

URGENT ACTION

HUNGER STRIKER'S HEALTH IN DANGER

Abdul Razeq Farraj, a Palestinian detained without charge is on hunger strike and his health, as well as that of around 100 other administrative detainees on hunger strike, is deteriorating rapidly. The Israeli authorities are punishing them for their protest and are denying them access to their lawyers and families, and doctors of their choice.

Abdul Razeq Farraj was arrested on 25 February at around 2am at his home in Ramallah in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). Without having been questioned he was handed a six-month administrative detention order the next day, issued by a military commander. It will expire on 24 August. A military judge confirmed the order on 4 March on the basis of "secret information" that neither Abdul Razeq Farraj nor his lawyers were allowed to see. Abdul Razeq Farraj's appeal against his administrative detention was submitted to a military court on 20 May and was rejected six days later. His lawyer petitioned the Israeli Supreme Court on 29 May and awaits a decision.

On 30 April Abdul Razeq Farraj joined a hunger strike begun six days earlier by more than 125 detainees, demanding Israel stop the use of administrative detention. According to his lawyers from the human rights organization Addameer, when he joined the strike the Israel Prison Service moved Abdul Razeq Farraj to solitary confinement and denied him salt to add to his water, apparently as punitive measures.

His wife, Lamees, has told Amnesty International that she has only been allowed to visit him once, in April, before he began his hunger strike, and his family has since been prevented from visiting him. She said that Abdul Razeq has been prevented from seeing a lawyer and independent doctors, making it very hard for the family to get information about his whereabouts and the state of his health.

Please write immediately in Hebrew or your own language:

- Calling on the Israeli authorities to release Abdul Razeq Farraj and all other Palestinian administrative detainees immediately, unless they are promptly charged with internationally recognizable criminal offences;
- Calling on them to ensure that Abdul Razeq Farraj, and other hunger striking administrative detainees, have ongoing access to doctors of their choice for any specialized medical treatment they require, which must only be given with their informed consent; the authorities must not put pressure on health professionals treating them to act in a manner contrary to medical ethics;
- Urging them to ensure that Abdul Razeq Farraj and other hunger strikers are treated humanely and with dignity at all times, are allowed access to lawyers and to their families, and are not subjected to denial of such access, or any other punitive measures on account of their hunger strike.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 25 JULY 2014 TO:

Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu,
Office of the Prime Minister
3 Kaplan St., PO Box 187
Kiryat Ben-Gurion Jerusalem 91950, Israel
Email: b.netanyahu@pmo.gov.il
pm_eng@pmo.gov.il
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Israel Prison Service Commissioner

Lieutenant-General Aharon Franco
Israel Prison Service, PO Box 81
Ramleh 72100, Israel
Fax: 011 972 8 919 3800
Salutation: Dear Lieutenant-General

And copies to:

Director General, Ministry of Health
Dr. Roni Gamzo
Ministry of Health, 2 Ben Tabai Street
Jerusalem 93591, Israel
Fax: 011 972 2 565 5966

Also send copies to: Ambassador Ron Dermer, Embassy of Israel, 3514 International Dr. NW, Washington DC 20008
Fax: 1 202 364 5607 | Phone: 1 202 364 5500 | Email: info@israelemb.org -OR- info@washington.mfa.gov.il
Please check with the AIUSA Urgent Action Office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Abdul Razeq Farraj, 51, a father of two, is the Director of Finance and Administration at the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, based in Ramallah in the OPT, where he has worked for 28 years. He holds a BA in Economics and a Diploma in Management from Birzeit University in the OPT.

From 1985 to 1991, he served a six-year sentence imposed by an Israeli court. Since his release he has been arrested five times, and each time placed in administrative detention: between 30 May 1994 and 1 February 1996, 9 April 2002 and 28 July 2006, 12 January 2009 and 9 October 2009, 27 November 2011 and 20 July 2012, and most recently since 25 February 2014. He has spent more than 92 months in detention without charge or trial.

In 2012 he went on hunger strike for around 24 days in protest at his detention conditions, along with other administrative detainees. At the time, a mass hunger strike of some 2,000 Palestinian prisoners and detainees was underway in protest at poor prison conditions, solitary confinement, denial of family visits and detention without charge. The strike ended on 14 May 2012 following an Egyptian-brokered deal with the Israeli authorities. Despite media reports suggesting that Israel had agreed that administrative detention orders would not be renewed unless significant new intelligence was presented, the Israeli authorities continued renewing the orders and issuing new ones. According to the IPS, there were 191 Palestinians in administrative detention on 30 April 2014, though the number may have increased since. Nine Palestinian Legislative Council members are in administrative detention.

On 24 April 2014 around 125 administrative detainees announced the beginning of a hunger strike to protest against administrative detention. According to lawyers and human rights organizations, the Israeli authorities have subjected detainees to punishment including putting them in solitary confinement, refusing them salt to add to their water, and preventing them access to lawyers, family visits, and independent doctors. According to Addameer, Abdul Razeq and around 40 other administrative detainees were moved to hospitals on 28 May, and have been repeatedly transferred between prisons and hospitals since then, in what seems like another punitive measure. Physicians for Human Rights – Israel (PHR-I) has confirmed that its doctors and other health professionals are being denied access to the hunger striking administrative detainees. It is awaiting an answer from the IPS to their request to visit Abdul Razeq. Staff members of Addameer, which provides legal advice and representation, have also been denied access to hunger strikers, including Abdul Razeq Farraj.

Amnesty International opposes the practice of administrative detention in Israel and the OPT because it violates the internationally recognized right to a fair trial. Administrative detainees should be released unless they are promptly charged with internationally recognizable criminal offences and brought to trial in proceedings which comply with international fair trial standards. Amnesty International believes that some of those held in administrative detention by the Israeli authorities are very likely to be prisoners of conscience, held solely for the non-violent exercise of their right to freedom of expression and association. All but one of the Israeli prisons where Palestinian administrative detainees are held are located inside Israel. The detention of Palestinians from the OPT inside Israel violates international law.

On 9 June a government-proposed bill which allows for the force-feeding of detainees and prisoners on hunger strike passed through its first reading in the Knesset (parliament). As it stands, it would allow the head of the Israel Prison Service to start force-feeding after obtaining permission from the district court. The bill is due to have passed through the two additional readings required to make it into law by 20 June.

Any decision regarding non-consensual feeding of a hunger striker should be made only by qualified health professionals. Medical ethics essentially preclude compulsorily feeding of mentally competent hunger strikers. A medical decision whether to feed a hunger striker must take account of their mental competence and wishes, as ascertained by health professionals in confidential consultations with the hunger striker. The authorities must never pressure health professionals to act in a manner contrary to medical ethics.

Name: Abdul Razeq Farraj (m)

Issues: Arbitrary detention, Health concern, Hunger strike

UA: 152/14

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