

117 Palestinian Women and Child Detainees Released So Far in Prisoner Exchange as Addameer Reiterates the Call for the Protection and Release of Palestinian Prisoners

On 24, 25, and 26 November 2023, 117 Palestinian women and child detainees were released by Israeli occupation authorities as part of a prisoner's exchange accompanying the start of the four-day temporary truce in the Gaza Strip. Among those released are 30 women and 87 children from the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem, the oldest of whom is a 58-year-old woman, Hanan Barghouthi, detained without charge or trial, and the youngest include several 16-year-old boys. Among the 259 Palestinian political prisoners slated for potential release are 33 women and 226 children as young as 14 years-old.

The long-awaited release of Palestinian women and child detainees took place amid widespread media restrictions, bans, and threats against the documentation and celebration of prisoners' release. At the Israeli Ofer military base, where women and child detainees from the West Bank were released, Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) enacted a media ban preventing journalists from gathering at the site of the release and shooting sound grenades and tear gas into crowds of awaiting people. In Jerusalem, Palestinian women and child detainees were released from Al-Mascobiyeh detention center (Russian Compound) under greater threats of harassment and restrictions against any celebration. Israeli Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir [ordered](#) police to crack down on any celebrations, including a [ban](#) on the distribution of sweets and confiscating them. Released Palestinian women and child detainees reported being taken to Israeli intelligence (Shin Bet) interrogators prior to their release and threatened with re-arrest if they participated in celebrations or media interviews discussing detention conditions and abuse.

Despite the serious threats and restrictions, Palestinians gathered in Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin, and elsewhere across the occupied West Bank to celebrate the release of the Palestinian women and children. Released prisoners' shared testimonies in media interviews and videos confirming inhumane detention conditions, retaliatory collective punishment enacted against Palestinian prisoners by Israeli occupation authorities since 7 October, and serious threats of re-arrest and retaliation.

Many of the released Palestinian women and children were subject to assault, ill-treatment, and the denial of critical medical care, as is the case with Israa Jaabis and Fatima Shaheen. Israa Jaabis suffered from severe third-degree burns and lost all of her fingers in a car fire at the time of her arrest, yet was denied surgery or any medication beyond painkillers. Fatima Shaheen was shot by IOF upon her arrest and partly paralyzed. Wassim Tamimi, (16) years old, was shot in the head with a rubber bullet a few days before his arrest. Palestinian women and child prisoners were released late at night in poor clothing with many of them barefoot.

Regarding the youngest women prisoner, Nufuz Hammad, her name appeared in the list of those released, her father was summoned to the Mascobiyeh Center, where he was threatened not to celebrate or raise flags. After waiting for hours late into the night, he was taken out, and she was not released. Later, her lawyer and family learned that she had been transferred to Hadassah Hospital without knowing the reasons, and her lawyer was prevented from visiting her.

Many reiterated mixed expressions of joy and sadness that their release came “at the cost of the bloodshed in Gaza.” From the beginning of the Israeli aggression against Palestinians until this day, over 15000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, with more than half of them being children and women. In addition to (250) Palestinians killed in the occupied West Bank.

Situation in prisons before release

The release of Palestinian women and child political prisoners highlights the systematic, arbitrary, and mass incarceration of Palestinian civilians in Israeli military prisons. Since October 7, Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) launched a mass arrest campaign arresting over 3,260 Palestinians, including 120 women and over 200 children. Many of these arrests took place in the form of violent night-time raids with IOF storming detainees’ homes, assaulting family members, and destroying property. Currently, over 7,000 Palestinian political prisoners are held in Israeli prisons, including over 2,500 held under administrative detention without charge or trial.

Israeli occupation authorities systematically prosecute Palestinian children in military courts. Between 500-1,000 Palestinian children are detained annually, according to Defence for Children International - Palestine. Many children detained for years as minors are later tried as adults and sentenced to years in prison, all of whom are excluded from the current deal. Similar to the case of [Ahmad Manasra](#), who was 13 years old when he was first arrested and subject to psychological and physical torture, including two years of solitary confinement. Israeli occupation authorities have reportedly denied Ahmad humanitarian release. Ahmad is now 21 years old and remains incarcerated.

The Israeli occupation’s most recent mass arrest campaign coincides with its crackdown against the thousands of Palestinian prisoners already held in Israeli prisons. Addameer [documented](#) many of the extensive violations, including violent raids by Israeli Special Forces firing tear gas and beating prisoners, an indefinite blanket bans on family visits, restrictions on lawyers’ visits, prohibiting access to medical care, cutting of electricity in several prisons, and transferring a number of prisoners to isolation. Released prisoners’ testimonies confirm the harsh retaliatory and punitive measures enacted by the Israeli occupation.

Call for protection of Released Palestinian Women and Children and the Release of All Palestinian Political Prisoners

For years, Addameer has consistently emphasized the [illegality](#) of the Israeli military judicial system, which oversees the arrest and detention of tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians every year with a conviction rate of over 99.7%. The military judicial system is implicated in serious war crimes—including the unlawful deportation of Palestinians from occupied territory and the intentional denial of a fair and regular trial—and is part and parcel to Israel's colonial and apartheid apparatus to suppress, control, and delegitimize the Palestinian people. The most recent release of dozens of Palestinian women and children only confirms the illegal and arbitrary nature of their initial capture and incarceration by the Israeli occupation.

Addameer calls for the immediate protection of the released Palestinian women and children from threats of re-arrest or retaliatory harassment by Israeli occupation authorities.

Finally, Addameer calls for the release of all Palestinian political prisoners arbitrarily held in Israeli occupation prisons, including administrative detainees held without charge or trial, child prisoners subjected to systematic torture and ill treatment, as well as sick and ill prisoners experiencing the policy of medical neglect.