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Am I Not a Human?

Edited by

Dr. Mohsen Saleh
Rana Sa'adah

Translated by
Baraah Darazi

The Suffering of the
Palestinian Prisoners
& Detainees
under the Israeli Occupation



By

Firas Abu Hilal

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(4)

Book series discussing
the sufferance of the
Palestinian people
under the Israeli
occupation

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Al-Zaytouna Centre
For Studies & Consultations
Beirut - Lebanon

Table of Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	5
<i>Introduction</i>	7
<i>Chapter 1: Statistical and Informational Background</i>	11
<i>Chapter 2: Legal Background</i>	19
<i>Chapter 3: Detention, Trial and Conditions of Captivity:</i>	31
1. Arbitrary Arrest:	32
a. Special Laws of Arrest and “Legal” Violations	36
b. Conditions of Detention and Arrest	40
c. Administrative Detention	43
2. The Trial	50
3. Conditions of Captivity:	54
a. Facilities and Rooms	55
b. Health Conditions and Medical Negligence	57
c. Isolation from the External World	67
d. Other Rights and Violations	69
<i>Chapter 4: Torture</i>	73
<i>Chapter 5: Female Captives in Israeli Prisons</i>	85
<i>Chapter 6: Children Captives in Israeli Prisons</i>	91
<i>Chapter 7: Families of the Prisoners: Denial of Visits and Deliberate Targeting</i>	97
<i>Chapter 8: Palestinian Prisoners and Swap Operations</i>	103
<i>Conclusion</i>	111
<i>Endnotes</i>	115

Foreword

Al-Zaytouna Centre presents its readers with the fourth book in the series *Am I Not a Human?* through which it sheds light on the different aspects of the suffering of the Palestinian people.

The Suffering of the Palestinian Prisoners & Detainees under the Israeli Occupation deals with the experience of the Palestinian prisoners in all its aspects whether in regards to the conditions of detention, trial or captivity. Further, the book sheds light on torture and the different illegal violations practiced against the Palestinian prisoner.

Captivity as pursued by the Israeli occupation is a systematic policy which does not differentiate between a man and a woman, an adult and a minor, a healthy prisoner and a sick one. It is used as an assault on a large part of the Palestinian people, or even its entirety. Those who have not been, for example in captivity, have some relative in prison, and those who have not spent their youth in the gloomy prisons of the occupation would spend their childhood, youth and old age waiting for a dearly loved one who might never actually return from the darkness of the Israeli dungeons.

The Palestinian prisoners are not a mere big number crammed in prisons; they are a scene which embodies all types of racism, humiliation, torture and inhumanity practiced against them by the Israeli occupation which claims civilization and development. At the same time, the occupation is keen to keep the case of the prisoners in shadow due to its illegal practices which are incompatible with all laws, customs and principles. What adds insult to injury is that while the world demands respect for human's rights, freedom and dignity, it ignores the inhuman conditions of the Palestinian prisoners and their suffering.

This book, like the other books in the series *Am I Not a Human?*, conveys the suffering in a style which addresses the heart and mind within a methodical, scientific frame, illustrated by some stories and pictures that give the reader a better understanding of the ordeal of the Palestinian people under the Israeli occupation.

Introduction

The statement which Benny Kaniak, the director-general of the Israeli Prison Service, made to the Minister of the Interior Avraham Dichter that the Israeli prisons are completely full and congested with prisoners¹ was not a surprising or controversial declaration. Captivity is indeed a systematic policy of the occupation similar to all other policies it uses as an assault on a large segment of the Palestinian people or even its entirety. In fact, he who has not been in capture has at least one family member held in Israeli prisons; and he who has not spent his youth in the gloomy prisons tortured by the interrogators has spent his childhood, youth and old age waiting for the return of a dearly loved one who might never be released from incarceration.

Indeed, how could Israeli prisons not be congested when more than seven thousand Palestinians are kept in confinement? How could the prisons not be crammed when the number of the Palestinians captured since 1967 is more than 750 thousands, i.e., actually more than a quarter



of the Palestinians? How could the prisons not be over-crowded when some prisoners have been held there for 20 or more years?

The occupation authorities have exhausted all ways in the torture of the captives and debasing them, yet they have never succeeded in breaking the prisoners' resolve or their steadfastness. Such steadfastness and resoluteness can be seen, for example, in the words of the Dean of Prisoners Sa'eed Al'ataba Dweikat who had spent more than 31 years in captivity before he was released late in August 2008; and who has lost his father who died of a heart attack after seeing the bad conditions of his son—the following are his words which he said as he entered his 29th year in captivity and which still radiate with the same determination and patience:

This long journey has not fatigued me though fatigue is a human quality, and I might be obstinate if I denied that; however, fatigue is a relative matter and if I have been tired of imprisonment, this does not mean that I have been tired of bearing my cause and my convictions which have led me to prison. I still have the energy to persevere; we as a people do not have many choices, it is a to-be-or-not-to-be matter. So either we go on with the same spirit or we fall and are doomed as humans and as a cause.²

Dweikat added that “he who has ever lived the experience of imprisonment recognizes how long and harsh it is, yet he realizes that there is no room for surrender”; It is a double-faced image:

a brutal, sadistic state and suppression embodied in the jailer on the one hand, and on the other hand, a state of steadfastness and heroism represented by the Palestinian prisoner who could preserve himself as a human being, maintain his identity as a struggler and face these circumstances, thus turning them into a true revolutionary school.³



Nonetheless, it should be noted that regardless of the endurance and heroism the prisoners might show, they remain human beings who are governed by their humanity and dignity; and the violations committed by the occupation authorities are not a mere violation of international charters and laws, but rather practices that defy the human imagination through the “arts” of torture and cruelty, and the exploitation of human feelings to the maximum. To this should be added the Arab and international silence that enfolds the prisoners’ suffering, thus making the experience of Palestinian prisoners under the Israeli occupation an experience that should be highlighted, and an occupational practice that should not only be addressed but also stopped.

This study seeks to address the suffering of the Palestinian prisoners and detainees under the Israeli occupation and the various inhuman practices in this respect, based on the available legal Arab and international reports. This is in addition to the testimonies of the prisoners, taking into consideration that the occupation authorities are very keen to cover up on their practices which constitute humanitarian violations and crimes incompatible with all laws, customs and principles.

We’d better drown all these prisoners in the Dead Sea since the lowest point in the world is there.

- Avigdor Lieberman, Israeli minister of transportation in a statement to Radio Israel, 7/7/2003.



*The Suffering of the
Palestinian Prisoners
& Detainees
under the Israeli Occupation*
معاناة الأسير الفلسطيني
تحت الاحتلال الإسرائيلي

This Book

The Palestinian prisoners and detainees in the prisons of the Israeli occupation are being tortured and detained for months and years. Their families are being exhausted with waiting and longing for their loved ones. Their stories are live testimonies to the cruelty and inhumanity of the occupation. Palestinian prisoners are the real proof of the patience, steadfastness, bravery and pride of the Palestinian people.

This book, the fourth of its series, is based on the available data, such as Palestinian, Arab and International reports and information, in addition to the testimonies by the prisoners themselves. Al-Zaytouna Centre endeavors to present to its readers the full and complete picture of the suffering of the Palestinians under the Israeli occupation. It tries its best to address the hearts and minds with the most accurate, concrete and documented information.



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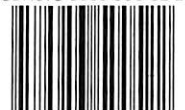
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