arrested on 23 January 2008. She was born in Kuwait on 15 April 1977 and carries a Jordanian passport. She was arrested on the Huwara checkpoint while she was in the company of her sister. Israeli police interrogated her for two hours and then turned her to the military. A male doctor examined her at the Huwara military base. She was handcuffed and blindfolded during the examination. She underwent another medical examination upon arrival at Petah Tikva interrogation center. Israeli interrogators threatened to harm her family and to deport her. Her hands and legs were cuffed to the back of a chair during interrogation sessions that used to go on from 11:00 PM to 4:00 AM. Several persons took turn interrogating her. She had her menstrual period but was denied any hygiene products as a form of pressure. She could not eat for the first ten days. Her lawyer was restricted from seeing her. After one week in solitary confinement at Ramla Prison, she was moved back to Pitah Tikva. A military court extended her detention and was transferred to Ha Sharon Prison before deporting her on 6 June 2008.

The case of Fatema al-Ziq: On 17 January 2008, the Israeli Central Court in Tel Aviv turned down a petition by Mandela lawyers requesting permission to visit Fatme-al-Ziq, an expecting female prisoner, at the hospital. The petition, on behalf of Fatme al-Ziq, was presented by

Mandela's Director Buthaina Duqmaq and advocate Taghreed Jahshan on 8 January 2008. The court's decision is blatant violation of the prisoner's right to dignified treatment, the right to health and the right to unrestricted access to the judicial system.

The Israeli prison authority claimed that Mandela's lawyers could provide the prisoner with legal consultation in the prison prior her due date. This was met with dismay as the prisoner would have no idea what to expect during the childbirth. During her visit to the hospital for tests, Ms. Al-Ziq's upper and lower limbs were cuffed to the clinic bed throughout the test which lasted four hours. In a preceding visit to the hospital, three prison guards, one female and two males, were present during the tests. Therefore, the prisoner did have no premonition of what could happen and thus needed the presence of her lawyers on her side during childbirth.

The Israeli prison authority argued the hospital room is not fit for a lawyer-prisoner interview stressing the need for a partition between the two parties and in the presence of prison guards. The court's ruling favored the prison authority and rejected the petition. The court suggested the lawyers could visit the prisoner in jail before or after the childbirth. Furthermore, the court was postponed till 26 February 2008. Nevertheless, Mandela's lawyers presented another petition asking the court to re-consider the first ruling and hold an urgent session as Ms. al-Ziq was on her way to hospital. The prisoner told her lawyer "the baby will be named Youssuf" as he will be the youngest prisoner in Israeli custody for the year 2008.

The case of Amal Joma'a: The Mandela Institute followed up the case of Amal Joma'a, a Palestinian female prisoner, suffered continuous bleeding for over twenty days. After immense pressure from Mandela lawyers, the prisoner was transferred to Meir Kfar Sava Hospital. Doctors only gave her Dextrose by infusion and told her she needs to get an internal examination by a gynecologist. Ms. Joma'a had a nervous breakdown upon hearing the doctors' recommendation. They asked her to inform her family and get their consent. On 1 June 2008, Amal Joma'a was transferred again to Meir Kfar Sava Hospital for further examination of the uterus to identify the reasons for the bleeding.

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