

Continuing campaign of arrests against civilians in the West Bank

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Introduction

The Middle East Monitor (MEMO) has obtained primary evidence of how Israeli forces and Palestinian security services have embarked on a campaign of arrests against Hamas supporters in the occupied West Bank. A list containing details of the political detainees arrested in the months of January and February 2010 is attached. It can be seen how, increasingly, arbitrary political arrests are being conducted in Nablus and Hebron, where there is a high level of Hamas support, as well as other governorates across the West Bank. The detainees include university students, professionals, journalists and political activists.

Israeli campaign of detention

The beginning of 2010 has seen an intensification of arrests conducted by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) in towns, villages and refugee camps in the West Bank. Sources obtained from the [Palestinian Information Centre](#) and the [Palestinian Centre for Human Rights Weekly Reports](#) show how the campaign of arrests has stepped up during the months of January and February, with hundreds of prisoners detained arbitrarily, including women and children under the age of 18.¹

Of particular gravity was the IDF raid on the refugee camp of Shuafat (in annexed East Jerusalem), where around 40 people were arrested. The Israeli forces also stormed shops and hospitals in the camp, and arrested civilians based on their allegedly “threatening” political affiliation. The Israeli police claimed that they were

“[putting order](#)” into the area.

One excuse used to justify the IDF campaign of arrests is that the detentions are intended to prevent a “restoration of the Hamas administrative branch” in the West Bank. It is clear, however, that the purpose of these arrests is purely political and simply a continuation of Israel’s policies, which appear to be a significant breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention. These breaches have the potential to amount to collective punishment, namely wilfully causing great suffering to the Palestinian people, in particular members of the Hamas movement.



As if the arrest of Palestinians was not enough, the Israeli forces have been targeting popular grassroots movements and human rights defenders seeking Israeli accountability; this is part of the attempt to weaken the Palestinian resistance. For example, the harsh campaign against the international solidarity movement, which has resulted frequently in the arrest of pro-Palestinian foreign nationals. In February alone, two activists with the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), one from Spain (Ariadna Marti Hubei) and the other from Australia (Bridget Chappell), who were acting as human shields against the occupation forces, were arrested and deported to their countries of origin, because of their “militant activities”.

The complicity of the Palestinian Authority in the campaign of arrests

Israel is not alone when it comes to human rights violations against the Palestinian people in the Occupied Territories. Over the past few months, there has been an escalation in political arrests and illegal detentions carried out by the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank.

The administrative detention of civilians in the West Bank is normally because of their “affiliation” with the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas). PA policies provide wide interpretations of what could constitute a “security threat”, to the extent that participating in a charity event, attending a Qur’an lesson at a Hamas-run religious school or participating in a demonstration, may amount to a crime or a threat to the public order and may have “terrorist connotations”.

Recently, [thirteen Hamas members and supporters were arrested in the West Bank](#). Among their number was the head of Jima’een municipal council, Izzat Zaitaqi, who was arrested because of critical remarks he had made about PA Prime Minister Salam Fayad’s government. Israel claims that the people arrested in the raids are “wanted activists”. The arrests were violent and conducted at dawn through raids into a number of occupied West Bank towns. Arrests by the Israeli forces are conducted overnight regularly, in flagrant violation of a security agreement with the Palestinian Authority.

Fatah has attempted to crush the popularity of Hamas in the West Bank, not only by detaining members of its political wing but also by arresting politicians, business men and clerics affiliated with the party. Recently, a number of journalists have been detained by the PA’s security services for depicting the crude reality on the ground. This is the situation of [Tariq 'Abdul Raziq Abu Zaid \(from Jenin\), a correspondent of al-Aqsa Television](#) who was arrested by the Palestinian Military Intelligence Service on 15 August 2009. The Palestinian High Court of Justice ordered his immediate release on 12 January 2010, but to-date the court ruling has not been implemented. Mr. Abu Zaid is being denied *habeas corpus*, in violation not only of international law and human rights provisions, but also of Palestinian Basic Law which deems arbitrary detention and the detention of civilians illegal.ⁱⁱ The harassment and arrest of journalists in the West Bank further constitutes an assault on freedom of opinion and expression, press freedoms and freedom of assembly in the West Bank.



