

Prison Violence 2024



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Israeli prisons and detention facilities are notorious for severe human rights violations. The Israeli government has enforced oppressive measures within these institutions, subjecting Palestinian detainees to various forms of physical and psychological abuse. This has tragically resulted in the deaths of many due to ongoing torture and intentional medical neglect. A key contributor to the rising violence in these prisons is the long-standing policies of the Israel Prison Service (IPS), which have been in place for decades and significantly exacerbate the hardships faced by Palestinian prisoners.

The situation for Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention facilities has severely worsened, particularly following 7 October 2023. This date marked a significant shift in the Israeli Prison Service's approach, leading to a resurgence of brutal repression and violence. Tragically, the number of Palestinian prisoners who have died due to ongoing torture has risen sharply. Access to essential healthcare has been denied, and prisoners are stripped of their fundamental rights. Furthermore, Israeli authorities have resumed

heinous practices such as enforced disappearances, the use of human shields, and extrajudicial killings, resulting in a disturbing increase in both martyrs and missing individuals.



This paper aims to examine the ramifications of these oppressive policies on the lives of Palestinian prisoners. We will highlight how these actions have led to the martyrdom of many, particularly in the aftermath of October 7, and explore their profound effects on the conditions within Israeli prisons.

All individuals whose detention experiences were recorded by Addameer reported enduring various forms of torture or ill-treatment. Every detainee recounted being handcuffed and blindfolded at the moment of their arrest, with many remaining in handcuffs for over seven months. They all confirmed experiencing starvation. Since October 7, the Israeli authorities have significantly decreased the food rations for prisoners, providing substandard meals that lack vital nutrients and vitamins, leading to a marked decline in their health. In addition to the excessive force employed against them, numerous prisoners reported being brutally beaten during their arrests, during interrogations, or throughout their detention, as the Israeli authorities resorted to unwarranted physical violence. Furthermore, prisoners noted the use of police dogs during searches or headcounts, which heightens their fear and anxiety, as they are compelled to lie down while the dogs are used aggressively against them.

The accounts from prisoners reveal a disturbing reality where torture manifests in both extreme physical brutality and insidious psychological threats. These individuals endured relentless psychological pressure and constant intimidation, compounded by severe sleep deprivation, which significantly harmed their physical and mental well-being. The extent of these inhumane practices is underscored by the testimonies collected by Addameer and various human rights organizations, all of which highlight a shared narrative of suffering and abuse. Arbitrary detentions and oppressive tactics are indiscriminately applied, affecting individuals regardless of their age or health status, with a blatant disregard for fundamental human rights.

Such tactics are not random; they are part of a deliberate strategy designed to undermine the spirit of prisoners and subject them to the most degrading treatment imaginable. This approach starkly illustrates Israel's broader policy of systematic oppression and violence directed at the Palestinian population within its prison system.



The ongoing violence has led to an unprecedented toll on the prisoner movement, marking the period from 7 October 2023, to the end of 2024 as the deadliest in its history.¹ Human rights organizations have documented the martyrdom of 291 prisoners from 1967 through the end of 2024, with 2024 and the last two months of 2023 being particularly tragic, as 54 prisoners lost their lives, including 36 from the Gaza Strip². These individuals endured horrific conditions, facing torture, medical neglect, sexual violence, and extreme starvation, all compounded by dire living circumstances.

The causes of martyrdom among these individuals were varied, with many succumbing to systematic torture. The first martyr of 2024 was Abdul Rahman Al-Bahsh, a 23-year-old from Nablus, who tragically died on 1 January 2024 due to severe beatings and subsequent medical neglect.³ Similarly, Ahmad Qdaih was martyred on 16 February 2024, after being arrested in Gaza and subjected to brutal torture in Israeli detention camps. The case of Dr. Adnan Al-Barash is equally harrowing; he was martyred following severe beatings after being arrested while working at Al-Awda Hospital in the enclave.

Numerous prisoners have tragically lost their lives due to egregious medical crimes inflicted upon them. One such case is that of Mohammad al-Sabbar from Hebron, who was martyred on 8 February 2024, after being denied necessary medical care for a congenital stomach and intestinal condition. Despite requiring consistent treatment, he was left without care from the moment of his arrest. The inhumane starvation policy exacerbated his health issues, ultimately leading to his untimely death. Similarly, the martyrdom of 22-year-old Asif al-Rifai from Kafr Ein, Ramallah, who battled cancer, was reported on 29 February 2024.⁴ The devastating effects of medical neglect were also evident in the case of Walid Daqqa, a 62-year-old from Baqa al-Gharbiya, who succumbed on 7 April 2024, after enduring years of intentional medical neglect.

¹ For additional details regarding the Palestinian prisoners who lost their lives in 2024, please refer to Appendix I.

² It is important to understand that this figure does not represent the actual total of martyrs; it only accounts for those whose identities have been confirmed. Unfortunately, for the remaining martyr prisoners from the Gaza Strip, there is currently no available information as of the time this report was compiled.

³ For more information on the case of martyr Abdul Rahman Al-Bahash, please refer to the prison violence briefing paper issued by Addameer: [Prison Violence | Addameer](#)

⁴ For deeper insights into the Palestinian martyrs who have lost their lives from the start of 2024 through the end of February, see the 2023 Annual Report on Violations against Prisoners, published by Addameer. Visit <https://www.addameer.org/ar/media/5413>.

Additionally, Samih Elaiwi from Nablus was martyred on 6 November 2024, just days after being moved to the Ramleh Prison clinic, where he faced a sudden decline in health due to a benign intestinal tumor.

Israeli authorities continue to commit the grave crime of enforced disappearance, a practice entrenched since the onset of the war, by systematically withholding information about the fate of numerous Palestinian prisoners. Following the escalation of genocide in the Gaza Strip, human rights organizations have been forced to investigate thousands of missing individuals—many of whom were later found to have been detained, with a significant number tragically dying in Israeli custody. While some have been identified, many remain nameless. Disturbingly, the deaths of prisoners from the enclave have only been confirmed months after their martyrdom, as Israeli authorities deliberately obscure their fate, refusing to disclose critical information in an apparent effort to conceal the atrocities committed against them.

In other instances, the Israeli authorities have outright denied the arrests of certain individuals, such as Munir al-Faqawi and his son Yassin. Initially, the army claimed there was no evidence of their detention. Following this, a petition was filed with the Israeli Supreme Court by HaMoked to uncover their whereabouts. The Israeli Public Prosecution first responded by stating they had no knowledge of the detainees, but later submitted a revised report on 13 November 2024, revealing that both had died post-arrest, with an investigation into the circumstances ongoing since April 2024.⁵ It is particularly concerning that the Israeli High Court did not seek further clarification from the prosecution regarding how the information about the deaths of these detainees was omitted from official records, expressly given the purported ongoing investigation into their killings from the moment they were reported martyred.⁶

Furthermore, there are numerous instances where the martyrdom of certain individuals was concealed. The Israeli army acknowledged their arrest and confirmed their presence in various prisons and detention centers, only for it to be revealed later that they had been martyred on dates before these confirmations. A notable example is the case of prisoner Mohammad Al-Asali. On 22 August 2024, Addameer received verification that he was incarcerated in Asqalan Prison. However, subsequent updates revealed that he had actually been martyred on 17 May 2024, which was before the initial inquiry was made. Similarly, the cases of martyrs Kamal Radi, Arafat Khawaja, Faraj Hussein, and Hussein Abu Obeida illustrate this troubling pattern. Initially, responses indicated they were detained at the Sde Teiman Detention Camp, but it was later discovered that they had been martyred when attempts were made to visit them.

This is not the first instance of a Palestinian prisoner losing their life in the Sde Teiman Detention Camp, a facility notorious for its brutal treatment and torture, reminiscent of Guantanamo Bay. Tragically, around 36 prisoners have been martyred here, prompting the Israeli army to initiate criminal investigations into the conduct of its soldiers⁷. However, the outcomes of these inquiries remain shrouded in uncertainty.

Moreover, we have observed the Israeli army employing Palestinian prisoners as human shields, strategically positioning them in front of military targets to minimize the risk of attacks on Israeli forces. This reprehensible tactic not only endangers the lives of these prisoners but also exacerbates their suffering. Numerous reports indicate that prisoners have been compelled to walk ahead of soldiers or to occupy positions near potential targets, significantly heightening the risk of injury or death.

⁵ Petition No. (42099–10–24) was filed by HaMoked with the Supreme Court, and a ruling was delivered on 19 November 2024.

⁶ Abeer Baker, "The Role of the Israeli Supreme Court in the Aggravation of the Crime of Enforced Disappearance," Winter 2025 ([The Role of the Israeli Supreme Court in Exacerbating the Crime of Enforced Disappearance | Institute for Palestine Studies](#))

⁷ Al Jazeera. "Five Israeli soldiers accused of torturing Palestinian detainees in Sde Teiman," 19 February 2025. <https://shorturl.at/QyoCf>



In the aftermath of the genocide committed by Israeli forces following October 7, numerous instances of extrajudicial executions of Palestinian prisoners by the Israeli army have been documented. These killings occurred during arrest operations or at subsequent stages, with some prisoners being killed directly by Israeli soldiers without any legal proceedings or public trials. Such actions represent a blatant violation of international humanitarian law.

