

Gazan detainees in Egyptian prisons appeal for international help

The Arab Organisation for Human Rights (AOHR) in Britain has recently released a report on the condition of Palestinian detainees in Egyptian jails. MEMO has gained access to the document which records the names and abuses to which scores of young Palestinians were subjected.

Report:

Israel's recent massacre of activists on the 'freedom flotilla' has provided a historic turning point in the way the siege on Gaza is viewed by many. This change in attitude is attested to by the hefty price willing to be paid by activists aboard the flotilla who originated from thirty-two different countries. The current worldview is that the inhabitants of Gaza deserve to be treated as human beings.

Israel's barbaric massacre has exposed the magnitude of its oppressive siege which has blighted the people of Gaza for nearing four years. Because of this, it has now become near impossible for both the Israeli and the Egyptian governments to maintain this siege. It is not important here to delve into details of the daily violations committed by Israel against Palestinians, particularly the people of Gaza, as an enemy that does not care about legal or moral standards carries out these violations. What is of significant importance is the continuation of the Egyptian imposed siege which has lasted for a thousand days and which bears undeniable similarity to the actions of Israel. As a result, Egyptian actions have received strong praise from Israel - all at a time when the electricity supply in Gaza has been cut off and food, medical supplies and drinking water are all scarce.

This situation was further compounded by the war on Gaza which killed and displaced thousands of innocent individuals and which was carried out under the watchful gaze of the Egyptian government. Subsequently, and despite Egypt's religious, cultural and blood connections to Gaza, the government turned its back on the dead and injured. In addition, when Gaza was suffering from a lack of gas, the Egyptian government exported gas to Israel at the cheapest prices possible.

Moreover, the Egyptian government has refused to respond to the numerous calls for the re-opening of the Rafah crossing. The Egyptian government's attitude towards the inhabitants of Gaza has become one of great hostility and has resulted in it building a steel-lined wall along its border with the Strip to destroy the tunnel system serving as one of the only means for Gaza's inhabitants to obtain food and basic necessities.

A large number of Palestinians found in Egyptian territory were arrested, some were students simply trying to gain an education, while others were trying to seek medical attention for wounds sustained during the war. The Egyptian security

services were diligent in subjecting these detainees to various forms of torture, including electric shock treatment and suspension by the limbs regardless of prisoner's health. Many feared for their lives and in a few cases, as in the case of Mr Yusuf Abu Zuhri, this fear resulted in death. Today, a number of Palestinians who have committed no breach of Egyptian security continue to languish in Egyptian prisons. Their only crime being that they are Palestinians from Gaza.

According to documentary evidence, some of these detainees were granted the right of release by the courts, however, the executive authorities in question refused to implement these decisions. This not only shows a lack of respect for the judiciary system, but also is a clear violation punishable by law. The judiciary appears to have no control over the continuous detention of these Palestinians resulting in there being a real threat to their lives. This is a flagrant violation of both Egyptian and international laws.

This report would like to point out that the detainees have parents, wives, children, sisters and relatives who all await their return. Their situation is all the more poignant as they are being detained by an Arab neighboring state.

The Arab Organization for Human Rights in Britain calls on the Egyptian government to release these detainees amid the warm atmosphere of solidarity with Gaza. We also call on the Secretary General of the Arab League, Mr Amr Mousa, to intervene with the Egyptian government to release the detainees who face the constant threat of death from torture and poor living conditions.

The Arab Organization for Human Rights in Britain would like to highlight that the Egyptian government's decision to open the Rafah border crossing indefinitely following the massacre on the freedom flotilla, was a deception designed to absorb international anger. However, the promises made by this resolution are yet to be implemented.

What is required from the Egyptian government is the immediate lifting of the blockade and the opening of the Rafah crossing so that people can live normal daily lives; make contact again with the outside world and re-join the cycle of life after an exclusion period of more than a thousand days.

Table of Palestinian prisoners in Egyptian jails, and their whereabouts

Name of Detainee	Prison Held	Length of Imprisonment	Period of condemnation	Remarks
Ayman Ahmad Noufal	Al-Marj prison	2 and a half years	Detained without a sentence	Moved between Al-Marj, Al-Arish and Burj al-Arab prisons. He was granted release from the Egyptian courts, and has been subjected to severe torture.