Recommendations

It is clear from the above activities that Palestinian political prisoners are being used as pawns to achieve political and military gains. These practices not only violate international humanitarian law, but also undermine the foundations of democracy. The international community must hold the Palestinian leadership accountable in order to protect the human rights of the Palestinian people.

MEMO reiterates its condemnation of all politically-motivated arrests and detention of civilians and calls for the immediate release of all political detainees held by Palestinian security services in the West Bank, and by the Israeli authorities in administrative detention. We call upon the Palestinian Authority to respect the Palestinian Basic Law, international peremptory norms and the [Palestinian High Court of Justice ruling of February 1999](#), which deem all political arrests illegal.

The political arrest campaign against Hamas members in the West Bank must cease and all political prisoners from all parties who are being held without charge or trial should be released.



APPENDIX

Civilians detained by the Palestinian Authority (January-February 2010)

02/01/10	Two are arrested in Qalqilya
03/01/10	Four are arrested in the governorates of Jenin and Nablus
04/01/10	Six are arrested in the governorates of Nablus and Qalqilya
05/01/10	Four are arrested in the provinces of Qalqilya, Nablus and Salfit
06/01/10	Three are arrested in the governorates of Jenin and Hebron
07/01/10	Ten are arrested in the governorates of Nablus, Ramallah, Qalqilya, Hebron, Jenin and Salfit
09/01/10	Eleven are arrested in the governorates of Nablus, Qalqilya, Hebron and Jenin
11/01/10	Eight are arrested in the provinces of Qalqilya and Hebron
12/01/10	Twelve are arrested in the provinces of Qalqilya, Jenin, Tubas and Tulkarem
13/01/10	Five are arrested in the provinces of Qalqilya, Ramallah, Tulkarm and Jenin
15/01/10	Eight are arrested in the provinces of Bethlehem, Nablus and Jenin
16/01/10	Twelve are arrested in Tulkarem and Allar
17/01/10	Twelve arrested in Hebron, Nablus, Tulkarem, Bethlehem and Jenin
18/01/10	Six arrested in the governorates of Nablus, Ramallah and Qalqilya
19/01/10	Six arrested in the provinces of Qalqilya and Hebron
20/01/10	Five arrested in the provinces of Qalqilya, Nablus and Bethlehem
21/01/10	Five arrested in the governorates of Nablus, Ramallah, Hebron and Salfit
22/01/10	Seven arrested in the governorates of Nablus, Qalqilya, Hebron
23/01/10	Two arrested in Hebron and a citizen of Tulkarm, and six "Hizb ut-Tahrir" members arrested in Hebron
24/01/10	Six arrested in Hebron, Nablud and Tulkarem
25/01/10	Twelve arrested in the governorates of Ramallah, Nablus and Tulkarm, and security services arrested nine members from the "Al-Aqsa Brigades" at the request of the Israeli security services



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26/01/10	Ten arrested in Hebron, Nablus, Ramallah and Tulkarm
27/01/10	Fourteen arrested in Hebron, Jenin, Tulkarm, Qalqilya and Ramallah
28/01/10	Four arrested in Hebron and Nablus
29/01/10	Four arrested in Hebron, Nablus, Ramallah and Tulkarm
30/01/10	One member arrested in Hebron
31/01/10	Three arrested in the governorates of Ramallah, Tulkarm and Hebron
01/02/10	Two arrested, one from Nablus and one from Hebron
02/02/10	Three arrested in the governorates of Jenin, Nablus and Qalqilya
03/02/10	Seven arrested in the governorates of Jenin, Nablus and Qalqilya
05/02/10	Twelve arrested in the governorates of Nablus, Ramallah, Tulkarm and Qalqilya
06/02/10	Seven arrested in Hebron, Nablus, Tulkarm and Qalqilya
08/02/10	Eight arrested in Tulkarm and Nablus
09/02/10	Fifteen arrested in the governorates of Ramallah, Nablus and Bethlehem
10/02/10	Ten arrested in the governorates of Tulkarm, Qalqilya and Jenin
11/02/10	Twelve arrested in the governorates of Ramallah, Qalqilya and Tulkarm
12/02/10	Four arrested in the governorates of Ramallah, Tulkarm and Hebron
13/02/10	Two arrested in Jenin
14/02/10	Five arrested in the governorates of Nablus, Ramallah, Tulkarm and Hebron
15/02/10	Five arrested in the governorates of Ramallah and Hebron



