

Report, 15 May 2021

## **The Terror of Israel's Arrests**

### Brutal Assaults on more than 700 Detainees in the 1948' Occupied Lands

In the first week of the Palestinian Unity Uprising, human right lawyers in the 1948' Occupied Lands have recorded horrific cases of violence and human rights violations committed by Israeli repressive forces – the police, special units, border police, secret service, and *mista'arivim* (Israeli undercover "counter-terrorism" forces), in addition to judges and prosecutors representing the legal system.

Since the start of protests in the 1948' Occupied Lands from Sunday May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to Friday evening, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021, in addition to hundreds detained in Jerusalem and the West Bank, more than 700 people have been detained, including tens of children. It is abundantly clear from the details of the arrests that the goal is to terrorize Palestinians and deter them from protesting and taking to the streets, as well as to thwart their efforts to defend their families, homes, neighborhoods, and towns from organized assaults by Zionist mobs. Through these arrests, the Israeli security agencies and the legal system provided protection and cover for those mobs who not only assaulted, abused and shot at Palestinians; they also set fires and destroyed their property.

This report examines the recurring types of arrests in all Palestinian cities and towns as delivered us by various lawyers from the 1948' Occupied Lands.

**Arbitrary arrests:** The arrests were utterly arbitrary. The police arrested people en masse in demonstrations in addition to many passersby or people who were simply there by coincidence or even in nearby neighborhoods. The police set up checkpoints in areas where there were no demonstrations. They stopped, searched and arrested young people in their cars.

**Raids into Homes and Businesses:** In the recent days, police stormed a number of houses next to the demonstration sites, assaulting and arresting people inside their own homes. The most prominent example of this was raiding into Sheikh Awad Mahamid's house in Haifa and brutally assaulting him and his sons. In addition, there were many

recorded cases of raids into shops that allowed the wounded in. These shops, restaurants and cafes were smashed and the wounded who found shelter in them were arrested.

**Attacking and arresting people recording and documenting the assaults:** there are dozens of documented occurrences in which the police assaulted everyone who recorded and documented their violence, especially the moment of arrest in which extreme physical violence appears vividly. Many arrests took place because young people recorded the events. The police threatened and intimidated others who documented the events by shooting rubber bullets and throwing stun grenade at them.

**Physical violence in detention and carrying people into detention facilities:** The injuries reported by detainees were fractures in their feet, hands, back, and neck, as well as injuries in their eyes, face, and head. Police continued to beat detainees with batons and rifle butts; they stepped on their heads and necks for minutes, and deliberately slammed their heads against the ground, walls, and cars. The Israeli police were particularly violent against the detainees as they were being transported to detention centers. In detention centers, physical and mental violence were practiced against detainees with mental health problems leading to seizures due to which they were moved to the hospital. In both cases, there were kinds of assaults after the police were notified about the health issues in a clear manner.

**Death Threats:** During the arrests, especially the ones carried by *mista'arivim* against minors in particular, the *mista'arivim* threatened to kill them; they covered their faces and blindfolded them and thrown into various *mista'arivim* and police vehicles for many hours while threatening to kidnap them.

**Collecting False Evidence:** Security forces have a method of planting false evidence. After an arrest, a member of the security forces collects rocks, bottles, or sticks randomly from the ground, claiming that they were in the hands of the detainee.

**Cramming Detainees into Small Vehicles:** The police gathered large numbers of detainees in cramped transport vehicles, and in many cases, they crammed detainees on top of each other, closed the vehicle doors and windows so there wasn't enough air to breathe, and then periodically assaulted the detainees stacked inside the car. The police also repeatedly hit the heads of detainees with the vehicle doors.

**Violation of Children's Rights During Investigations:** In addition to the horrific attacks during arrest, the rights of the overwhelming majority of the children detained were violated, not only by threats and psychological violence, but by preventing them from their basic rights such as their right to legal counseling before the investigation. There was a failure to conduct investigations in Arabic. Parents were not allowed to accompany their children during the investigations. These are all rights guaranteed by law. The majority of interrogations of minors also took place in the morning hours, another violation of the law. And the interrogators practiced deceptive methods against the children in order to extract confessions from them.

