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EYES ON ISRAELI MILITARY COURTS

A Collective of Observers' Testimonies

by Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association



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• February 2022 •



Gobierno
de Navarra



SODEPAZ

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Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, for over 30 years, has worked under the auspices of the Israeli military judicial system, providing pro bono legal aid to Palestinian prisoners and documenting gross systemic violations of arbitrary detention, torture, and absent fair trial standards.

In retaliation, Israeli occupation authorities have relentlessly targeted Addameer through arbitrary arrests of staff, military raids on its offices, gag orders on prisoners' cases, travel bans, residency revocation, and disinformation campaigns. Most recently, on 19 October 2021, Israeli "Defense" Minister Benny Gantz announced the arbitrary designations of six leading Palestinian civil society organizations, among them Addameer, as "terror organizations," in an unprecedented and blanket attack on Palestinian civil society. Despite widespread condemnation by the international community, the Israeli Military Commander of the West Bank issued a military order on 3 November 2021 formally outlawing the six organizations.

The order has grave imminent and explicit consequences, allowing Israeli occupation authorities to raid Addameer's offices, arbitrarily arrest staff, and seize all assets—including legal files of Palestinian prisoners and detainees. Beyond the imminent threats to security, the order acutely hinders the provision of services and legal support for Palestinian prisoners and detainees under the Israeli military judicial system.

Nevertheless, Addameer remains committed to its mission of advocating for the rights and dignity of Palestinian political prisoners, and the Palestinian people more broadly in the face of the Israeli occupation and apartheid regime.



Introduction

Israeli military courts form the central mechanism of the Israeli military judicial system, a product of and an integral element to Israel's occupation and apartheid regime over the occupied territories. As part of the military judicial system, Israeli military courts prosecute Palestinians of all ages and backgrounds based on Israeli military orders issued by the Israeli military commander in the West Bank. The breadth of these military orders effectively criminalizes all basic Palestinian individual and collective rights, including fundamental freedoms of expression and association. Under this racist military judicial system, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been tried and convicted in farcical court proceedings—at a conviction rate of over 99%—and subjected to brutal detention conditions, torture, prolonged incarceration, and gross violations of their rights and dignity.



© Active Stills, Oren Ziv. Ofer military court, West Bank. 1 January 2018.

The military courts, Kafka-esque and kangaroo in nature convict Palestinian detainees in the span of minutes in military trials in securitized trailer 'chambers,' overseen by an Israeli military-settler judge and prosecutor. Guilt is predetermined; instead, families attend court sessions with the hope of seeing their loved ones. It is a system wrapped in profound humiliation and degradation, as it aims to impose absolute legal, physical, and psychological control over the Palestinian people.



© Active Stills, Oren Ziv. Ofer military court, West Bank - 29 October 2017. Palestinians waiting outside the courtroom at Ofer military court, to begin hearings in the trial of family members and friends who were arrested by the Israeli army, near the West Bank city of Ramallah.

Between 2017 and 2021, **Addameer** coordinated **44 visits for 273 individuals representing state diplomats, international NGOs, researchers, students, European Union, and United Nations representatives from Brazil, Ireland, Italy, Palestine, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, US, and United Kingdom**, to observe Israeli military court proceedings. For much of the latter two years, the outbreak of COVID-19 led to the imposition of compounding discriminatory, arbitrary, and oppressive measures, including the prohibition of external visitors, lawyer and family bans, transition to faulty videoconferencing sessions, and the intended further isolation of Palestinian prisoners and detainees.

This booklet of select former visitors' testimonials aims to push against the increased isolation and consequent greater systemic impunity enjoyed by the Israeli occupation and apartheid regime. The testimonials represent a range of individuals from diverse backgrounds describing their first encounter with Israeli military courts, revealing shock at the discord between expectation and reality, the violence and humility embedded in the bureaucratized system, and the temporary and pseudo-structure of the courts and hearings themselves.

Nevertheless, the systematic abuses of the military judicial system lie beyond gross fair trial violations. Rather, the basis of the Israeli military judicial system, which lies at the behest of the Israeli military occupation, continues to be part and parcel of Israel's broader apartheid regime across the occupied territories.