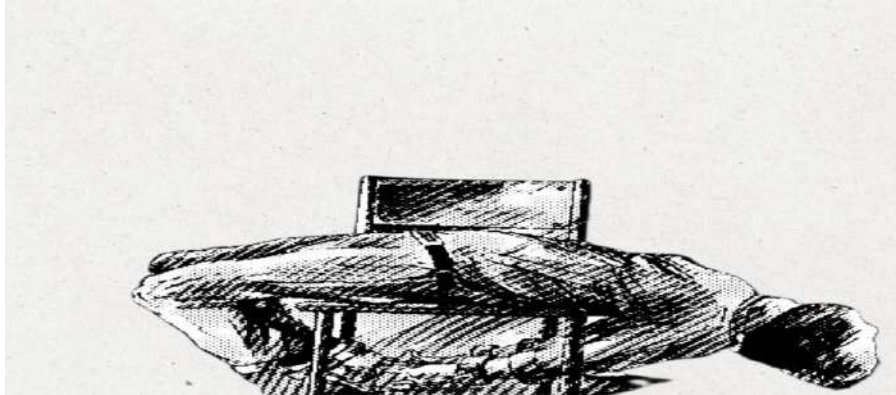
It is important to note that the cases discussed in this paper are only those that have been officially reported and documented. However, these figures do not accurately reflect the true number of martyrs. Human rights organizations have provided estimates based on testimonies from released prisoners, indicating that systematic torture has led to a significant increase in martyrdom. The occupying state continues to withhold official and transparent information regarding the numbers and identities of all martyrs, only offering details when human rights groups investigate the whereabouts of these prisoners. Furthermore, the occupying state fails to fulfill its obligation to inform the families of the martyrs about the fate of their loved ones.

Torture and Killing Practices in Israeli Prisons and Detention Camps

After October 7, Israeli prisons and detention camps transformed into sites of vengeance, where appalling torture methods and extrajudicial killings became commonplace. In these facilities, inmates endured unimaginable suffering, facing extreme physical and psychological abuse, including brutal beatings and threats of death. Additionally, harsh practices such as prolonged solitary confinement resulted in the deaths of numerous prisoners, all in blatant violation of international laws that outlaw torture and premeditated murder—acts that undeniably constitute war crimes demanding accountability.

In this regard, Addameer has documented over 739 cases throughout 2024 across various prisons and detention centers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, confirming that every detainee experienced one or more forms of torture or inhumane or degrading treatment.⁸ Consequently, we will highlight the cases of several prisoners who faced systematic torture that ultimately led to their tragic deaths.

⁸ For more information on torture and inhuman or degrading treatment, see Sde Teiman Camp and Ofer Camp papers on Addameer's website: www.addameer.org



Extrajudicial Killing – Martyr Prisoner Mohammad Hussein Al-Aref

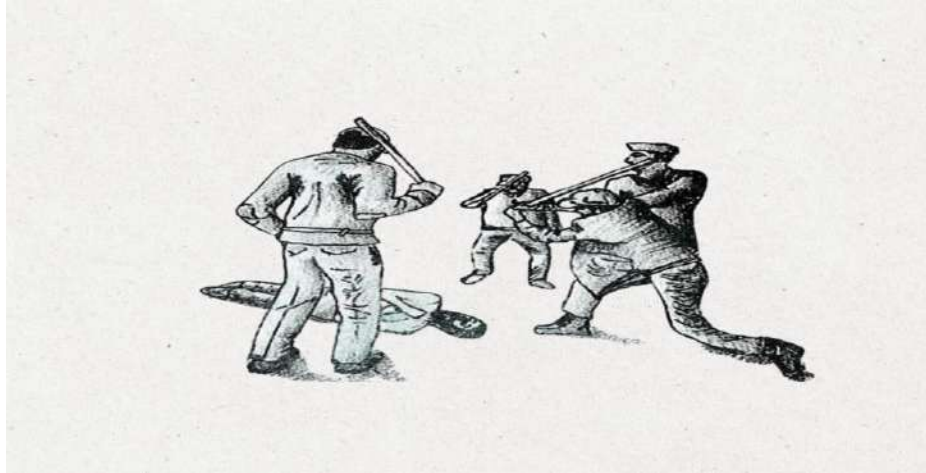
Martyr Mohammad Al-Aref, aged 45, hailed from the Nour Shams Camp in Tulkarm. A former prisoner, he endured nearly two decades in Israeli prisons before his release in 2021. Tragically, on 28 November 2024, Israeli authorities re-arrested him. Mohammad was a devoted husband and father to a daughter, with another child on the way. On the day of his arrest, Israeli forces surrounded his family's three-story home. An officer instructed Mohammad to exit the house with his nephew. Upon their exit, they were taken into custody in a nearby house and interrogated for about ten minutes before taking them away. According to Mohammad's brother, a young man who had been released later met with his nephew Jawad, who was arrested alongside Mohammad. Jawad relayed that during their transport in a military vehicle, Israeli soldiers assaulted Mohammad, striking him on the head and causing him to lose consciousness.⁹



Martyr Mohammad's family has stated that he was in good health before his arrest. Following his apprehension and subsequent transfer to the Al-Jalameh interrogation and detention center, his martyrdom was declared on 4 December 2024, just one week after his arrest. This timeline strongly suggests that he endured torture, including severe beatings and excessive force, which are part of the systematic practices employed by the Israeli army and interrogators during the initial stages of detention.

Autopsy Report – Evidence of Excessive Force Against Detainees

⁹ Phone interview conducted by Addameer with Al-Aref's family on 26 January 2025.



After the announcement of his martyrdom, Physicians for Human Rights conducted an autopsy on behalf of Al-Aref's family and issued a preliminary medical report following their examination of the martyr's body on December 17. The report revealed that Mohammad was moved from the Al-Jalameh 'Kishon' detention center to Rambam Hospital, where he was admitted to the emergency room on December 4 at 10:40 a.m. The reason for his transfer was reported pain in his right leg; however, the documentation from Rambam Hospital confirmed that he lost vital signs shortly after arrival and required cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Ultimately, his heart ceased to function, and the hospital declared him dead at 11:14 a.m., roughly 34 minutes after he arrived.

A post-mortem CT scan of Al-Aref, conducted after his passing on December 17, uncovered several alarming medical conditions. These included notable swelling and bruising in the right leg, a slight deformity, and enlargement of the pulmonary artery trunk and main arteries, as well as fluid accumulation in the right abdominal wall, which doctors suspected to be a hematoma. On the same day, an external examination by medical professionals revealed multiple indicators of physical assault and injuries linked to excessive restraint use. Hematomas were identified in the left frontotemporal region, both upper and lower limbs, the anterior chest, and the abdominal area, alongside significant swelling in the right leg and a considerable hematoma above the knee. Moreover, the examination found linear scratches on the wrists and ankles, which were believed to result from overly tight handcuffs.¹⁰

Medical professionals conducted a thorough internal examination, revealing a subarachnoid hematoma approximately 1 cm in size located in the frontotemporal area after opening the skull. Upon chest examination, they discovered around 150 ml of serous fluid on the right side, while the left side remained clear of any fluids. The heart was assessed in its natural position, where significant fibrinous thrombosis was noted in both the ventricles and auricles. Furthermore, a substantial saddle thrombus was identified in the trunk of the pulmonary artery and its main branches, although the coronary artery appeared normal.

In their report, the doctors concluded that the prisoner had experienced an assault involving excessive force and restraints, leading to intracranial bleeding. The presence of narrow abrasions and large bruises on the victim's limbs and torso underscored the brutality of the attack, yet none of these injuries alone could account for the cause of death. The intense psychological trauma resulting from the physical assault may be linked to what is referred to as 'murder by heart attack,' particularly in cases where life-threatening injuries are absent. The clots found in the pulmonary circulation could also suggest a sudden death due to pulmonary embolism. However, the lack of deep venous thrombosis and the presence of blood clots in the ventricles indicated postmortem changes rather than an acute stroke. The doctors advised a microscopic examination to further investigate the formation of the pulmonary embolism¹¹.

¹⁰ Physicians for Human Rights - Israel. "Autopsy report concerning the death of prisoner Mohammad Hussein al-Aref," 21 January 2024.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

The medical report unequivocally reveals that the injuries sustained by martyr Mohammad Al-Aref are not merely incidental marks but are clear indicators of the torture and ill-treatment he endured during his brief detention. The numerous bruises across various parts of his body, including the head, limbs, chest, and abdomen, alongside the significant swelling in his right leg and the hematoma above his knee, serve as undeniable proof of the physical violence inflicted upon him. These injuries can only be attributed to repeated and intentional assaults, showcasing a disturbing level of excessive force used against him. Moreover, the linear abrasions on his wrists and ankles highlight the brutal application of handcuffs, which caused evident harm, reflecting calculated negligence and the systematic use of painful shackling methods aimed at inflicting suffering on prisoners. The physical and psychological torture endured by martyr Mohammad Al-Aref were pivotal factors that led to the decline of his health, ultimately resulting in his martyrdom.

Targeting Medical Personnel in the Gaza Strip



Israeli forces have systematically attacked the medical sector, rendering all hospitals in the Gaza Strip non-operational since the onset of the ongoing genocide. This strategy has included widespread arrests of medical personnel working in these facilities, aimed at crippling the healthcare system for patients and the injured. Since October 7, over 333 healthcare workers have been detained¹², many enduring brutal torture that has resulted in the deaths of several, including Dr. Iyad al-Rantisi, Dr. Ziad al-Dalu, Dr. Adnan al-Bursh, and Nurse Hamdan Enaya, with numerous other cases remaining unreported. Such actions are a blatant violation of international law, which expressly forbids the targeting of medical staff and institutions, qualifying as a war crime under Article 8(2)(b)(24) of the Rome Statute.

