

## Quarterly Newsletter—April to June 2014

On 24 April, Palestinian administrative detainees declared an open hunger strike against the policy of administrative detention. Hundreds of Palestinian detainees participated in the 63-day strike, which was ultimately the longest Palestinian hunger strike in history. The Occupation's authorities continuously tried to break the strike through severe punitive measures including deprivation of basic rights, attempted passage of legislation to allow for force-feeding and severe beatings and other harsh and coercive treatment.

During the hunger strike, the Israeli Occupying Forces (IOF) escalated its military operations in the West Bank in response to the disappearance of three settlers near Hebron. Curfews and sieges on villages in Hebron were imposed and hundreds of Palestinians across the West Bank were arrested and held under interrogation. The number of administrative detainees doubled during this period.

The period between April and June witnessed an increase in the number of arrests since the last quarter. Between 1,100–1,500 Palestinians were arrested or detained during this period, including 27 Palestinian Legislative Council members, 51 ex-prisoners released in the 2011 exchange, 8 women and hundreds of children.

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### Detention By the Numbers

	April	May	June
Total No. of Prisoners	5265	5271	6000
Administrative Detainees	186	192	470
Children (under 16)	202 (24)	196 (27)	202 (32)

Statistics compiled from the Negotiations Support Unit and the Israeli Prison Service

### Longest Palestinian Hunger Strike in History

On 24 April 2014, over 100 Palestinian administrative detainees launched an open-ended mass hunger strike in protest of the policy of administrative detention policy and the ongoing violations against the prisoners.

Administrative detention, the policy of holding Palestinians without charge or trial indefinitely, has been used as the basis to detain thousands of Palestinians arbitrarily and systematically. An administrative detention order, which is confirmed from one to six months, is based on a secret file generally submitted by the Shabak intelligence and confirmed in a military court. Under international law, administrative detention is admissible in strict cases where the individual poses an immediate and grave danger to the security of the state. However in practice, Israel has held activists, academics, women and children under these orders.

Due to the close coordination between the Shabak and the military court, the orders are usually renewed without re-assessing the accusations against the prisoner. For the above reasons, the Palestinian administrative detainees engaged in a hunger strike demanding an immediate policy change. At the height of the strike, about 300 prisoners joined, including prisoners in solidarity. (Continued on next page)



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### Hunger Strikes, continued



Abdul Razzeq Farraj, one of the hunger strikers, days before is arrest. He has been under administrative detention numerous times.

The Palestinian administrative detainees were subjected to severe punishments and difficulties by the Israeli Prison Service (IPS) as retribution for starting the hunger strike. Punishments included denial of family visits, transfers between different prisons, frequent and extensive cell raids, solitary confinement, denial of food and medical treatment and even confiscating clean drinking water from their cells. The detainees were also denied their right to legal consultation through lawyers bans imposed on them when they announced their hunger strike. Addameer lawyers were routinely denied access to the prisons through written statements of refusal, as well as having their visit abruptly interrupted by emergency alarms, the constant transporting of hunger strikers to different prisons, or long delays in permission to enter the prisons.

As the hunger strike progressed, the detainees' health deteriorated rapidly to the point that they needed serious and urgent medical attention and treatment. In the hospitals, the prisoners were subjected to harsh treatment, including 24-hour surveillance and intimidation from prison guards, deprivation of movement and being shackled to the bed by both hands and legs at all times. The detainees told Addameer that they were required to ask for permission to use the bathroom, which was only 2-meters from their beds. If granted, they had to be escorted by a prison guard and keep the door slightly ajar.

The dehumanizing treatment of the detainees is indicative of efforts to break the hunger strikes.

The health repercussions of the hunger strike were severe. They suffered from breakdown of muscle tissue, severe weight loss, low heart rates and hemoglobin levels

and dizziness. They also complained of severe headaches, stomach pain and kidney and liver problems.

The hunger strike ended after 63-days without a clear agreement between the hunger strikers and the Israeli Prison Service.

During the hunger strike, Addameer worked via legal representation, documentation and advocacy to raise awareness about arbitrary arrest. From the legal aspect, our lawyers diligently visited detainees to take affidavits about treatment and conditions, as well as represented detainees in the military courts and submitted appeals to the high court on their behalf. The documentation team worked closely with families and detainees to document cases as well as compiled statistics, data and testimonies from the detainees and their families. The team also participated in local activities of solidarity with the detainees especially the "Water and Salt" online campaign. On the international level, Addameer worked closely with everyone from solidarity activists to diplomats to raise awareness of the detainees to foreign governments and international organizations, submitted urgent appeals through the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and worked with partner organizations to submit urgent appeals to various stakeholders.