© Active Stills, Oren Ziv. Ofer military court, West Bank - 08 February 2015. Palestinians wait for a court hearing of their family members in the Ofer military court, near the West Bank town of Baituniya.

© Active Stills, Oren Ziv. Ofer military court, West Bank - 21 December 2017. A Palestinian prayer in the courtyard in the Ofer military court before the hearing of Nariman Tamimi and Nur Naji Tamimi, near the West Bank city of Ramallah.

COVID-19: Compounding Measures Exacerbating Prisoners Representation and Fair Trial Guarantees

With the global COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in March 2020, the Israeli occupation regime declared a state of emergency, adopting a series of legislative measures concerning incarcerated populations that were discriminatory by rule and application. The measures included: a total ban on all visits by lawyers and family members, the halting of prisoners' transfer to Israeli military courts, whereby sessions were conducted via videoconferencing; and discriminatory policies exacerbating Palestinian prisoners and detainees' subjection to harsh living conditions, deliberate medical neglect, torture, and ill-treatment. In response, on 26 March 2020, Addameer and Adalah—the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel filed a petition to rescind the measures and reinstate visitations following the necessary medical precautions, stressing that such measures violate prisoners' right to legal counsel and effective representation. In the months following, the Israeli High Court refused to issue a decision, deferring instead to the discretion of the Israeli Prison Services (IPS).

Due to the transition of Israeli military court proceedings to videoconferencing sessions, Palestinian detainees were no longer physically brought to court. The sessions were marred by poor technology and poor extant translation services. Addameer documented instances where microphones were deliberately turned off during court sessions, preventing prisoners from understanding the session's proceedings; other instances included a failure to provide prisoners with an interpreter. The poor translation is exacerbated by faulty technology. In particular, there is a significant discrepancy in the quality of videoconferencing technology employed in Israeli civil courts as opposed to Israeli military courts. Moreover, there is a complete lack of confidentiality in lawyer-detainee communications due to the nature of videoconferencing court sessions, where any communication is heard by the Israeli military judge, military prosecutor, 'translator,' and anyone else present.



© Active Stills. Nazareth, 19 September 2021. Court hearing of four recaptured Palestinians captives via video conference.

Addameer documented several cases where lawyers were unable to determine the location of a detainee due to the declaration of a COVID-19 'lockdown' by the Israeli occupation regime and the transfer of detainees to various quarantine sites and prisons during the beginning period of detention. Lawyers attempting to locate their clients were burdened with the task of contacting numerous police stations, Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF), IPS, and detention facilities.