On 19 April 2024, the Israel Prison Service announced the death of a "prisoner for reasons of national security" at Ofer Prison, without disclosing further details about the circumstances surrounding the death. The spokesperson later confirmed that this statement referred to Dr. Adnan al-Bursh and noted that an investigation into the matter was underway.¹³

¹² The Guardian. "More than 160 Gazan medics held in Israeli prisons amid reports of torture". 25 February 2025. <https://rb.gy/g37ovv>

¹³ BBC. "Who is Dr. Adnan Al-Bursh, the leading surgeon in Gaza, who died in an Israeli prison?" 3 May 2024. <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/articles/c043jk3z5d90>

Dr. al-Bursh was taken into custody at al-Awda Hospital in North Gaza and was later declared a martyr four months following his arrest. In this regard, Tlaleng Mofokeng, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, affirmed that "Dr. al-Bursh had been detained with other doctors and medical personnel by Israeli forces on 18 December 2023, at Al-Awda Hospital in North Gaza. At that time, he was generally in good health and was performing his duties normally."¹⁴

"Dr. al-Bursh arrived five days after I arrived at the Sde Teiman Camp and I was shocked to see they were doctors I work with. They were in severe terror. When they were brought in, soldiers were holding them and pushing their heads down; they were all cuffed to each other, walking like a train, with one hand on the shoulder of the person in front. Dr. al-Bursh was in pain from the beatings. Hearing from them, it seemed to me that there was more severity in the violence towards healthcare workers, they were treated aggressively. Dr. al-Bursh was also subjected to punishment. During their time in detention, he and several others underwent interrogation at least once before being moved to a different location. They likely faced questioning just three days before this transfer. Dr. al-Bursh displayed clear signs of physical harm and was struggling to breathe," a fellow inmate, who shared the same cell with Dr. al-Bursh, recounted.¹⁵



In mid-April, Dr. al-Bursh was brought to Ofer Prison, where he tragically lost his life shortly thereafter. He endured horrific torture during his time there. A fellow inmate who witnessed the events recounted, "The prison guards brought Dr. al-Bursh into the section in a deplorable state. He had clearly been assaulted with injuries around his body. The prison guards threw him in the middle of the yard and left him there. Dr. al-Bursh was unable to stand up. One of the prisoners helped him and accompanied him to one of the rooms. A few minutes later, prisoners were heard screaming from the room they went into, declaring Dr. al-Bursh (was dead)."¹⁶

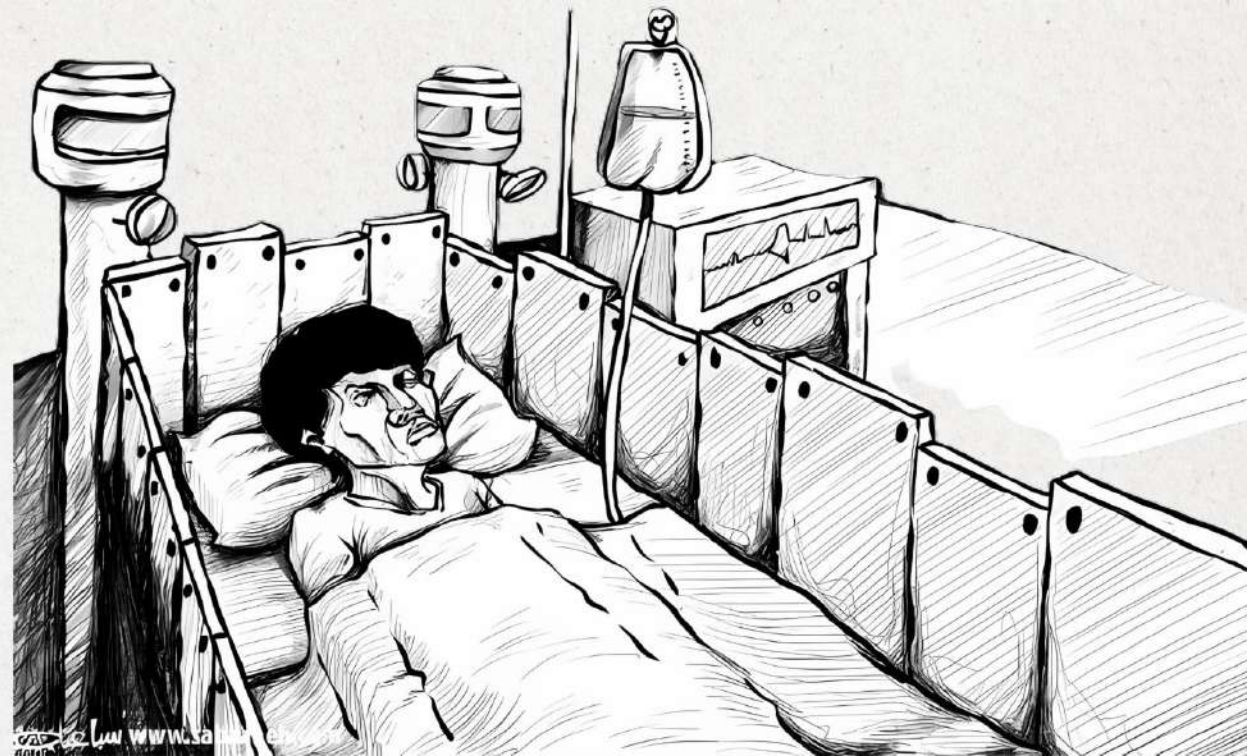
¹⁴ OHCHR. "UN expert horrified by death of Gazan orthopedic surgeon in Israeli detention". 16 May 2024.

<https://www.ohchr.org/ar/press-releases/2024/05/un-expert-horrified-death-gazan-orthopedic-surgeon-israeli-detention>

¹⁵ Healthcare Workers Watch. "The Killing, Detention, and Torture of Healthcare Workers in Gaza". 7 October 2024.

<https://healthcareworkerswatch.org/publications/reports/the-killing-detention-and-torture-of-healthcare-workers-in-gaza/>

¹⁶ Sky News. "He was the light of my life and I lost him: How a famous surgeon died in an Israeli prison after being taken from Gaza hospital". 14 November 2024. <https://rb.gy/aob3nl>



The systematic torture faced by Palestinian prisoners, particularly those from the Gaza Strip, is a grave concern. In March, the tragic deaths of two Gazan prisoners were reported while they were being transported to Sde Teiman Camp, following a brutal beating by soldiers during the transfer. An investigation was initiated, and while two soldiers involved were questioned, none were detained, mirroring the pattern seen in the inquiries into the deaths of 33 other prisoners from Gaza. At least two of these individuals lost their lives due to medical neglect or ill-treatment, yet no soldiers faced arrest. The investigations have expanded to encompass 36 cases related to the treatment of Palestinian prisoners and 70 concerning wartime conduct,¹⁷ but the findings of these inquiries remain undisclosed.

Medical Negligence – An Act of Violence Within Prisons

Medical negligence in Israeli prisons stands out as a significant manifestation of systematic violence inflicted upon Palestinian prisoners by the occupying forces. From the moment they are detained, these individuals face severe health challenges that are worsened by the intentional disregard and neglect shown by the Israel Prison Service. This neglect manifests in various ways, including the failure to provide essential medical care to injured prisoners, delays in treatment, withholding of medications, and, in certain instances, outright refusal to conduct necessary surgical procedures.

The demand for medical care among prisoners surged after October 7, driven by the extreme violence and oppression they faced within the prison walls. Yet, the Israel Prison Service continued its pattern of neglect, disregarding the urgent health needs of these individuals and denying them essential medical attention. As physical and psychological torture intensified during this time, coupled with the dire conditions of overcrowding, unsanitary environments, and a lack of medical supplies, the health of the prisoners began to decline alarmingly. This deterioration resulted in the worsening of numerous medical issues, ultimately leading to the tragic loss of many lives.

¹⁷ Haaretz. "An inquiry into the deaths of two detainees from Gaza reveals that soldiers assaulted them during their transfer to the Sde Teiman facility." 28 May 2024. <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-28/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-bbb6-dc1f-abef-ffb9de50000?gclid=34d43ebaa4e44f0e9dd72af64eac25ca>

In the grim reality of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli facilities, scabies has emerged as a chilling tool of oppression, emblematic of a broader strategy of systematic abuse. This contagious skin condition inflicts severe itching and inflammation, posing serious health risks if not promptly addressed. Documentation from Addameer reveals that the Israel Prison Service has intentionally allowed the spread of this infection by neglecting hygiene standards within the cells and maintaining overcrowded conditions that hinder a healthy living environment. Furthermore, the IPS has either delayed treatment or failed to provide it altogether, exacerbating the suffering of those affected. It was not uncommon for prisoners suffering from scabies to endure weeks without care, facilitating the disease's spread to others.

This medical negligence transcends mere oversight; it represents a calculated approach designed to inflict ongoing suffering on prisoners, subjecting them to relentless pain and exacerbating their injuries. This practice is part of a broader strategy of prisoner abuse, where medical neglect serves as a means to psychologically and physically undermine individuals, highlighting the severe human rights violations occurring within Israeli prisons.

One of the first victims of this negligence in 2024 was Izz al-Din al-Banna, who tragically passed away on February 20. Al-Banna, who had long suffered from a motor disability and various health issues, endured extreme torture following his arrest, which significantly worsened his medical condition and ultimately led to his death. A fellow prisoner, M. T., shared concerning details about Al-Banna. "Izz al-Din al-Banna from Gaza has been suffering from paralysis for an extended period due to a previous injury, and he is now facing severe complications, including deep ulcers. The doctor assessed his condition and confirmed its seriousness. Al-Banna has been unable to sleep for several days and is unaware of anything, yet he has not been transferred to a hospital. His skin has taken on a yellowish hue."¹⁸ Tragically, Al-Banna was pronounced dead later that same day.

Despite the large number of cases that were subjected to medical crimes inside Israeli prisons, we cannot talk about all of them, and therefore we will focus in this context on some prominent cases that highlight the extent of the violation, including the cases of Walid Daqqa, Mohammad Musa, and Samih Elaiwi, who were martyred as a result of deliberate medical negligence and the harsh treatment they were subjected to inside the prisons.

Case Study – Martyr Prisoner Walid Daqqa



Walid Daqqa, a 61-year-old Palestinian intellectual and author from the occupied city of Baqa al-Gharbiya, was imprisoned in 1986, initially sentenced to life but later reduced to 37 years. Throughout his incarceration, Daqqa's health significantly declined, culminating in a diagnosis of a rare bone marrow cancer in 2022. Unfortunately, he endured a systematic policy of medical neglect from the Israel Prison Service (IPS). Despite medical professionals recommending a bone marrow transplant and a transfer to a more suitable environment, the IPS has disregarded these urgent medical needs, leaving him in conditions detrimental to his health.