To learn more about the severe punishments against the hunger strikers, [watch](#) Nidal Labboum talk about his experience.



A press conference coordinated by Addameer on 5 June with ex-detainee, Nidal Labboum and the sister of hunger striker Salem Badi. According to Nidal, the hunger strikers were "detained in dark cells that lack the basic standards of humanity, without charge or trial."

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### Mass Arrests Across West Bank



Following the disappearance of three Israeli settlers on 12 June, the Israeli occupation conducted a mass arrest campaign throughout the West Bank, carrying out nightly raids, door-to-door searches, setting up flying check-points, holding villages under siege, demolishing homes, and arresting Palestinians en masse.

Some of those arrested during this period were interrogated and released, while the vast majority continue to be detained until today. By the end of June 2014, the number of Palestinians arrested was between 1,100 – 1,500, and the total number of Palestinians in detention exceeded 6,000.

During this period, the number of administrative detained more than doubled (196 to 430) as did the number of Palestinian Legislative Council members. During the ar-

rest campaign, 27 PLC members were arrested, of whom 20 were given administrative detention orders. There are now 38 PLC members detained.

Ex-prisoners released in the 2011 prisoners exchange deal were also targeted, as 62 of them were re-arrested and continue to be detained. These prisoners can be subjected to Article 186, which allows for a military committee to determine if they should serve the remainder of their previous sentence. This includes one female prisoner, Bushra Al-Tawil, a young journalist who was previously held under administrative detention and released in the 2011 exchange. Also among those re-arrested is Na'el Barghouthi, who previously served 34 years of a life sentence before his release in 2011.

Israel's mass raids and detention campaign is a gross violation of international humanitarian law, particularly Article 33 of Geneva Convention IV, which prohibits collective punishment and "all measures of intimidation" against a civilian population. On 21 June, the Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council (PHROC) issued an urgent appeal to the European Union urging them to not give Israel a carte blanche to continue the collective punishment of Palestinians, as well as hold Israel accountable to IHRL and IHL. At that point, 454 Palestinians had been arrested and detained.

### Bill Gates Sells Down Shares in G4S

To commemorate the annual Palestinian prisoners day on 17 April, Addameer, the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC), and War on Want launched a campaign calling for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to divest from G4S, a British-Danish security company complicit in the occupation. Last year, the philanthropy purchased \$172m of shares in the company.

G4S has been under constant fire for providing services and equipment to the Israeli occupation's prison authority where thousands of Palestinians are detained and tortured, including children. For example, G4S provides surveillance equipment to two interrogation centers, Moscobiyeh and Jalameh, where Palestinian detainees are systematically tortured.

The campaign was endorsed by over 100 international organizations and launched with a [video](#) of ex-detainees giving testimony of torture in G4S prisons as well as fact-sheets and info graphics. The open petition garnered over 12,000 signatures from across the world calling for Gates to sell his shares. The pressure on the

Gates Foundation proved to be successful, as they announced selling down their shares on 28 May, joining the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), Dutch trade union Abvakabo and Amnesty International Denmark in ending their relationship with G4S. G4S continues to be targeted in a boycott campaign until it ends its complicity in the occupation and colonization of Palestinian land.

For more about the G4S Campaign, see our [Call to Action](#).



Tell Bill Gates: Divest from  [addameer.org/gatesdivest](http://addameer.org/gatesdivest)

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### Legal News

#### Force-Feeding Bill

The administrative detainees' mass hunger strike continued for 63 days despite the severe punishments imposed on them. One such punishment, in an effort to coerce them to stop their protest, was Netanyahu's request that the Knesset pass the third and fourth reading of a bill allowing for force-feeding of hunger striking prisoners. The readings were slated to occur on the 61<sup>st</sup> day of the hunger strike, and will pass pending on receiving a majority vote by the Members of Knesset. The force-feeding bill has been widely condemned by international and local organizations alike, including the World Medical Association, who considers the practice tantamount to torture. The 2006 Malta Declaration, which is signed by the Israeli Medical Association, states "force-feeding is never ethically acceptable."

On 25 June, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights released a statement by Mr. Juan Mendez, the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment that said: "Even if it is intended for the benefit of the detainees, feeding induced by threats, coercion, force or use of physical restraints are tantamount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment."

The Israeli authorities have used force-feeding against Palestinian prisoners in the past, most notably in the 1970s and 1980s when four hunger strikers died during the procedure. The proposed Knesset bill not only denies the prisoners' right to individual autonomy but also the ability to protest conditions and policies hunger strike.