**Assaults Inside the Interrogation Centers:** Police officers committed brutal violence in the interrogation centers, especially by members of the *yassam* units, who entered the detention centers and imposed their control illegally. There were testimonies that large numbers of detainees were gathered in very narrow rooms, and that they were prevented from drinking water or using the bathroom. Cases were also recorded in which members of the special units took pictures of detainees with their own phones without any authority or legal justification. In Nazareth, for example, one of the detainees reported the existence of a special room in which they gathered the detainees on the ground. They prevented them from raising their heads so that they would not see the security men entering and beating them. According to the detainee's testimony, the floors of the rooms were filled with blood stains as a result of the attacks.

**Preventing the transfer of detainees to the hospital prior to the investigation:** Dozens of cases were recorded in which the police refused to transfer injured detainees to hospitals for medical treatment despite the recommendations of paramedics and their insistence that treatment should be provided immediately. In some cases where the defense teams protested and refused to provide advice to detainees until they received medical treatment, the police took revenge on the detainees and defense teams by postponing the investigation and keeping the detainee without treatment for many hours, in certain cases for more than nine hours. Among these cases there were detainees whose injuries required immediate treatment in which time plays a pivotal role, such as eye injuries.

**Assaulting Lawyers:** The police tried in various ways to thwart the work of defense teams, especially the volunteer lawyers, who collectively represented the detainees and insisted on their rights, especially their right to receive medical treatment. In many cases, police blocked lawyers from entering the detention center to keep them from knowing the number and names of the detainees.

In Nazareth, the arrest of two lawyers was recorded. In more than one case, lawyers were expelled from detention centers. In Umm al-Fahm, for example, the police station was completely closed, and they stopped answering phone calls in order to not provide any information about the detainees and prevent them from receiving any legal advice. When the lawyers insisted on the rights of the detainees, especially their transfer to receive medical treatment, the police took punitive steps aimed at exhausting the lawyers, such as delaying the investigations until the morning hours, forcing the lawyers to wait for long hours before providing advice to the detainees.

**Conditional release:** In many of the cases of arbitrary arrests, the police decided to release the detainees without bringing them to a hearing to extend their detention, but imposed conditions on them mainly aimed at preventing them from participating in protests. This confirms that the primary goal of these arrests is to suppress protests and deter Palestinians from participating in demonstrations. Although the police did not have any justification for their arrest, they stipulated that detainees should be released either to house arrest for many days, or be deported from their areas of residence, or be released under the condition that they not participate in demonstrations. These conditions are unlawful or have no legal justification. It is noteworthy that the Israeli courts have severely delayed appeals filed to challenge these conditions, and only considered the appeals after the detainees had already completed their house arrest or had been deported.

**Charges presented to the court:** The prosecution brought various charges against the detainees, including those of incitement, through which they tried to create a false image that the protests were racist and “anti-Semitic,” by emphasizing the false claim that the detainees incited the “killing of Jews.” The prosecution also relied on a number of flimsy charges, such as the use of explosive materials, racist crimes, and violations of anti-terrorism laws.

**Arbitrary courts and judges carrying out political orders:** The political role played by judges emerged in the hearings regarding the extension of detention, as they deliberately ignored all important human and civil rights aspects. For example, judges almost completely ignored the assaults on detainees and the appalling effects of physical violence on them. They also ignored in their rulings to extend detentions all the violations that were recorded, from preventing access to legal council, violating the rights of minors, ignoring constitutional rights, and ignoring the insults of prosecutors towards the lawyers in the courtroom. The judges insisted on forcing deals that were unfair and harmful to the detainees. When defense lawyers rejected these deals, judges deliberately issued retaliatory decisions aimed at punishing detainees and lawyers for refusing the deals. As for the police representative, he threatened the lawyers more than once that he would start escalating requests to extend detention if the defense insisted on rejecting the deals and adhering to the defense of the rights of the detainees. It is also reported that in the overwhelming majority of cases in which the court decided to release the detainee, and the prosecution appealed the decision, the Court of Appeal accepted the position of the prosecution and maintained the extension of detention. This is while the Court of Appeal rejected the overwhelming majority of the defense's appeals.

These systematic practices, along with many other practices and details, aim to terrorize Palestinian youth and deter them from protesting in order to empty the streets of the masses through house arrests and deportation orders, in an attempt to dissuade people from their right to defend themselves, their homes, properties, villages, and cities. Teams of lawyers will continue to represent all Palestinian detainees in this brave uprising, and to defend their right to fight for freedom.

**Lawyers for Defending The Uprising Detainees**

**Haifa, Palestine**

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