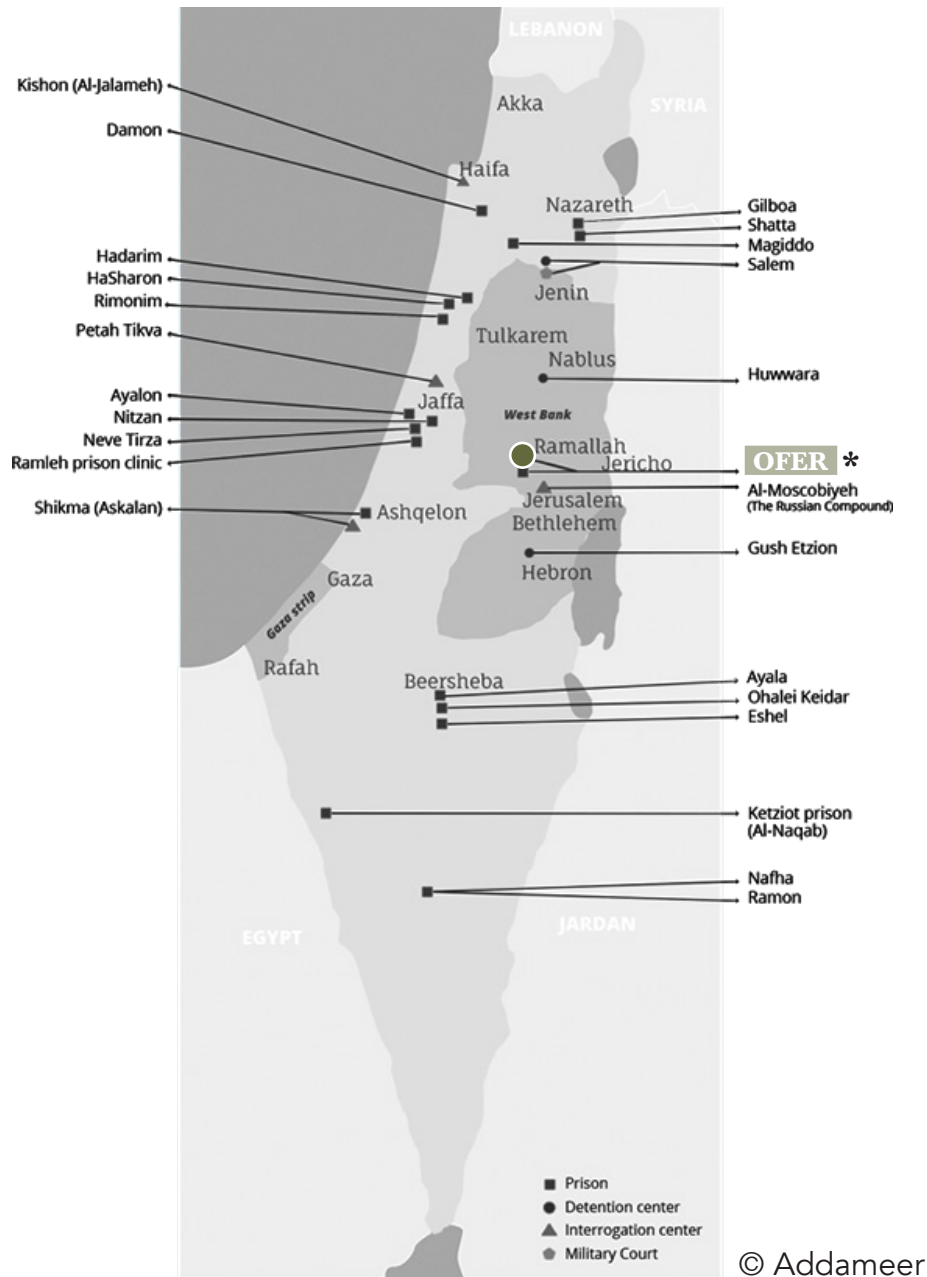
In total, legislative, administrative, and institutional measures arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic compounded upon existing discriminatory and oppressive policies by the Israeli occupation and apartheid regime to create immense barriers between lawyers and Palestinian detainees, handicapping any effective representation and exacerbating mass fair trial violations inherent to the Israeli military judicial system.



© Active Stills, Oren Ziv. Ofer military court, West Bank - 29 October 2017. A waiting area for Palestinians waiting to enter court hearings on family and friends who were arrested by the Israeli army, Ofer military camp.

TESTIMONIES

PRISONS AND DETENTION CENTERS



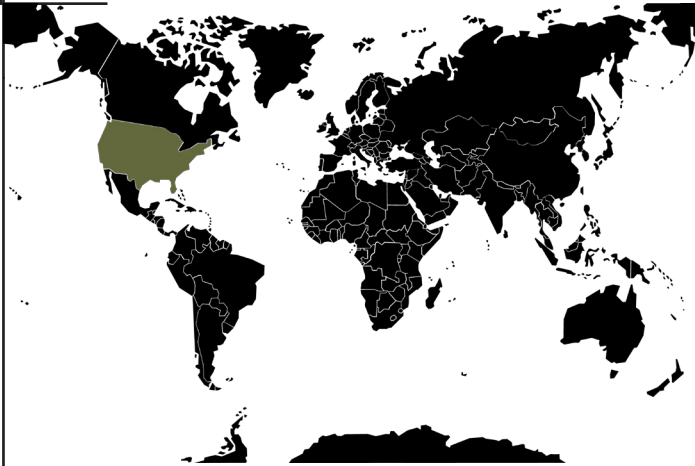
* All the people whose testimonies are collected in this booklet have attended military court hearings in **Ofer military court** (Detention Center, Prison, and Military Court). Known as 'Ofer Camp,' the site was built on expropriated land from the village of Beitunia in the West Bank—just four kilometers outside the city of Ramallah.