In 2023, Daqqa experienced a series of serious health complications, including a stroke that caused severe swelling and pain in his leg. His pleas for transfer to a civilian hospital were met with a delay of nearly ten days. This neglect led to the development of severe pneumonia, resulting in the removal of a significant portion of his right lung in April 2023. After the surgery, he was sent back to the Ramleh Prison Clinic, which,

¹⁸ Lawyer's visit to prisoner M. T. in Ramleh Prison clinic on 20 February 2024.

despite being labeled as a facility for sick prisoners, lacks the necessary medical infrastructure to handle complex cases like his. The clinic is primarily staffed by nurses rather than qualified doctors, further compromising his care. Walid's condition continued to worsen, marked by extreme weight loss and shortness of breath, necessitating the use of an artificial oxygen cylinder. The prison administration's failure to provide adequate medical attention placed his life in grave danger.¹⁹

Given the serious threat to Daqqa's life and the ongoing refusal of the prison authorities to provide necessary medical care, his family submitted a request for early release to the "Parole Committee" on 10 May 2023. They based their appeal on Article 7 of the "Parole Release from Detention Law of 2001," which states that "the committee is authorized to release any prisoner under certain conditions after reviewing medical reports, particularly if medical reasons indicate a limited life expectancy or that the illness poses a danger to their life." However, on May 31, during a session held at Ramleh Prison, the committee decided that Daqqa's case did not fall under its jurisdiction as he was classified as a high-security prisoner. Consequently, they referred the file to the "Early Release Committee," which handles prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment and others. Despite the Israeli courts initially imposing a life sentence of 37 years on Daqqa, which was set to conclude on 24 March 2023, the situation took a turn when the court decided to extend his sentence by an additional two years due to his involvement in smuggling cell phones into prison. This new sentence is entirely separate from the original one, effectively prolonging his incarceration.

Upon forwarding the case to the "Early Release Committee" for evaluation, the committee examined the file and aligned with the legal advisor's perspective, treating the two sentences as a single continuous term. Consequently, the committee acknowledged Daqqa's legal status as a prisoner serving a life sentence, which was essential for determining the committee's jurisdiction to review his case. Accordingly, the committee invoked Article (40/A) of the "Counter-Terrorism Law of 2016," which stipulates that early release is not permitted for prisoners charged with murder or attempted murder when the court deems such acts as acts of terrorism.

Thus, the committee rejected Daqqa's request on June 26. The committee's decision was firmly rooted in a law that specifically targets Palestinian prisoners, imposing discriminatory practices against them. The occupying state has manipulated this law to further its political agenda, stripping Palestinians of their legitimate rights and denying them equal treatment alongside Jewish citizens. It serves merely as a mechanism to justify the ongoing human rights violations perpetrated by the occupying authority.

The arbitrary and prejudiced nature of the law is reflected in the committee's decision, which is equally arbitrary and highlights the broader complicity of the colonial system as a whole in its treatment of Palestinian prisoners. It underscores the profound injustice of the Israeli occupation, which continues to pursue Daqqa based on an outdated case that should have concluded with the completion of his life sentence. The entire colonial apparatus has mobilized to undermine Daqqa, subjecting him to health risks and maintaining him in deplorable detention conditions, all while denying him adequate medical care.

Daqqa's family remained resolute, refusing to accept the rulings of the two committees. Instead, they appealed to the Central Court in al-Lod, challenging the denial of his release. A hearing took place on July 16, but despite multiple sessions to review the appeal, the Central Court ultimately ruled on August 7 to deny Daqqa's early release, choosing to uphold his detention even as his health significantly declined in the months leading up to this decision. After enduring 38 years behind bars and relentless efforts from his family to secure his freedom, the cruel policy of medical neglect prevailed, leading to the announcement of Daqqa's martyrdom on Sunday, 7 April 2024, at Assaf Harofeh Hospital.

Posthumous Abuse

The occupying state escalated its ill-treatment of Daqqa and his family by announcing its intention to withhold Daqqa's body, robbing both him and his family of their fundamental right to a proper burial. Even as the family attempted to hold a mourning ceremony, Israeli police disrupted the gathering by raiding the mourning tent. In response to this violent raid, which resulted in the arrest of several family members and

¹⁹ For further details surrounding the health issues and medical negligence experienced by prisoner Walid Daqqa, click [Immediate Release of Palestinian Political Prisoner Walid Daqqa Diagnosed with Bone Marrow Cancer and Facing Imminent Deteriorating Health Conditions due to Israeli Prison Services Policy of Deliberate Medical Neglect | Addameer](#)

mourners and the use of excessive force that injured attendees, Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, sent an urgent letter on 8 April 2024 to Israeli Police Commissioner Yaakov Shabtai and Baqa al-Gharbiya Police Station Commander Ben Schuster. Adalah highlighted that, under Israeli law, the police are not authorized to prohibit mourning tents designed to offer condolences. Adalah therefore demanded that the police refrain from any further interference in this matter and immediately cease violating the family's right to dignity and to mourn and honor the deceased.²⁰

On June 11, during discussions regarding the petition filed by Daqqa's family, the State informed the Supreme Court that on June 9, the Security Cabinet of Israel ratified Defense Minister Yoav Gallant's decision to withhold Daqqa's body as a bargaining chip for future negotiations with Hamas. The State further said that although the decision was based on an "extremely exceptional case", justifying a deviation from the policy of not holding the bodies of Israeli citizens, the Cabinet decided to continue holding all bodies of Palestinian citizens of Israel in custody until a decision is made by the government on the overarching policy on the matter. In its update to the Supreme Court, the State argued that the petition should be dismissed because there are no grounds for the Supreme Court to intervene in the Defense Minister's decision.²¹ The occupying state continues to hold the body of martyr Walid Daqqa, along with 63 other bodies of deceased prisoners, until the end of 2024.

Holding the Bodies of Deceased Prisoners

The practice of holding the bodies of martyred prisoners stands out as a significant method of collective punishment employed by Israel against the Palestinian people. By refusing to return the bodies of those who die in custody, Israeli authorities strip families of their fundamental right to lay their loved ones to rest under cultural and traditional practices. This approach transcends mere punishment; it constitutes a blatant breach of international humanitarian law, which mandates respect for the dignity of the deceased and the rights of their families to mourn and conduct proper burials.

This policy serves as a tool of political leverage, exemplified by the case of martyr Walid Daqqa, whose body the Israeli authorities have indicated they may use in future negotiations for prisoner exchanges. Such actions not only punish the martyr but also inflict suffering on their families. The impact of this policy is widespread, affecting not just a handful of individuals but encompassing dozens of martyred prisoners. Currently, the bodies of 63 deceased prisoners remain in Israeli custody, leaving their families in anguish, uncertain about the fate of their loved ones—whether their remains are still stored in Israeli facilities or have been clandestinely interred in the so-called "cemeteries of numbers," where Israel conceals the bodies of Palestinians.

²⁰ Adalah. "Adalah to the Israeli Police: Dismantling the Mourning Tent at the Family Home of Recently-Deceased Palestinian Prisoner Walid Daqqa Is Unlawful." 9 April 2024. <https://www.adalah.org/ar/content/view/11091>

²¹ Adalah. "State informs Supreme Court it will continue withholding Walid Daqqa's body and bodies of other Palestinian citizens as bargaining chips for negotiations with Hamas." 12 June 2024. <https://www.adalah.org/ar/content/view/11131>



On 14 February 2024, the Knesset General Assembly took a significant step towards legitimizing the detention of deceased prisoners by approving three draft laws in a preliminary reading. These laws would prevent the Israeli government from returning the bodies of Palestinian resistance fighters who are classified under Israeli law as having committed a "terrorist act" during their deaths²². While the legislation is still in its early stages, its preliminary approval signals a clear intention from the Israeli government to persist in this practice, transforming it from a policy into a formalized law driven by a desire for retribution.

The ongoing detention of the remains of fallen prisoners by the Israeli authorities represents a blatant breach of international law. This practice contradicts numerous international agreements and conventions that mandate respect for the dignity of the deceased and uphold the rights of their families to conduct proper burials. Specifically, it contravenes Article 17 of the First Geneva Convention of 1949, which mandates that parties to the conflict must guarantee that the deceased are laid to rest with dignity, respecting their religious customs and that they must be treated with compassion and care, ensuring that no one is subjected to inhumane treatment or left without identification. Furthermore, Article 34 of the First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 1977 underscores the prohibition of any actions that violate personal dignity, including humiliating or degrading treatment of deceased individuals.

This policy also contravenes Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which categorizes "attacks on human dignity, especially humiliating and degrading treatment," as a war crime. Furthermore, it breaches Article 1/3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which asserts that everyone is entitled to respect for their dignity, even after death.

The occupying state not only refuses to return the bodies of the fallen prisoners, denying families the chance to say their final goodbyes but also engages in a systematic approach of collective punishment and psychological torment. This behavior stands in stark violation of Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which explicitly forbids "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." Such actions are unequivocally illegal under international law and demand global accountability to halt these egregious violations. Despite this clear and undeniable breach, the occupying state persists in its oppressive tactics, even escalating them following October 7.

Case Study – Martyr Prisoner Mohammad Musa

37-year-old Mohammad Musa was arrested in Bethlehem on 20 April 2023. This marked his first encounter with the law. A devoted husband and father to three daughters, the youngest being just three years old, Musa faced significant health challenges before his arrest, including diabetes. Tragically, during his time in

²² Madar. "In Preliminary Reading: Three Bills Preventing the Return of the Bodies of Palestinian Resistance Fighters." 14 February 2024. <http://tinyurl.com/yc5bc4kp>

detention, he experienced severe medical neglect, suffering not only from his diabetes but also from scabies; a condition that had spread among inmates in Israeli facilities. Despite his deteriorating health, the Israel Prison Service failed to provide adequate care, leading to the announcement of his martyrdom on 13 October 2024.