Mu'tasam Waleed al Qoufa	Abu Za'bal Prison	6 years	Detained without a sentence	Has received a decision for release; however the resolution was not implemented. Spent six years in prison, held in solitary confinement for 3 years, suffers from epilepsy because of torture, deprived of all visitation rights including from doctors.
Jum'ah al-Talha	Abu Za'bal Prison	1 year	Detained without a sentence	<p>Subjected to torture for more than 3 months in the security service's detention centre. Some of the types of torture he was subjected to was electric shock treatment, beatings, being kept completely undressed, and sleep deprivations.</p> <p>He was transferred to Abu Za'bal prison, where he has been interrogated more than once. He suffers from heart disease and continuous high blood pressure.</p>
Muhammad Mahmoud al Sayyid	Abu Za'bal Prison	1 year	Detained without a sentence	<p>Subjected to torture for a period of 3 months in the security service's detention centre in Ballzgli. Some of the types of torture he was subjected to include electric shock treatment, beatings, being striped completely of his clothing, sleep deprivation and suspension upside down for 6 consecutive days.</p> <p>He has been transferred to Abu Za'bal prison. As a result of the torture he suffered, he now urinates and vomits blood. Due to the severe nature of his condition he had to be taken to hospital for treatment; this said, the prisoner was not allowed to stay over night in hospital due to the state's unwillingness to pay for overnight charges.</p> <p>Before his arrest, Muhammad was resident in Egypt for 5 years, where he studied at Sitta October</p>

				University in the department of engineering. His arrested at his apartment in Sitta October, coincided with his last month of university where he was preparing his graduation project.
Muhammad Abu Jirad	Al-Qantara Prison	1 year	Detained without a sentence	Subjected to torture for 3 months in the security service's detention centre. Some of the forms of torture used included electric shock treatment, beatings, being kept completely undressed, and sleep deprivations. He was then transferred to Al-Qantarah prison
Abdallah Abu Raya	Abu Za'bal Prison	3 years	Detained without a sentence	This prisoner suffered from a prior arm injury which was exacerbated as a result of the torture he was subjected to in prison and as a consequence of which he has lost 90% of the function in his left hand.
Nidal Hamadah	Abu Za'bal prison	3 years	Detained without a sentence	
Abdul-Rahman al-Nuwajah	Alexandria Prison	5 years		
Ismaeil abu-Musamih	Bor-Saeed Prison	3 years	3 years	Likely to have ended his sentence, but as of yet still not released.
Hasaan Yusuf Washah	Abu Za'bal Prison 2	2 years	10 years	
Ibrahim Ahmad Abu-al Thoum	Abu-Za'bal Prison		10 years	
Abdul-Rahman al-Najar	Security service detention centre	A Year and a half		His whereabouts still unknown.
A'la'a Muhammad	Security Service			His whereabouts still unknown.

Al-Mansi	Detention Centre			
Muhammad Abdul-Rahman Hamad	Security Service Detention Centre	1 and a half years	Detained without sentence	
Muhammad Jabir Salim Abu-Musa	Al-Qantara Prison	1 year	3 years	
Muhammad Yusuf abu-Mugheeb	Al-Qantara Prison	1 year	3 years	
Yahya Rasheed al-Ramhy	Al-Qantara Prison	1 year	3 years	
Muhammad Ramadan al Sha'er	Ta'deeb Prison in Abu Za'bal	1 and a half years	Detained without sentence	
Muhammad Rasheed Ghazi abdal-Hadi	Abu Za'bal Prison 2	1 year	Detained without sentence	Arrested after his return from umrah (visit to Makka)
Nidal Fathi Judah		1 and a half years	Detained without sentence	
Muhammad Ramadan Bakr		1 and a half years	Detained without sentence	
Ramzi Nasri Khamees al-Ra'ee	Security Service Detention Centre in Al-Zaghli	1 month	Detained without sentence	Arrested at his apartment in Heliopolis, Cairo. He stayed for 5 days in the Security Service's detention centre in Ballzgli where he was severely tortured. As a result, he was taken to Kasr Al-Aini hospital prison section in Cairo, where he stayed one week before being returned to the Security Service's detention centre.

Omar Abdul-Kareem Suleiman Sha'th	Security Service Detention Centre	1 month		Arrested on his return from the Rafah border crossing.
Aadil Al-Khateeb	Abu Za'bal Prison		Detained without sentence	From what is known, he has been a resident in Egypt for a while. He was arrested on the grounds of importing funds and assistance.
Muntasir Hijazi				Arrested on his return to Cairo Airport.