Palestinian Civilians detained by Israel (January-February 2010)

02/01/10	Three Palestinians arrested in the Provinces of Hebron and Jenin
03/01/10	Five citizens arrested in Beersheba, Bethlehem. Another citizen was arrested in Hebron
04/01/10	Ten people arrested in the provinces of Hebron and Jenin
05/01/10	Eight Palestinians arrested in the West Bank. Three Palestinians arrested in the provinces of Jerusalem and Bethlehem
06/01/10	Four citizens arrested in Jenin, Ram and Qalandiya
07/01/10	Four Palestinians arrested in Hebron, two Palestinians arrested in Jenin
08/01/10	The arrest of a citizen in the Ramallah district
09/01/10	Two Palestinians are arrested in Hebron
10/01/10	One citizen was arrested in Hebron
11/01/10	Three citizens arrested in the governorates of Ramallah and Hebron, including two children. In Jerusalem four children were detained for 10 hours and then released
12/01/10	Eight arrested in the governorates of Ramallah, Tubas, Nablus, Hebron and Jerusalem
13/01/10	One citizen is arrested in the city of Jenin
14/01/10	Seven are arrested in Tulkarm and Hebron
16/01/10	A citizen was arrested in the governorate of Hebron and six fishermen were arrested in Rafah
17/01/10	Ten citizens were arrested in the governorate of Hebron and Nablus
18/01/10	Arrest of 17 Palestinians in the Ramallah district
19/01/10	Arrest of sixteen citizens in the governorates of Nablus and Hebron
20/01/10	Two people arrested in the governorate of Ramallah
21/01/10	Thirteen citizens arrested in the provinces of Bethlehem, Ramallah, Nablus and Hebron, including a child
22/01/10	Two arrested in the provinces of Tubas and Hebron
23/01/10	Three arrested in Hebron
24/01/10	Ten arrested in Hebron and Bethlehem



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FACT SHEET – 12 March 2010

25/01/10	Sixteen Palestinians arrested in Ramallah, Hebron and Jenin
26/01/10	Two brothers arrested in the city of Bethlehem
27/01/10	Fifteen Palestinians arrested in the West Bank
28/01/10	Ten citizens arrested in the governorates of Ramallah, Nablus, Hebron and Qalqilya
30/01/10	Six Palestinians arrested in Ramallah and the Jordan Valley
31/01/10	Two citizens arrested in Hebron
01/02/10	Nine people arrested in the governorate of Nablus, Hebron and Ramallah
02/02/10	19 citizens arrested in the governorates of Jenin, Bethlehem and Hebron
03/02/10	Israeli occupation forces arrest 12 Palestinian civilians in central and southern West Bank
04/02/10	More than twenty two residents in Hebron, Bethlehem, Qalqilya, Ramallah and Jenin arrested
05/02/10	Five arrested in Jerusalem and Hebron
08/02/10	Twelve Palestinians arrested in Ramallah, Hebron, Bethlehem, Qalqilya and Jenin
09/02/10	Sixteen arrested in the governorates of Jerusalem, Ramallah, Hebron and Jericho, including three children
10/02/10	Six arrested in Hebron and Tulkarem
11/01/10	Thirty-two arrested in the governorates of Ramallah, Bethlehem, Hebron and Jenin
12/02/10	One arrested in the city of Tulkarem
14/02/10	Three arrested in the city of Tulkarem
15/02/10	Twelve arrested in the governorates of Nablus, Ramallah and Hebron

ⁱ Annex 1, Campaign of detention tables

ⁱⁱ Articles (11 and 12) of the Palestinian Basic Law and Law of Penal Procedure NO. (3) of 2001. Rulings of the Palestinian High Court of Justice also clearly emphasise that the Military Justice Authority may not detain civilians.