Prisoner Musa was initially held in Section 8, Room 107 of Rimon Prison before being moved to Section 6 along with several other inmates, including the recently released M. Sh. During their time in detention, a significant outbreak of scabies affected all sections of the prison, leading to a high number of infections among the inmates. Musa contracted scabies in May 2024. Given his pre-existing medical condition and the new infection, his lawyer urged the court to ensure he received necessary treatment, highlighting that Musa had made multiple requests to the prison administration for medical care, all of which were denied. The court ruled that he should be taken to the clinic for appropriate treatment. However, when the prison guards escorted him to the clinic, they shackled his hands and feet with metal restraints and linked them with a chain, typical for high-risk prisoners. During the transfer, he was subjected to physical abuse and ultimately denied the treatment he desperately needed for his scabies.

Prisoner M. Sh. recounted the tragic fate of Musa, stating, "Musa was battling diabetes, and after contracting a severe skin disease, he developed inflammation that rendered him immobile, leaving only his eye capable of movement. His fellow inmates had to assist him with basic needs like using the bathroom and eating. The skin condition spread across his entire body, even between his fingers, sparing only his neck and face, leading to a significant decline in his health."²³ The released prisoner further shared, "One day, the deputy director of the prison approached us and, in Hebrew—which I understand—declared, 'You are zombies, not humans.'" This remark highlights the dire situation of the prisoners, who suffer from both abuse and ill-treatment and the rampant spread of scabies. Despite the prison administration's obligation to ensure proper medical care for the inmates, they have neglected their duties, choosing instead to mock the prisoners by labeling them as 'zombies.'

W. R., a former prisoner, conveyed his experiences to the Prisoners' Affairs Commission and the Prisoner's Club, stating, "In Rimon Prison, the jailers referred to Section 6 as the 'zombie' section because of the debilitating effects this disease had on the inmates. One fellow prisoner appeared as though he had endured severe burns, and approximately 85 out of the 155 detainees in that section exhibited varying degrees of these alarming symptoms."²⁴

Human rights organizations have faced significant challenges in gathering clear and definitive information regarding prisoner Mohammad Musa. The Israel Prison Service has actively obstructed lawyers from visiting inmates for extended periods and has frequently transferred prisoners between facilities. This has severely hindered efforts to obtain accurate and comprehensive details about the deaths of numerous prisoners. Such actions stem from a deliberate policy of secrecy aimed at concealing the crimes occurring within the prison system, with the complicity of the IPS and Israeli courts working to obscure the truth and mask the ongoing violations against Palestinian prisoners. This complicity underscores the oppressive policies of the Israeli authorities, which are rooted in repression and a systematic effort to hide the injustices faced by Palestinian prisoners.

Case Study – Martyr Prisoner Samih Elaiwi

²³ Field interview conducted by Addameer Foundation with the released prisoner (M. Sh.) on November 9, 2024

²⁴ Palestinian Prisoner's Club Society. "The Prisoners' Affairs Commission, along with the Prisoner's Club, is examining the account of a recently released prisoner who was with martyr Mohammad Musa from March through September." 13 October 2024. <https://www.ppsmo.ps/home/news/15515?culture=ar-SA>



On 23 October 2023, Samih Elaiwi was arrested from his home in Nablus. During his arrest, Israeli soldiers did not use force against him. He was subsequently taken to the Huwwara interrogation and detention center, where he spent two days before being moved to Megiddo Prison. After a month there, he was transferred to Naqab Prison. Unfortunately, during the transport to Naqab Prison in a prisoner transfer vehicle, he faced an assault. Upon his arrival, members of the Keter Unit and the Nahshon Unit, tasked with prisoner transport, brutally attacked him with sticks and kicks. They further humiliated him and several other prisoners by forcing them to crawl on all fours.²⁵

The Decline of Elaiwi's Health Condition in Israeli Prisons

Elaiwi had no chronic health issues before his arrest, aside from a previous surgery to remove a benign tumor from his small intestine at Rafidia Hospital in Nablus. This procedure resulted in an extra-gastric hernia that required further surgery, which was unfortunately postponed due to his arrest. During his time in detention, he endured severe beatings that exacerbated his health problems, including an increase in the size of his hernia. A doctor at the Megiddo Prison Clinic indicated that he required retina implant surgery, but prison guards denied him access to the clinic. When his lawyer petitioned the court for necessary medical treatment due to Elaiwi's pain, the judge directed him to see a doctor. During this consultation, the doctor confirmed that the retina implant surgery would be performed when necessary, yet Elaiwi was not taken for any further medical evaluations despite his persistent requests.

Upon visiting him in Naqab Prison, his lawyer observed, "Elaiwi is showing me his abdomen, which appears to have a mass the size of a tennis ball. It is evident that there is a serious issue, and no medical professional has examined him here. He has to bind a piece of cloth around his stomach, and he is also experiencing nerve issues on the outer side of his left palm, suffering from severe cramps when handcuffed. The marks from the handcuffs on his wrists are unmistakable."²⁶

Following a decline in Elaiwi's health, Addameer escalated his case to a specialized institution that monitors medical issues within Israeli prisons. On 20 May 2024, this institution reached out to the head of medical

²⁵ Lawyer's visit to prisoner Samih Elaiwi in Naqab Prison on 26 March 2024.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

services at the Israel Prison Service (IPS). The correspondence detailed that during a visit from his lawyer, Elaiwi reported experiencing intense abdominal pain and swelling resembling a tumor. The prison doctor diagnosed him with a hernia and recommended an ultrasound and a consultation with a surgeon to determine the necessary treatment. Despite his ongoing reports of severe pain, he has yet to receive the recommended examinations or surgical intervention. Furthermore, Elaiwi mentioned that before his arrest, he had surgery on his left shoulder and now endures significant pain and muscle spasms due to being restrained with his hands tied behind his back, disregarding his medical condition. Physicians for Human Rights concluded their letter by urging that Elaiwi be provided with the essential medical care he requires.²⁷

In response, the Israel Prison Service replied on June 4, acknowledging Elaiwi's abdominal pain. However, they stated that a clinical examination conducted on May 23 revealed no 'concerning' findings, and therefore, no further intervention or treatment was deemed necessary at that time. The IPS also refuted any claims regarding muscle or shoulder pain, asserting that Elaiwi's overall health status was 'satisfactory and stable.'²⁸

The IPS's relentless commitment to perpetuating medical injustices against prisoners, coupled with their failure to deliver adequate treatment, has resulted in gross negligence during medical examinations and an alarming failure to accurately diagnose the illnesses that require proper medical attention. Thus, a lawyer from Physicians for Human Rights visited Elaiwi in Naqab Prison in August 2024, where Elaiwi reported experiencing intense abdominal pain. He mentioned that he had been examined at the prison clinic approximately two months prior but had not received any treatment. The correspondence highlighted his recent struggles with severe pain and nausea, prompting doctors to urge the prison administration to reassess his condition and ensure he received the necessary medical care to identify the root cause of his suffering.²⁹

In response to this correspondence, the IPS stated on October 7 that Elaiwi had undergone medical examinations on September 4 and that his health had stabilized. However, on September 14, he returned to the prison clinic, and the following day, his condition worsened, leading to his transfer to Soroka Hospital. There, he was admitted to the internal medicine department due to severe pain, dizziness, and loss of appetite. He received intravenous treatment to address a salt deficiency before being discharged. On September 16, he was moved to the Ramleh Prison Clinic for further medical care.

Elaiwi was moved to the Ramleh Prison Clinic for ongoing treatment and monitoring due to a serious decline in his health. Officials at the clinic informed Physicians for Human Rights that while Elaiwi remained fully conscious and stable in terms of his breathing and blood circulation, he was noticeably weak and emaciated, struggling to articulate his words. His weight had dropped to just 40 kg, and although he could walk independently, he did so at a slow pace. On September 23, he was transported by ambulance to Shamir Hospital after experiencing a critical drop in his potassium levels (1.4). At the hospital's emergency department, he received potassium-infused fluids and was discharged the following morning back to the Ramleh Prison Clinic, where he continued to receive oral potassium and magnesium treatment. The IPS indicated that Elaiwi was under medical supervision at the Ramleh Prison Clinic and was referred for comprehensive external examinations, although a date for these has yet to be established.³⁰

Elaiwi's Legal Status

Following his arrest, Elaiwi was placed in administrative detention, with an initial order set for six months. Once this period concluded, the military commander extended his detention for another six months, but this time it was reduced to four months. Subsequently, the administrative detention order was renewed once more for an additional four months, resulting in a total of three separate orders against him. In early November 2024, when the third renewal of Elaiwi's administrative detention occurred, his wife reached out

²⁷ Physicians for Human Rights – Israel. "Correspondence to the Israel Prison Service Regarding the Provision of Medical Care to Prisoner Samih Elaiwi", 20 May 2024.

²⁸ Israel Prison Service. "Response to Physicians for Human Rights – Israel Correspondence Regarding Medical Care for Prisoner Samih Elaiwi". 4 June 2024.

²⁹ Physicians for Human Rights – Israel. "Correspondence to the Israel Prison Service Regarding the Provision of Medical Care to Prisoner Samih Elaiwi", 20 May 2024.

³⁰ Israel Prison Service. "Response to Physicians for Human Rights – Israel Correspondence Regarding Medical Care for Prisoner Samih Elaiwi". 7 October 2024.

to Addameer to express her concerns. She informed the lawyer that Elaiwi was experiencing significant health issues, as relayed by former prisoners. In response, the lawyer sought a current medical report from the family to present to the court for an urgent appeal. The most recent medical update the family had received regarding his health was from August 2024.

The lawyer submitted the medical report to the Ofer Military Court and requested an urgent appeal session, but the court rejected the request on November 11. It justified the rejection by saying that the attached report indicated that Elaiwi's condition was not urgent and did not seriously threaten his life, and requested the submission of a more recent medical report. However, it is important to note that the court issued this decision after Elaiwi was martyred in prison, while the family was still hoping to save him, as they had not received any official information about his martyrdom until that date.