Testimony: Asma Jaber

Profession: Harvard Law School Alumna

Country: United States

Date: March 2019



We eventually made our way into a heavily secured area of rows of trailers, with each trailer serving as a courthouse. Outside of the trailers, our Addameer guide and lawyer Salah Hammouri explained that all defendants are Palestinians, as the military system does not apply to Israeli settlers. He also told us that the prosecutors are Israeli soldiers and the judges are Israeli

military officers. My classmates looked at each other in disbelief. How could anyone believe in this façade of a proceeding?

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We entered one of the crowded trailers and watched as about seven or so young Palestinian men, no more than 30 years old, entered the "courtroom" with their ankles shackled to one another. We all looked at each other, shocked and holding back our tears. The proceeding, though conducted on Palestinian land, was all in Hebrew – a language that most Palestinians in the West Bank either do not understand or do not speak fluently enough to fully comprehend a court proceeding. While representing his clients, which included translating for them as much as the speedy proceeding allowed, Salah paused to explain the charges. Most of the charges were for either incitement due to political Facebook posts or for stone-throwing at protests. Salah said that he had seen little to no evidence attempting to prove any of the allegations.

In the span of ten minutes, each of the men was sentenced to anywhere from six months to two years in a cage. The outcomes were no surprise given the 99.7% conviction rate that Palestinians face in Israeli military courts. What I witnessed within those ten minutes, however, is an image forever imprinted in my mind. Rather than pay attention to the short proceeding that would strip them of the remaining freedom they had under Israel's

apartheid regime, these men turned towards their family members in the back of the trailer and proceeded to ask about their children, their wives, and their parents. They knew that their guilt was predetermined because they are Palestinian. And so they embraced life for those brief ten minutes and smiled for their family.

About a year after our tour, Israel imprisoned our guide Salah, who has already been imprisoned by Israel several times. No Palestinian is immune from Israel's unjust carceral system and kangaroo courts where your identity is your crime. After our tour, I retrieved Yusra's prayer beads that I hid before going through security, both because I wanted to remember and honor Yusra and all Palestinian political prisoners and because I did not want Israel to take anything else away from my fellow Palestinians— not from Yusra, not from Salah, and not from the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians that Israel has caged and continues to cage simply because they are Palestinians yearning for freedom.

T**Testimony:** “Western Diplomat”**Profession:** Diplomat**Country:** -**2****Date:** -

The first time I went to an Israeli military court as an observer I was expecting a very orderly, tightly scheduled procedure. To my surprise none of that happened.

After waiting for a couple of hours, even though the hearing was scheduled at a given time, we were let into the courtroom with a group of diplomats

and relatives of the accused. To my surprise the courtroom was housed in some sort of large container with low ceilings, as if it is a temporary structure.

We took seats and immediately were shouted at by security guards that we had to sit separately. The two relatives of the accused took the seats closest to the cubicle where the accused would be let into the courtroom. When the accused was brought in shackled to hands and feet, the family members tried to make eye contact and greet from a distance, but security guards purposefully blocked the view to prevent this.

In the midst of some more shouting and a nervous running back and forth through the small courtroom by soldiers, security guards and civil administrators, apparently the hearing was taking place, even though nobody really seemed to know which procedures to follow. Then a document with the charges was passed on to the lawyers of the accused. The entire hearing took place in Hebrew, a language the accused does not master, no translator was present. Luckily the lawyer could translate and had a minute or two to explain the charges to the accused. After what seemed to be less than 10 minutes, the entire session was over.

I also learned that after several weeks in detention, the accused received a first change of clothes since the arrest only the day before. All these seemingly small elements of indecent treatment of the accused left me shocked about the lack of respect for a fair trial and human dignity. Let alone thinking about what if the accused was your own parent if you grew up in Palestine.

T**Testimony:** Maen Hammad**Profession:** Regional Campaigner, Amnesty International**Country:** Palestine**3****Date:** February 2020

I went to Ofer on 17 February 2020 to attend the hearing of three torture victims. The entire process was constructed to be humiliating, hectic, and inhumane — and I went with the privilege of being an employee at an international organization. I cannot imagine what that process is like for family members or relatives of those incarcerated. p

The bureaucracy of attending a military hearing is violent, I firmly believe it is all a part of the intended collective punishment Palestinians face at the hands of the Israeli military. You must shuttle around in the prison complex to get to the court, wait for hours in the outdoors, face humiliation by Israeli soldiers, and all the while, see hundreds of Palestinians who are doing this every day; old, young, infants, the elderly: the Israeli prison system that incarcerates Palestinians living in the OPT is one that thrives off of degrading their humanity. Most prisons around the world do this, however at Ofer, it subjugates the family to a carceral reality. It is a reminder that their loved ones are not in good hands.

