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**Human rights situation in Palestine and other
occupied Arab territories**

Joint written statement* submitted by International Council Supporting Fair Trial and Human Rights, Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 August 2021]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



The Situation of Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

Since the occupation of the eastern part of (Jerusalem) in 1967, Israel has placed a number of restrictions on the inhabitants of Al-Quds, placing them in an unknown legal category with the aim of wiping them out of existence while they are still living. As a result, they were punished as permanent residents, considering their prison terms and other sentences imposed on them as internal affairs, and enforcing the same rules on them as Jewish prisoners.

Simultaneously, they are not even give half the rights of other Jewish prisoners. Thus, their affiliation with the Occupied Territories of 1967, is not recognize nor they are granted citizenship, like other Palestinians in the 1948 Territories.

These ambiguous and oppressive policies also affect the prisoners of Al-Quds in the prisons of the occupying power. They are treated as Palestinians whenever they demand their rights in prisons. But when there is political amnesty or agreements on exchange of prisoners, or when Palestinian prisoners' rights are addressed as a result of hunger strikes, they are treated as citizens of the occupying power. However, following the Oslo Accords, Palestinians were able to enter their names in the lists of release of prisoners and prisoner exchange agreements.

Like other Palestinian prisoners, Al-Quds prisoners were subject to violent torture, solitary confinement, poor prison conditions and poor health in detention, the brutal behavior of Israeli soldiers, the constant attempts to separate them from other prisoners and their isolation, as well as their deprivation of liberty, receiving training and medical care. They are also kept away from their place of residence and other types of human rights violations. In addition, Al-Quds detainees suffer from banning family visits under the pretext of "security bans", house demolition, travel restrictions and harassment.

The problems of the prisoners of Al-Quds are not limited to the poor health conditions of some prisoners and lack of adequate attention. The Al-Moscobiyeh Detention Center in Al-Quds, where detainees are interrogated, is the worst detention facility in the entire occupying territory, to the point where the Palestinians call it a death or slaughterhouse. As a result of torture and medical negligence, about 18 prisoners from Al-Quds have died behind bars since 1967, including Qasim Abu Bakr, who was martyred in 1969 in the prison as well we Ishaq Maragheh, Omar Al-Qasim, Mustafa Al-Akawi, Hussein Obaidat, Mohammad Abu Hadwan and others, Aziz Awaisat was the last of them who was martyred in 2018. In addition, there were other prisoners who died after their release from prison as a result of torture, negligence, and medical negligence during their imprisonment.

Increase in arrests

Through the follow-up we have done, based on events and testimonies, there is a growing danger to the people of Al-Quds. Statistical data shows that the proportion of detainees has increased and the number of detainees in Al-Quds is increasing and expanding, for example:

During 2018, the number of detainees of Al-Quds was 1803 or in other words, 27.8% of the total number of detainees of all provinces.

During 2019, the number of detainees of Al-Quds was 2039 or in other words, 37% of the total number of detainees.

During 2020, the number of detainees from Al-Quds was 1975 or 42.6% of the total number of detainees.

In the first half of 2021, the number of detainees of Al-Quds was 1698, or in other words 49.8% of the total number of detainees of all provinces. (West Bank, Al-Quds and the Gaza Strip)

Targeting Children

Al-Quds children also share the burden of problems, because the occupying power prosecutes the children and detains them in very unfavorable conditions and treats them like other Palestinian prisoners. Since the beginning of the Quds Intifada on October 1st, 2015, the occupying power has adopted organized measures against the residents of Quds, especially the children of Quds, and has put them under pressure. The aim of the occupying power is to suppress and intimidate the hearts of children and their families. In this regard, thousands of children have been arrested in Al-Quds and repressive measures have been increased against them, such as: torture during interrogation, lack of health and medical care, deprivation of the right to education, long and complex trials, punishments that require payment of heavy fines. It can be said that all the verdicts issued against children are accompanied by heavy fines that impose an additional burden on their families.

Additionally, many children have been deported, hundreds of homes have turned into prisons, and Al-Quds families turned into prison guards for their children, in what has been called "house arrest," a collective punishment that has dangerous social and psychological consequences for parents and children. This is only the tip of the iceberg of problems that families, especially the children are suffering from in Al-Quds.

During 2020, the occupying power arrested 363 children from Al-Quds, out of a total of 543 detained children from all Palestinian provinces, that is the proportion of children arrested in Al-Quds was 66.9% of the total number of Palestinian children arrested last year.

Meanwhile, in the first half of 2021, the occupying forces arrested about 402 Palestinian children from Al-Quds. That is 39 children were arrested more than last year, and this number indicates that the number of children arrested in Al-Quds at the end of 2021 may double that of the previous year.

Targeting the Women and Girls

The occupying forces don't differentiate between men and women in their arrests. These forces target women, girls and young girls the same as, old and young men. In 2020, about 100 Al-Quds girls and women were arrested, consisting about 78.1% of the total number of arrests of girls and women in all Palestinian provinces (128 women and girls).

But in the first half of 2021, the occupying forces arrested about 85 women and girls from Al-Quds, which is equivalent to 78.8% of the total arrests of all provinces (108 women and girls). The figures also show that the number of women detained in Al-Quds at the end of the year will be much higher than those arrested last year, and this fact indicates the intensification of pressure on all people of Al-Quds, including men, women and children.

Prisoners of Al-Quds in the Prisons of the Occupying Power

Not all detainees remain in prisons. There were prisoners who were released on bail or on special conditions or are under house arrest. Some have been detained for short periods or their sentences have expired and they were released. However, 380 prisoners from Al-Quds are still in the prisons of the occupying power, of which 12 are women and 42 are children, who are in the prisons of Nafha, Al-Damon, Ramon, Asqalan, Beer Al-Saba, Hadarim, Mejddo, Ufar and Al-Naqab, the latter with 120 captives from Al-Quds. This number, should be added to the number of Al-Quds prisoner who are in the interrogation and intelligence section of Al-Moscobiyeh Prison and other detention centers at the moment, that is, if we know the number of these detainees and add it to the specified figures, the total number of prisoners in Al-Quds may be more than (500) men and women.

Administrative Detainees from Al-Quds

It should be noted here that 20 Al-Quds citizens are in administrative detention without charge or trial, including two former representatives, Ahmad Attoun and Muhammad Abu Tair, and a former Quds minister, Khaled Abou Arafa.

Old prisoners

Many events bring pains and bitterness, especially, the prisoners who have been in prison for twenty years, thirty years or more since their arrest, and they were included in none of the political pardons following "Oslo", the attempts to release them with prisoner exchange agreements have not been fruitful. As a result, they remained in prisons of the occupying power and now we are counting the years they have spent behind bars: Statistics show that 10 prisoners have been detained for more than 20 years, for 6 of them, more than a quarter of a century has passed since their arrest, and 4 of them were arrested before Oslo Accords. The oldest prisoner is Samir Abu Nima, who has been in prison since October 1986.

This number is in addition to the number of prisoners released under the Shalit Agreement, or what the Palestinians call "Wafaa Al-Ahrar", and past sentences were returned to them, some of whom spent twenty years, thirty years or more in prisons.

In the face of the bitter realities that the citizens and captives of Al-Quds are suffering from, it is necessary for the international community to pay more attention to the captives of Al-Quds and provide them with a wider media space so that their sufferings and the problems resulted from aggression and crime in violation of international agreements and treaties, is known to the international community.

Also, we call on the HRC Member States to help the prisoners of Quds, especially children, so that they can enjoy their right to freedom and accept them after their release from prison.