The Family's Efforts to Uncover Information about Elaiwi

The ongoing genocide perpetrated by the occupying state since October 7 has had devastating consequences, particularly for prisoners. Families are left in the dark, unable to communicate with their loved ones or learn about their fates while detained in Israeli prisons. One such family is that of Samih Elaiwi, who endured prolonged uncertainty regarding his well-being. When they reached out to human rights organizations for assistance in locating him, they were met with disheartening news: his name was absent from the records of the Israel Prison Service, including the Ramleh Prison Clinic, casting serious doubt on his status.

On November 15, the family received the tragic news of Elaiwi's martyrdom within the prison, relayed through the Palestinian liaison. Further inquiries with the Prisoners' Affairs Commission revealed that he had actually died on November 6.³¹ The court's response, which called for an appeal following the announcement of his martyrdom, underscores the complicity of various Israeli state agencies in hiding critical information and obscuring the crimes committed against prisoners. This situation highlights a disturbing lack of accountability. In light of this complicity, former prisoners have played a crucial role in shedding light on the abuses and atrocities they faced during their time in Israeli detention facilities and throughout their transfers to central prisons.

Human rights organizations have gathered numerous accounts from former prisoners who have witnessed tragic incidents of martyrdom within Israeli detention facilities. One such account comes from prisoner M. N., who observed the heartbreaking martyrdom of Moath Rayan, a person with special needs, at the Sde Teiman detention camp. Moath was arrested on 13 October 2023. "Moath Rayan was a martyr. He was born with special needs, only able to move his eyes and tongue. He required medication and treatment, which were denied to him. As a result, he was unable to eat or drink for nearly three days due to the lack of his necessary medication, and his health deteriorated rapidly. We repeatedly requested his medication, but our pleas went unanswered. On the 13th or 14th day of my detention, Moath lost his ability to speak, and shortly after, we noticed that his eyes had stopped moving. A vascular doctor, who had worked at Kamal Odwan Hospital before his arrest, was with us and examined Moath. He confirmed that Moath had passed away and had no pulse. We began to scream for help until the army arrived to take him away, and after that, we lost all contact with him."³²

Enforced Disappearance – Gaza Martyrs: When Statistics Fail to Capture the True Story

³¹ Phone interview conducted with Elaiwi's wife on 25 November 2024.

³² Phone interview conducted with released prisoner M. N. on 19 November 2024.



Since October 7, Israeli forces have initiated a devastating and bloody war against all living beings in the Gaza Strip, marked by relentless airstrikes and ground operations. The Israeli military has infiltrated every corner of the enclave, resulting in the tragic loss of over 45,000 lives.³³ Alongside these attacks, widespread arrests have targeted individuals from all walks of life within the Palestinian community.

As the crackdown escalates, detainees have faced severe forms of torture both during their apprehension and after being taken to Israeli detention centers. Since the onset of the war and continuing into 2024, numerous detainees from Gaza have tragically lost their lives—some due to the brutal torture inflicted upon them, while others succumbed to deliberate medical neglect. Many prisoners, suffering from chronic illnesses or injuries sustained from the Israeli military's actions, have died after being arrested directly from medical facilities. Furthermore, some of the deceased were captured within Gaza and used as human shields by the Israeli army before being executed, while others were interrogated and subsequently executed. It is crucial to note that the Israeli authorities have concealed the arrests of several of these individuals, leaving many families in anguish over the fate of their loved ones, who remain unaccounted for to this day.

The rise of Gazan martyrs can be attributed to numerous factors, yet the Israeli authorities have engaged in the grave crime of enforced disappearance since the onset of the war. This practice targets both the living and the deceased, with authorities withholding information about Gazan detainees for months. The legal and judicial framework in place has fostered an environment that facilitates such violations. Israeli laws and their amendments have significantly contributed to the alarming increase in missing persons and the enforced disappearance of detainees. The Incarceration of Unlawful Combatants Law enacted in 2002³⁴ allows Israeli authorities to detain individuals without clear charges or trials, operating under procedures that lack transparency and judicial scrutiny.

In 2024, The Incarceration of Unlawful Combatants Law underwent several amendments, extending the detention period to 75 days before detainees must be presented in court. This change enables Israeli authorities to conduct prolonged investigations without meaningful judicial oversight. Furthermore, the duration for which detainees can be denied access to their lawyers has been increased to 180 days³⁵, complicating communication and obscuring their fates. The implementation of military emergency orders also permits the swift issuance of arrest warrants with minimal judicial oversight, thereby amplifying the Israeli army's authority over detainees' destinies. Consequently, these policies have intensified the crime of enforced disappearance, leading to a growing number of individuals who endure severe and uncertain detention conditions.

As the number of detainees increased, human rights organizations began submitting petitions to the High Court to reveal the fate of these detainees. This court played a pivotal role in exacerbating the crime of enforced disappearance and complicity in concealing these detainees, as the court aligned itself with the Israeli Public Prosecution's policy of not disclosing the fate of missing persons who were seen being held

³³ Ministry of Health's statistics until 31 December 2024.

³⁴ The Incarceration of Unlawful Combatants Law is an Israeli law that permits the detention of individuals suspected of engaging in 'hostile' acts, either directly or indirectly, or those affiliated with groups opposing Israel. It applies to persons who do not qualify for prisoner-of-war status as defined by the Third Geneva Convention of 1949.

³⁵ Addameer. "New Laws and Legal Amendments in 2023." 12 May 2024. [New Laws and Legal Amendments in 2023. | Addameer](#)

alive by the Israeli forces, and then their traces were lost. On 31 October 2023, the HCJ rejected the first petition submitted to it on October 10 by a group of human rights organizations on behalf of journalists Haitham al-Wahid and Nidal al-Wahidi without holding a session to hear the parties. The court justified its decision by "that Israel held no obligation towards residents of the Gaza Strip, given that it was a territory controlled by a terrorist organization" and did not establish what were the legal framework and duties incumbent on Israel in holding Gazans. This petition was also deleted and in an unprecedented step, heavy costs were imposed on the petitioners.³⁶

On 22 October 2023, a second petition was filed with the High Court of Justice (HCJ) seeking to uncover the whereabouts of over 400 Gazans who were legally present in the 1948 occupied territory or the West Bank and whose whereabouts became unknown after October 7. The court, however, limited the scope of this petition to just the 10 individual petitioners who formally signed the petition. Thereupon, the Public Prosecution announced that the competent body to address the matter of the Gazans who entered 'Israel' legally before October 7 was the National Security Council (NSC). In a separate petition on behalf of 568 Palestinians from Gaza, who were also legally in the 1948 occupied territory before the onset of the genocide on October 7, the court decided to respond only to a limited number of petitioners for whom organizations had previously made direct requests to the NSC before approaching the court.³⁷ Furthermore, a fourth petition submitted on November 21 for 62 Gazans was dismissed on the pretext that 'the petition in hand concerns different petitioners whose matters vary one from the other. The factual basis regarding each of the petitioners is different, and consequently, the normative framework that applies to them could be different.'³⁸

In one of the individual petitions filed approximately seven months after the genocide, the prosecution submitted its response to the High Court of Justice (HCJ), marking the first time it communicated the necessity for lawyers to reach out to the relevant authorities through a designated email address to ascertain the status of the missing Gazans.³⁹ However, the search for these individuals proved to be challenging. As human rights organizations began to file inquiries regarding the missing Gazans, it became evident that some responses from the Israeli army were misleading.⁴⁰ Despite official statements indicating that there were no records of these individuals in the Israel Prison Service or military facilities, families provided compelling testimonies confirming that arrests had taken place, often witnessed firsthand. This discrepancy may stem from the arbitrary and illegal nature of the detentions, leading to some prisoners not being documented in official records. Furthermore, it suggests a troubling lack of seriousness on the part of the occupying state in addressing this issue, as well as a potential policy of enforced disappearance or extrajudicial killings, as later evidence would reveal regarding some of these individuals.

Unaccounted for – A Word That Carries a Heavy Burden for Families

Since October 7, the situation has dramatically worsened with the escalation of genocide perpetrated by the occupying state against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. This has led to a new tragedy: the issue of the missing. Thousands of Palestinian families are now engulfed in uncertainty regarding the whereabouts of their loved ones. Months into the war, as efforts to address the missing have commenced, the responses from the Israeli army have been as follows:

1. **Present:** The current location of the detainee has been established, confirming that they are alive.
2. **Released:** The specified release date is noted, but it does not guarantee that the individual returned to Gaza in good health; many prisoners have been released only to face execution at checkpoints by Israeli forces.

³⁶ HaMoked. "Following High Court petition: Israel returned to Gaza thousands of laborers it held incommunicado: the HCJ did not address the legality of their detention nor their coerced return to a warzone". 22 November 2023.

<https://hamoked.org/document.php?dID=Updates2383>

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ HaMoked. "High Court of Justice rejected HaMoked's petition to reveal the whereabouts of 62 Gazans incarcerated in Israel and thus again sanctioned protracted incommunicado detention." 18 February 2024.

<https://hamoked.org/document.php?dID=Updates2389>

³⁹ Hamoked, "In response to HaMoked habeas corpus petition: State insists on its refusal to provide information on location of Gaza detainees, but for the first time since the outbreak of the war, provides an email address to coordinate meetings with lawyers", 5 May 2024 (<https://hamoked.org/document.php?dID=Updates2402>).

⁴⁰ The entity responsible for all detainees from Gaza is the Israeli army.

3. **Died in detention:** The date of death is recorded, yet the circumstances surrounding it remain unclear.
4. **Unaccounted for:** The individual in question is not in custody, leaving families in uncertainty regarding the whereabouts and fate of their loved ones.