After hours of waiting and being screamed at by Israeli prison guards over the loudspeaker, I entered the courtroom. It was an old trailer in a gravel outdoor square. I saw the prisoners take their seats and look around at symbols of due process or justice, there were lawyers with robes, and a clerk and a judge. I saw them peer into these symbols, but I knew, as I imagine they did, that this was a show. A show that we were in a prison complex under a military regime, and that justice was out of the picture.

Testimony: Olaia Duarte Lopez

Profession: City Councilor of Euskal Herria Bildu, Basque Delegation

Country: Basque Country, Spain

Date: 2018



During my first trip to Palestine from June 20 to 27, 2018, as part of the Basque delegation Sodepaz, I had the opportunity to get closer to the conflict and the occupation that the Palestinian people have faced for more than 60 years now. The aim of these lines is to share the experiences and emotions felt during that exchange of realities, and specially, to thank all the people who opened the

doors of their lives and stories to us.

What shocked me the most throughout my stay was the visit to Addameer's offices on June 25th led by Sahar Francis. The visit to Ofer military base, including the prison and military court, was equally shocking: the imposing concrete walls of this prison were not the only ones we found on our arrival. There is another concrete wall that can be seen from the road, which stands between the prison and Beitunia, which is only 3 kilometers from Ramallah. We needed to go through several security controls in order to reach Ofer military court waiting room for relatives. The heat, the smell, the sad faces of people who were waiting in silence for their turn to visit a family member made the wait so long.

The lawyer who was leading our group told us that we were allowed to witness two military trials. As soon as we entered the first one, I felt as if I was in a scene from a war movie. The coldness of the room was impressive, as well as the harshness and dehumanization of the treatment of the prisoners: four young people wearing brown jumpsuits, bound by the hands and feet, were listening to the military officers who were judging them. Although they were listening, they did not seem to understand a thing, since the trials are always held in Hebrew. A military officer translated the hearing into Arabic, but we soon realized that no translation was needed to understand what was going to be decided in that room. In fact, the final decisions are taken even before the people who are going to be judged enter the room. In that exact moment, we realized about the complexity of the work done in Addameer and the courage of the professionals who work for the organization.

One of the accused was sentenced to a year and a half in prison for a post on his Facebook profile in 2014. That is another particularity of the Israeli legal system: facts

never prescribe and arrests can occur many years later. His brother and a friend were allowed to enter the room in silence so that they could listen for the final judgment, even if they could not get a word of what was being said. They whispered Habibi (I love you) to each other and they tried to touch hands, but one of the guards immediately stopped them with punches. I could not contain the tears, the emotions when facing the abuse, humiliation, dehumanization and oppression.

When the trial was over, we left the room so that we could breath and get ready for the following one: it was about a taxi driver sentenced to 28 years in prison even if he had not been responsible for the situation at hand. He had been arrested in 2001 because of a shooting caused by a rider in the Second Palestinian Intifada. The man who shot was sentenced to 21 years in prison. The trial was being held to appeal the sentence period, while his three sons were waiting next to him, once again, without understanding a word of what it was being said. Two lawyers from Addameer effusively defended the accused man in front of the mocking smile of the judge. When we left the room, we could speak to the sons, who stated that his father had been arrested when they were five years old and had been waiting for him to come back since then.

We got out from Ofer in silence, our stomachs in a knot, thinking about the stories of all these people, families, daughters, sons we were leaving behind. Stories that, altogether, make up the story of this territory, of these people, who are still waiting, resisting, surviving.

Testimony: Maite Santamaria

Profession: Etorri Errefuxiatuak (NGO) Representative

Country: Basque Country, Spain

Date: 2018



Zionist occupation has been creating over the years a false appearance of being a democratic country, trying to make us believe that its institutions respect the rights of Palestinian people and that Palestinian resistance to the occupation must be punished. Because of this, Israel created its own repressive system, with a “legal” frame that allows them to detain and judge everyone, without control.