#### Knesset Approves Bill to Block Amnesty Releases of Prisoners

In June 2014, a motion was put forward in the Knesset to block Palestinian prisoners releases. The legislation will allow for the courts to prevent the president from shortening the sentence of any prisoner considered to "have blood on their hands." The bill is still pending approval by the Knesset in its second and third reading.

This bill, which was initially presented in October 2013 by the Jewish Home Party, was being discussed in the midst of the most recent negotiations during which Netanyahu agreed to release all the Palestinians detained before the signing of the Oslo Agreements in 1993. The Occupying government eventually reneged on the agreement and failed to release the final group of 30 prisoners, most of whom were Palestinian citizens of Israel. The confirmation of such a bill points to the falsity of the stated "goodwill gestures" by Netanyahu to release Palestinian detainees.



Legal Researcher Mourad Jadallah gives a briefing in June 2014 in Dheisheh Refugee Camp about the on-going hunger strike and the implications of the force-feeding bill.

#### Petition to High Court Rejected

A petition submitted by the Association for Civil Right in Israel (ACRI), Yesh Din and the Public Committee against Torture in Israel to the Israeli High Court of Justice was rejected on 6 April 2014. The petition called for a reduction of the period of pre-trial detention for Palestinians, as current practices are excessive and discriminatory. According to current legislation, Palestinians charged with an offense can be held in detention for 96 hours (four days) which can be extended to eight days, which is almost always the case. An Israeli settler charged with the same offense can only be held for 24 hours before being brought to a judge. In the decision hearing, the High Court judge stated that the pre-trial period for Palestinians is "reasonable and proportionate." The rejection of this petition by the High Court of Justice highlights one of the many arbitrary and discriminatory practices used by Israel against Palestinian detainees and perpetuates the existence of the apartheid system in place by Israel. The State is required to file its response to the decision by 15 September 2014.

#### Stripping the Rights of Detained 1948 Palestinians

A bill was ratified by the Knesset Labor and Welfare committee to deprive Palestinian prisoners who are released on parole from social security benefits. The law, which is aimed at 1948 Palestinians and Jerusalemites, deny detainees who had sentences of more than ten years from basic insurance, pension, unemployment and retirement benefits until the original sentence expires. This bill continues to establish the pretense on which prisoner releases are built on and the intended disenfranchisement and isolation of detainees even after their release.

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### Addameer News

#### NLG Delegation

In May 2014 Addameer hosted a delegation of lawyers from the National Lawyers Guild, one of the largest public interest associations in the United States, to conduct a fact-finding mission on Palestinian political prisoners. The NLG visited Ofer Military Court, attended a hearing for Rachel Corrie's case, met with ex-prisoners and their families, participated in a demonstration in Nabi Saleh and met with various organizations. Their findings will be presented in a report at the upcoming annual National Lawyers Guild convention as well as submitted to Congress and the Obama administration. The delegation took place during the mass hunger strike of administrative detainees, prompting them to call for the immediate end of US-backed administrative detention of Palestinians by Israel. The press release can be read [here](#).



Families at a hunger strike solidarity demonstration



Members of the NLG Delegation meet with the wives of hunger striking administrative detainees in the Al-Bireh Protest Tent.



The NLG Delegation meets with former administrative detainee Sheikh Khader Adnan. In 2012, Sheikh Khader was on hunger strike for 66 days in protest of the conditions of his detention.

#### Conferences

On 24 and 25 April, the director of Addameer, Adv. Sahar Francis, participated in a United Nations roundtable discussion on the legal aspects of the Palestine question. The roundtable focused on the legal status of Palestinian political prisoners and detainees in international law, the available mechanisms to ensure compliance with international law and Third State responsibility, the general legal implications stemming from the State of Palestine's status as a non-Member Observer State. The Roundtable evaluated the new legal status of Palestine under international law as well as the recent signing of the international treaties by the State of Palestine. The discussion on prisoners focused on how Israel can be bound to its responsibilities under international law, specifically in regards to the Fourth Geneva Convention and its obligations as an occupying power.

Adv. Sahar Francis also attended a conference in Morocco, which convened Palestinian organizations from the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jerusalem and 1948 Territories. The workshops and discussions focused on political reconciliation, with an emphasis on lessons learned from the reconciliation in Morocco.

In April, Addameer's legal researcher attended the Arab-International Forum of the Solidarity Organizations Supporting Freedom Prisoners in the Prisons of the Zionist Occupation held in Beirut, Lebanon. The forum discussed the issues that Palestinian political prisoners face in the occupation's prisons, and highlighted the large role that resistance of the occupation plays in the battle to liberate Palestinian prisoners. The forum also featured prominent speakers and diplomatic figures that represented different political parties as well as many ex-prisoners.