Addameer has been diligently tracking numerous cases that reveal the alarming practice of enforced disappearance affecting Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons and military facilities. By the end of 2024, Addameer has documented over 400 instances of individuals who are unaccounted for⁴¹. Efforts to ascertain the status of these individuals often yield the vague response of 'unaccounted for,' despite the existence of videos and photographs released by Israeli forces that confirm some of these prisoners are indeed held in Israeli interrogation centers. Disturbingly, some were taken in front of their families, with witnesses reporting that their loved ones were used as human shields. Notably, one of these 'missing persons' was eventually released during a prisoner exchange. Given the prevalence of such cases, human rights organizations have intensified their scrutiny of individuals labeled as 'unaccounted for.' Through its ongoing investigations, Addameer has uncovered that Israeli authorities are intentionally obscuring the fates of certain detainees, as evidenced by the inconsistent and conflicting information provided regarding these cases.

In several instances, responses indicated that certain individuals were unaccounted for, only for it to be revealed later that they had been arrested. The Israeli army defended this by claiming there were issues with their search procedures. In other situations, it was discovered that these 'unaccounted for' individuals had actually been martyred due to torture within Israeli prisons. The assertion from Israeli forces that these individuals were not in custody appears to be a tactic to obscure the reality of their deaths while detained. Organizations tasked with locating Gazan detainees consistently received such misleading responses. Consequently, HaMoked filed numerous petitions seeking information on detainees who were reported as not being in custody, despite testimonies from released prisoners confirming their presence in the prisons. Ultimately, these searches revealed that they were indeed held by the Israeli army.

The case of prisoner Mohammad Al-Assili is an example of such a troubling pattern that human rights organizations dedicated to advocating for prisoners' rights have been investigating for some time. Initially, it was reported that Al-Assili was arrested and held in Asqalan Prison. However, further inquiries on 13 January 2025 revealed the tragic truth: Al-Assili had been martyred in Israeli custody on 17 May 2024. Similarly, Addameer has faced challenges with other cases, such as that of Ibrahim Adnan Ashour, who was taken into custody on 14 February 2024. When Addameer first sought information about Ashour's situation, they were informed on 6 August 2024 that he was being held at Ofer detention camp. Despite multiple requests for visitation, the camp administration consistently denied access without providing any justification. The last attempt to see Ashour occurred on 30 September 2024, which raised serious concerns about his well-being. In response, Addameer submitted another inquiry, only to receive a confusing update: the Israeli army claimed he was under interrogation and not present in the camp.

Shortly after that on 23 December 2024, a request was made to visit Ashour, only to receive the shocking news that he had been martyred on 23 June 2024. This revelation is particularly troubling given that the army claimed he was detained and under investigation as late as November, approximately five months after his reported martyrdom. Such discrepancies raise serious doubts about the credibility of the army's statements and highlight a troubling lack of transparency regarding the treatment of Palestinian detainees. This situation suggests a deliberate effort by the Israeli authorities to obscure the truth and perpetuate the crime of enforced disappearance. Furthermore, the Israeli army has gone to great lengths to mask its actions by disseminating false and misleading information about the status of these detainees.

Numerous cases, including that of martyr Ashour, illustrate this pattern, where the army initially acknowledged the detention of individuals only for it to emerge later that they had been martyred. Addameer has documented nine instances where the army confirmed prisoners were in custody, only for it to be revealed later that they had died. By the end of 2024, human rights organizations reported the martyrdom of 36 identifiable prisoners from Gaza, yet the army's response has been limited to merely stating the dates of their deaths, without any explanation of the circumstances surrounding them. All of their bodies remain

⁴¹ These figures represent only the cases recorded by Addameer, excluding data from other organizations. Consequently, they do not provide a true representation of the total number of missing individuals. In fact, it is anticipated that the actual count of missing persons will significantly surpass these figures.

in the possession of Israeli authorities, and as of this report, no autopsies have been conducted to ascertain the causes of death, nor have the results of any purported investigations been made public. Between May and October 2024, HaMoked submitted 24 habeas corpus petitions concerning 30 individuals, which notably included a 17-year-old boy and a five-year-old girl. This action was taken after the organization was informed that these individuals were not being held in Israeli detention. Of these petitions, 16 were rejected without any information emerging regarding the fate of the petitioners; in the framework of some of these proceedings, the State conducted on the Court's instruction some flimsy technical inquiries to try to trace the petitioners, which led to nothing.⁴²

Enforced disappearance stands as a grave violation of human rights and is classified as a war crime under international criminal law. The cases mentioned unequivocally demonstrate that Israeli forces are responsible for this act, intentionally hiding the whereabouts of hundreds of individuals. This deliberate concealment obstructs any efforts to trace or understand the circumstances surrounding those who vanished after being in the custody of the Israeli army. Furthermore, it hampers investigations into potential torture or extrajudicial killings, leaving the families of the missing without any information that could shed light on their loved ones' fates or the horrific details of their suffering.

Extrajudicial Executions and Use of Human Shields



Since the onset of the genocide perpetrated by Israeli forces on October 7, both local and international human rights organizations have reported numerous instances of field executions conducted by the Israeli army against Palestinian civilians, including the elderly, women, and children. These acts are not mere isolated incidents; they represent a systematic strategy employed by Israeli forces to instill fear within the Palestinian population, compelling compliance with military orders and establishing total control over the Gaza Strip.

One of the most alarming elements of these field executions is the coercion of Palestinian civilians to follow orders from the Israeli army under the threat of death, only to be executed afterward in cold blood. Reports have documented instances where Palestinians were shot and executed after being forcibly removed from their homes by the military, even while displaying white flags⁴³—an egregious violation of wartime protections for civilians. Furthermore, mass executions of entire families have occurred in areas occupied

⁴² HaMoked. "Unaccounted for: Gazans – including a 5-year-old girl – disappeared after they were in the custody of Israeli security forces; HCJ rejects HaMoked petitions based on State's claims of "no indication of arrest or detention." 7 November 2024. <https://hamoked.org/document.php?dID=Updates2425>

⁴³ Al Jazeera. "Human shields are a flagrant war crime unfolding in Gaza." 24 June 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/3x4dtrbj>

by Israeli forces, with men being killed in front of their loved ones, while women and children were left to face uncertain fates. Many suffered due to the denial of medical assistance, while others were taken hostage.

In addition to field executions, the Israeli army has been accused of employing Palestinians as human shields, effectively taking civilians hostage in their own homes and compelling them to stay put while Israeli forces positioned themselves to launch attacks on nearby areas. Eyewitness accounts from survivors of these actions have been documented by field sources. Young men were reportedly coerced into entering various structures, including homes and tunnels, prior to Israeli forces breaching them, to check for any Palestinian gunmen; a tactic that placed them in grave danger of being killed. A report from the New York Times indicated that multiple Israeli soldiers admitted to either participating in or witnessing these actions⁴⁴. Additionally, there have been reports of children and the elderly being used as human barriers in front of Israeli military vehicles, putting them at risk of gunfire and shelling. Such actions represent a serious breach of the laws of warfare, which strictly forbid the use of civilians in military operations.⁴⁵

In one of many distressing incidents, Saqr Hamduna became a victim of the Israeli military's tactics during their operation in Gaza. A witness, identified as D. H., recounted the harrowing experience her husband endured. She stated, "On 18 November 2024, my husband Saqr and several other drivers were apprehended and held at the passenger crossing for eight days. On the eighth day, they were taken to Rafah, near Awad Tower, where they were forced to act as human shields. The soldiers instructed Saqr to enter Awad Tower to take photographs, ensuring it was devoid of any resistance fighters. Tragically, during this time, he was shot 'by mistake' by soldiers in a nearby tank. This incident was witnessed by a recently released prisoner who shared the details with us. He was freed around the eleventh day, just three days after my husband's death. This prisoner also experienced being used as a human shield. He mentioned that Saqr was airlifted to Soroka Hospital, as the soldiers claimed they were taking him for medical treatment. Although my husband was not killed instantly, he managed to give the prisoner my contact information to update me on his condition and the transfer to Soroka Hospital. This information was relayed by the driver who was with Saqr during his arrest."⁴⁶

Hamduna's recent arrest marks not just a single incident but his third encounter with Israeli forces. Previously detained twice, he was released each time, only to face a third arrest where he was reportedly used as a human shield. On 25 November 2024, an unidentified body was brought to the European Hospital in Khan Younis by the Red Cross. Citizens shared a photo of the unidentified martyr online, leading his family to recognize him and seek confirmation. Tragically, the body was identified as Saqr Hamduna. The circumstances surrounding his death remain unclear, and as of this report, human rights organizations have been unable to contact the young man who was arrested alongside him.

One of the many cases shrouded in uncertainty is that of prisoner Bilal Salama. On 6 November 2024, efforts were made to ascertain his status, leading to confirmation of his arrest and detention at Ofer Camp. However, when a lawyer sought to visit him, the Israeli army asserted on December 9 that he had been released on August 11, labeling the earlier information as incorrect. Upon reaching out to Bilal's family, they firmly rejected the claim of his release. As a result, his current situation remains unclear. The Israeli army denies holding him, while his family disputes the assertion of his release. This situation raises serious concerns about the possibility of an extrajudicial execution and an effort to obscure the truth by falsely announcing his release.

The crimes described represent a continuation of the systematic killings that Israeli forces have inflicted upon Palestinians for many years. Yet, the recent war in Gaza has escalated these violations to alarming heights, where extrajudicial killings and forced detentions are now part of a military strategy designed to eradicate any trace of Palestinian existence in the enclave.

Deaths of Palestinians in Israeli Detention – Impunity and Violation of International Law

⁴⁴ Al Jazeera. "Israeli soldiers confirm using Palestinians as human shields in Gaza." 15 December 2024. <https://tinyurl.com/bdyen2th>

⁴⁵ See the paper on the Sde Teiman Detention Camp, published by Addameer on 29 January 2025.

[Sde Teiman military camp | Addameer](#)

⁴⁶ Phone interview conducted by Addameer with D. H., martyr Saqr Hamdoun's wife, on 22 November 2024.