It wasn't my first time visiting a prison, nor would it be the last. Before and after my visit to Palestine in 2018, I had the opportunity to visit several prisons, some of them with high security measures. Over the years I've visited different courts several times, but the visit to Ofer meant became a turning point in my idea of the legal system. Ofer is in the middle of nowhere, and trials seem to take place in the most complete indifference.

Everything impresses you, starting from the background: seeing a trial being held in prefabricated containers is quite strange. Sometimes the prisoners don't understand the language used and that the translation provided is poor. Also the space for the families to attend the trial is limited, and the accused can hardly look towards their beloved ones, who they haven't seen since a long time. Sometimes only because of a look or a sign the family is banned from the room. What is really absurd is that we were allowed to bear witness to this show called trial, I guess is part of the sense of impunity that goes with the occupant power.

When Addameer explained to us the charges against the prisoners, they usually consisted of publishing “inappropriate” content on social networks or for taxi drivers, for example, to give a ride to the wrong person. My reaction was very simple and primitive: I started crying, I felt broken inside, I was overwhelmed by the pain caused by injustice and this feeling is still inside me. I still cry remembering two twins, sons of a prisoner, that grew up without their dad and turned out to be wonderful human beings. I was the one crying but they were stronger, stronger than everything, even stronger than the Zionists.

T**Testimony:** “Anonymous”**Profession:** -

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Country: United Kingdom**6****Date:** -

The court hearing was noisy, confusing, and unmanaged. No formal timings were published for court attendees, meaning family members and representatives would have to wait hours (0830 – 1400hrs). The proceeding was in Hebrew, and not one voice could be heard over the various conversations between the staff and court attendees. It felt unprofessional, unstructured, and chaotic

with lots of people moving around the court and no order. Within 10 mins the detainee had information related to her by her lawyer as opposed to an official translator from Hebrew to Arabic to cater for her native language and an opportunity to fully understand what was happening as part of the court hearing.

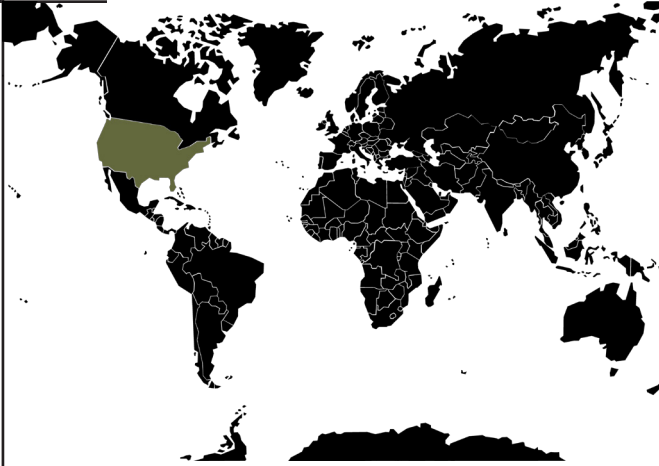
The facility was a small temporary building and didn't appear fit for formal court proceedings. Members of staff within the court were purposefully antagonistic and blocked the view of the visiting family member seeing their mother, the detainee. Noting families have been unable to visit since detention started four weeks previously, these rushed court appearances were the only opportunity to see them in person. Blocking their view was unnecessary and cruel. Family members were restricted in attending court, and only one member permitted per court appearance, yet several representatives from the international community could attend.”

Testimony: Amber James

Profession: Harvard Law School Alumna

Country: United States

Date: March 2019



I visited Ofer in March 2019. As a Black woman and law student in AmeriKKKa, I already had a healthy skepticism toward courts and their ability to deliver “justice.” Visiting the military “court” at Ofer brought that skepticism to new heights.

The word “court” confers a sense of legitimacy on Ofer that is completely unwarranted. In reality, Ofer’s “court” is a row of trailers in which Israeli settlers decide the fate of people whose crime is being Palestinian in Palestine. And even the word “settler” obscures the violence inherent in Ofer’s judges and prosecutors choosing, voluntarily, to live and work in the West Bank, on the frontier of Israel’s unceasing encroachment on Palestinian land. Given that Israeli settlements in the West Bank are flagrant violations of international law, how could settler judges and prosecutors -- who choose to break the law by the very nature of where they live and work -- be entrusted with imposing their law on the indigenous Palestinian population whose lands they steal?

“Absurd” is the best word to describe Ofer. When Palestinians are arrested, or more accurately, kidnapped, for grave “crimes,” such as liking a Facebook post, they are brought to Ofer with no ability to communicate with their loved ones. So, during their trials, they sit in the back of the courtroom trailer and get hurried updates from their families -- How are the kids? How are the elders? How are the trees? They have little incentive to listen to the proceedings. The “court” proceedings are conducted entirely and exclusively in Hebrew, with no time to translate into Arabic so that defendants could actually understand what was being decided about their fates. Israeli military courts have a 99.7% conviction rate, so even if defendants could understand what was being said, it wouldn’t make a difference; a guilty verdict is virtually a certainty. Outside of the trailers, dozens and dozens of men sit in the sun, waiting for their names to be called. The “court” is a mockery of justice that would be mortifying to anyone with a shred of morality. But of course, Zionists abandoned even the pretense of morality when they decided to establish an apartheid state that depends on the destruction, death, and dispossession of Palestiniangs for its maintenance.

The Ofer "court" attempts to lend a thin veil of legitimacy to the underlying violence of Israel's ongoing military occupation of Palestine. But every kidnapped child, weeping parent, and grieving spouse terrorized by Israeli Occupation Forces tears that thin veil to tatters.

Testimony: Elizabeth Masero Visiga

Profession: Asociación Paz con Dignidad (NGO)

Country: Spain

Date: -



The first time I went to a court hearing in Ofer military court it was shocking. I left Ofer around 12 pm and I could not work for the rest of the day. I was with another employee in a Spanish NGO who had experienced this before, but in any case nothing that she explained to me was enough to not have a mix of feelings: sadness, impotence, injustice, and surprise. I could not believe the

rough treatment to families, especially in this critical moment.

I have attended court hearings in Ofer few times and in all of them I can confirm that there was a total lack of humanity in all senses: transport paid by the families to move inside Ofer military base; no possibility of keeping personal belongings; no place with minimum requirements of accessibility for people with disabilities or elderly people; not enough space for all of the family members and international observers attending the sessions; screams from soldiers to people waiting to give instructions; metal fences; turnstiles to go inside and outside; families are not allowed to contact their relative who is being judged, except with gestures; sometimes families and other companions are not allowed to enter the session, so families wait to see their relative with no success. This is a cruelty that made me even cry on some occasions.

But apart from the sense of humanity or empathy a person could have, what is crucial here is to apply International Human Rights law. As a human rights defender with Paz con Dignidad, I have the duty and commitment to expose these human rights violations that I have seen against protected people under a situation of long standing occupation, as Palestinian people are under Israeli military occupation. The most basic rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Conventions and International Humanitarian Law are violated every single time a political prisoner is under arrest, interrogation, trial and in jail. This unjust system must end.

Fair Trial Guarantees Under International Law

The functioning of the Israeli military courts gives rise to serious violations of international law, including human rights law, humanitarian law, and criminal law, including the war crime of intentionally denying Palestinian prisoners their right to a fair and regular trial under **Article 8(2)(a)(6)** of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Moreover, **Article II(f)** of the Apartheid Convention recognizes as an element of the crime of apartheid the "*Persecution of organizations and persons, by depriving them of fundamental rights and freedoms, because they oppose apartheid.*"

According to principles of International Humanitarian Law, an Occupying Power is expected to maintain the application of the laws already in effect in the occupied territory, except in cases that threaten the Occupying Power's security. Notably, **Article 64** of the Fourth Geneva Convention entails that the legislative powers of the Occupying Power must be limited to its responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention and the implementation of the safeguards set under the Convention for the protection of the Occupied people. The Commentary of 1958 further explains that these legislative powers under **Article 64** "*must not under any circumstances serve as a means of oppressing the population.*" With that in mind, Israeli military orders serve the sole purpose of maintaining control over the Palestinian people and ensuring the Occupying State's security.