Since October 2023, there has been a shocking rise in the number of Palestinian prisoners dying in Israeli central prisons and military camps. Many of these deaths are attributed to systematic torture, intentional medical neglect, and the inhumane living conditions endured for months. Prisoners have faced shackling, blindfolding, and a complete lack of fresh air and sunlight for periods exceeding six months. While the Israel Prison Service has claimed to have initiated investigations into these deaths, fifteen months later, the findings remain undisclosed and shrouded in secrecy. The reasons behind the deaths of numerous prisoners from the Gaza Strip are still unclear, and the Israeli authorities have not released any official autopsy reports. Despite Addameer's persistent requests for clarification regarding the causes of these deaths,⁴⁷ they have yet to receive any responses.

The lack of any official communication from Israeli authorities regarding the status or outcomes of the investigations raises significant doubts about the legitimacy of their claims to have initiated these inquiries. This situation suggests several troubling possibilities: either these investigations were quietly closed without any real accountability, or they may never have taken place at all, serving merely as a facade to obscure the grave violations committed by the occupying state against Palestinian prisoners. Historical patterns indicate that all complaints lodged against Israeli soldiers and prison guards, whether by individual lawyers or human rights organizations, typically receive no acknowledgment from the Israeli authorities. Over the years, we have seen no genuine accountability for any prison guard, soldier, or investigator who has engaged in criminal behavior against Palestinians, despite the numerous complaints filed.

The lack of accountability and impunity persists even as numerous crimes committed by Israeli soldiers are self-documented, including extrajudicial killings that have resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Palestinians in Gaza. Israeli forces have also captured the severe mistreatment and abuse inflicted by Israeli prison guards, with video evidence circulating on social media. These clips reveal prisoners who are handcuffed and blindfolded, dressed in inadequate clothing, and subjected to violence by heavily armed guards, often accompanied by police dogs.

It's important to recognize that these criminal actions and the resulting impunity are not recent developments; they represent a continuation of the systematic colonial policies implemented by the occupying state over many years. However, following October 7, there has been a marked escalation in these practices, with a blatant disregard for the exposure of such actions.

Accountability Avoided and Impunity Institutionalized

The complete lack of any genuine investigations, which the occupying state asserts it has launched to uncover the truth behind the deaths of numerous prisoners, must be understood within the framework of Israel's entrenched and deeply rooted policy of shirking its responsibilities toward Palestinian detainees. For decades, Israeli authorities have systematically excluded Palestinian prisoners from legal protections, employing various forms of torture, medical neglect, humiliation, and psychological abuse as their primary means of control and oppression within prison walls. When prisoners die as a result of these inhumane practices, the Israeli authorities actively work to conceal evidence and intentionally stall any serious, unbiased investigations that could expose the truth surrounding these deaths.

Moreover, the occupying state continues to present medical reports that misrepresent the actual circumstances of the prisoners' deaths, aiming to justify these fatalities as either natural occurrences or the result of pre-existing health issues. In this context, the prisoners who tragically lost their lives in Israeli prisons last year—some of whom, according to medical documentation, succumbed to severe beatings—were victims of torture.⁴⁸ Despite claims from the occupying state that investigations were initiated to examine these deaths, over a year has passed without any tangible outcomes from these supposed inquiries.

Since October 7, there has been a troubling lack of independent oversight regarding the conditions faced by prisoners, a situation that has persisted throughout 2024. The Red Cross's role in monitoring these conditions has been severely diminished, allowing the Israeli security and judicial systems to operate without scrutiny. This environment effectively shields those responsible for these violations from facing

⁴⁷ The number of such cases amounts to 13.

⁴⁸ See Addameer's 2023 Report on Violations of Prisoners' Rights via the link: <https://www.addameer.org/ar/media/5413>

genuine legal consequences. Even when investigations are initiated, they often serve as mere formalities, failing to result in meaningful trials. Consequently, the Israeli judicial system is transformed into a mechanism for obscuring wrongdoing rather than a pathway to justice.

This culture of impunity extends beyond cases of martyrdom; it encompasses a wide range of abuses inflicted upon prisoners. These include prolonged solitary confinement, denial of necessary medical care, physical and psychological torture, sexual violence, and restrictions on communication with the outside world. Such actions have a direct and detrimental impact on the physical and mental well-being of prisoners. As a result, the martyrdom of prisoners becomes an inevitable outcome of the ongoing policies of the Israeli occupation, which operates without concern for any substantial international accountability.

Israeli actions towards Palestinian prisoners starkly contravene international humanitarian law, which clearly outlines the responsibilities of occupying powers regarding the treatment of detainees. The Fourth Geneva Convention mandates that the occupying authority must guarantee humane detention conditions, including adequate medical care and the prevention of torture or any form of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.⁴⁹ Furthermore, Article 85 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions defines the intentional denial of medical care that leads to a prisoner's death as a war crime. Thus, Israel's ongoing medical neglect of prisoners transcends mere legal infractions; it constitutes a war crime that demands urgent international scrutiny and accountability.

Moreover, the lack of thorough investigations into prisoner deaths further breaches essential tenets of international human rights law, particularly Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which mandates that states uphold victims' rights to justice and accountability. Israel's failure to disclose the outcomes of the investigations it claims to have initiated not only violates its international obligations but also highlights its intent to protect those responsible for crimes against prisoners.

Israel's approach of impunity toward the deaths of prisoners reflects a troubling extension of its apartheid system and ongoing oppression of the Palestinian people. The lack of accountability for these actions is a significant factor enabling the occupying state to persist in its violations. Consequently, we will witness more lives lost and countless prisoners enduring the same brutal treatment, as Israel's oppressive apparatus operates without restraint.

Appendix I: Martyrs of the Prisoner Movement in 2024

Name	Place of residence	Date of martyrdom
Atta Yousef Hasan Fayyad	Gaza	15 October 2023 ⁵⁰
Dr. Iyad Ahmad Al-Rantisi	Gaza	17 November 2023 ⁵¹
Faraj Hussein Hasan Ali	Gaza	19 December 2023 ⁵²
Abdul Rahman Al-Bahsh (23 years old)	Nablus	1 January 2024
Hussein Saber Abu Obeida	Gaza	22 January 2024
Ali Abdullah Suleiman Al-Houli	Gaza	5 February 2024
Mohammad Ahmad Al-Sabbar (21 years old)	Hebron	8 February 2024
Mohammad Tariq Abu Snaineh (16 years old)	Jerusalem	12 February 2024
Hamdan Hassan Anaba	Gaza	12 February 2024
Arafat Yousef Arafat Al-Khawaja	Gaza	15 February 2024
Ahmed Rizq Qdaih (78 years old)	Gaza	16 February 2024
Ezz El-Din Ziad al-Banna (40 years old)	Gaza	20 February 2024
Khaled Musa Jamal Shawish (53 years old)	Tubas	21 February 2024
Asef al-Rifai (21 years old)	Ramallah	29 February 2024
Majed Hamdi Ibrahim Sawafiri	Gaza	8 March 2024

⁴⁹ See Article 91 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, dated 12 August 1949. <http://hrilibrary.umn.edu/arab/b093.html>

⁵⁰ His martyrdom was officially declared on 7 October 2024, but it was kept hidden for several months.

⁵¹ Despite being martyred just a week after his arrest on 10 November 2023, the occupying state chose to reveal this tragic event only on 18 June 2024, nearly seven months later.

⁵² His martyrdom was announced on 6 October 2024.

Ahmad Abdel Marjan Al-Aqqad	Gaza	9 March 2024
Jomaa Abu Ghanima (26 years old)	Naqab	16 March 2024
Wafa Amin Mohammad Abdul Hadi	Gaza	25 March 2024
Kamal Hussein Ahmad Radi	Gaza	25 March 2024
Dr. Ziad Mohammad Al-Dalu	Gaza	21 March 2024
Walid Abdul Hadi Hamid	Gaza	31 March 2024
Ashraf Mahdi Al-Khadri	Gaza	31 March 2024
Islam Hasan Al-Sirsawi	Gaza	4 April 2024
Walid Nimr Daqqa (62 years old)	Baqa Al-Gharbiya	7 April 2024
Fathi Mohammad Mahmoud Jadallah	Qalqiliya	13 April 2024
Abdul Rahim Abdul Karim Amer (59 years old)	Jabalia	19 April 2024
Dr. Adnan Ahmad Al-Bursh (50 years old)	Jabalia	19 April 2024
Omar Abdul-Aziz Fadl Junaid	Jabalia	17 June 2024
Mustafa Mohammad Abu Arra (63 years old)	Tubas	26 July 2024
Kifah Issam Dabaya (34 years old)	Jenin	12 August 2024
Nasr Salem Ziyara	Gaza	16 August 2024
Zaher Raddad	Tulkarm	25 August 2024
Ahmad Walid Khalifa	Nablus	26 September 2024
Mohammad Munir Musa	Bethlehem	11 October 2024
Zuhair Omar Al-Sharif (58 years old)	Gaza	18 October 2024
Moath Khaled Rayyan (32 years old)	Gaza	2 November 2024
Samir Mahmoud Al-Kahlout (52 years old)	Gaza	3 November 2024
Samih Suleiman Elaiwi (61 years old)	Nablus	6 November 2024
Anwar Shaaban Eslim (44 years old)	Gaza	14 November 2024
Mohammad Anwar Labad (54 years old)	Gaza	27 November 2024
Mohammad Abd al-Rahman Idris (35 years old)	Gaza	29 November 2024
Mohammad Walid Ali Hussein (45 years old)	Tulkarm	4 December 2024
Alaa Marwan Hamza al-Mahlawi (42 years old)	Gaza	5 December 2024
Ashraf Mohammad Abu Warda (51 years old)	Gaza	29 December 2024
Mohammad Rashid Akka (44 years old)	Gaza	29 December 2024
Munir Abdullah al-Faqawi (42 years old)	Gaza	
Yassin Munir Abdullah al-Faqawi (18 years old)	Gaza	
Ismail Abd al-Bari Rajab Khader (33 years old)	Gaza	