Right to Know the Nature and Cause of the Charges

Israeli military courts deny defense counsel the necessary documents and information to prepare for Palestinian detainees' defense, citing the 'confidentiality' of critical documents that are not disclosed to the defense counsel. These documents almost always contain crucial evidence and are often concealed on a spurious and unsubstantiated basis to cover up Israeli interrogators' actions, notably torture and ill-treatment, and prevent cases from moving forward promptly. This phenomenon is most evident with the practice of administrative detention, where Palestinians are held indefinitely without charge or trial based on "secret material" that is not disclosed to detainees or their lawyers.

Right to Assistance of an Interpreter

The official language used in Israeli court proceedings is Hebrew, a language most Palestinians, detainees, and lawyers, from the West Bank, do not understand. Israeli military courts consistently fail to provide accurate interpretation services to Palestinian detainees, whereby "interpretation" is provided by an Israeli army soldier in military attire, who is neither a professional nor competent interpreter. Such services are invariably deficient,

hindering defense counsel's ability to respond and represent their clients, never minding additional prejudice lawyers face for their lack of fluency in Hebrew.

Right to Counsel and Effective Assistance of Counsel

Structural and institutional barriers are emanating from the Israeli military occupation lead lawyers' citizenship or residency status to dictate their ability to represent Palestinians. Palestinian lawyers from the West Bank require permits to reach detainees held in the Green Line. Permits are arbitrarily denied or curtailed, an effect of the systematic harassment faced by Palestinian lawyers. Moreover, during the interrogation period, Palestinian lawyers from the West Bank are unable to reach detainees, at times until the first court sessions in Ofer or Salem Military courts in the West Bank.

The absolute lack of confidentiality afforded to lawyer-client communication throughout interrogation, detention, court proceedings, and incarceration handicap lawyers' free and independent exercise and any free trial guarantees. Lawyer visits to detainees are conducted in poor conditions under constant surveillance by Israeli Prison Services (IPS), where lawyers are only allowed to bring in limited paper documents and where visits take days to schedule. Similarly, during court proceedings, lawyers are unable to properly communicate with detainees without being monitored by IPS, military prosecutors, or judges.

In addition, Israeli military courts frequently withhold necessary documents and information held by the military prosecution against Palestinian detainees, citing 'confidentiality' and 'security' concerns. This further handicaps lawyers' ability to represent their clients, most especially in cases of administrative detention (see Supra 1). Moreover, Israeli military courts borrow Israeli procedural law and criminal case precedents governing Israeli civil courts. Palestinian lawyers from the West Bank are unfamiliar with this additional legal regime, and unable to access databases for Israeli procedural law and judicial precedents, obstructing their ability to provide effective legal counsel to Palestinian detainees.

ADDAMEER Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association is a Palestinian non-governmental, civil institution that works to support Palestinian political prisoners held in Israeli and Palestinian prisons in Human Rights. Established in 1992 by a group of activists interested in human rights, the center offers free legal aid to political prisoners, advocates their rights at the national and international level, and works to end torture and other violations of prisoners' rights through monitoring, legal procedures and solidarity campaigns.

Addameer enjoys the support of a volunteer body called "**Addama'er**," which believes in Addameer's goals and participates in the activities held by the association. They also work in supporting its message.

Addameer is an executive member of the [Palestinian Non-Governmental Organization Network](#) (PNGO), the [Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council](#) (PHROC), [World Organization Against Torture](#) (OMCT), the [International Coalition against torture](#) and many other regional and international coalitions.

Addameer's Vision:

Addameer believes in the importance of building a free and democratic Palestinian society based on justice, equality, rule of law, and respect for human rights within the larger framework of the right to self-determination. Addameer's work is based on a belief in the universality of human rights as enshrined in international law.

Addameer's Goals:

- Put an end to torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment inflicted upon Palestinian prisoners and work on abolish the death penalty;
- Put an end to arbitrary detentions and arrests and guarantee fair, impartial and public trials;
- Support political prisoners and their families by providing them with legal aid and social and moral assistance and undertaking advocacy on their behalf;
- Push for legislations that guarantee human rights and basic freedoms and ensure their implementation on the ground;
- Raise awareness of human rights and rule of law issues in the local community;
- Ensure respect for democratic values in the local community, based on political diversity and freedom of opinion and expression;
- Lobby for international support and solidarity for Palestinians' legitimate rights.

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