



## **Silencing Voices**

The Plight of Palestinian Journalists Detained by Israeli Occupation during Ongoing Israeli Aggression on Gaza

**2023/2024**

# Introduction

Israel has committed one of the most heinous massacres in the history of world media in Gaza, with the aim of suppressing the truth by targeting the journalists—the witnesses who document these crimes.

**Nasser Abu Bakr, President of the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate**, states: "The systematic crimes against journalists have ranged from killing those who bear witness to the truth, to imprisoning and intimidating them. Even more devastatingly, their homes have been destroyed, their families killed, and their media institutions targeted."

He adds: "This is a full-scale war against Palestinian media, with Gaza being the scene of the most atrocious massacre ever witnessed in the history of world journalism."

Since the Israeli war on Gaza, the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate has documented the killing of 167 journalists, while two remain missing under enforced disappearance. More than 190 journalists have been severely wounded.

## **Staggering Statistics: Over 10% of Gaza's Journalists Killed by the Occupation**

**Abu Bakr** described the Israeli war on Palestinian journalists as a "genocidal war against the media, journalists, and their institutions." Over the past 11 months, Israel's military machine has systematically executed journalists in a continuous and deliberate campaign. The numbers are shocking—more than 10% of Gaza's journalists have been killed, and 100% of its media institutions have been destroyed.

Data from the **Palestinian Journalists Syndicate** reveal that the occupation's crimes also include the arrest of over 100 journalists in Gaza, the West Bank, and Jerusalem. But the horror goes beyond just the number of detainees—the forms of physical torture and psychological terror inflicted on them are unimaginable. Testimonies from released journalists and lawyers, documented by the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, describe acts of torture that defy description. In fact, such treatment is unparalleled in history.

"The testimonies of detained male and female journalists are harrowing," Abu Bakr continues. "They speak of beatings with sharp objects, prolonged hanging, forced stripping, attempted rape of both male and female prisoners, and death threats. It is slow torture, carried out over hours, days, and sometimes months. These are the conditions in which over a hundred journalists, who are supposed to be protected by international law, have lived while trying to carry out their professional duties."

**Abu Bakr** stresses: "International organizations have a duty to document, expose, and publicize these crimes. UN bodies specialized in issues of torture and detention witness, along with the rest of the world, the magnitude of the massacre

unfolding before their eyes. Yet, these organizations, including the International Red Cross, have not visited the prisons even once since October 7, 2023, while Palestinian lawyers have managed to visit some prisoners. Why haven't they acted? What is preventing them from visiting the prisoners for almost a year of war?"

"As for the UN Special Rapporteurs concerned with these matters, we are still waiting for them to issue a statement on the criminal reality inside the fortified, dark prison cells, where prisoners are shackled with iron chains, deprived of food, water, and basic human dignity. They endure beatings, torture, intimidation, and repeated attacks by police dogs—suffering in the harsh cold of winter and the extreme heat of summer."



**He added,** “Journalists have endured a suffering that future generations will never forget. Today, we are sounding the alarm, knocking forcefully on the doors, and calling upon the international press and human rights organizations to shed light on these prisons, many of which function as military bases of the Israeli army. Imagine the scene inside these detention centers: female journalists, completely stripped, blindfolded, beaten, and tortured, with the sounds of dogs threatening to maul them on one side, while a male interrogator threatens them with rape on the other. What humanity can we speak of in the face of such horror? And perhaps even worse took place during those agonizing hours, stretched into days. We have the right to ask all international organizations and journalists worldwide: have you ever, in all the fascist wars throughout history, encountered such true, documented accounts? We ask the conscience of humanity—where are you in all of this?”

This message is a call to all journalists across the world to fulfill their professional and humanitarian duty. These atrocities are not just against Palestinians, nor solely against journalists; they are crimes against humanity itself”.

The most important question is: Why are all these crimes being committed by the occupation against journalists? Of course, they are unarmed, and it has never been proven that any of them was carrying weapons. The interrogation has not been about arms but rather their professional journalistic work.

Has human history ever known such horrific interrogation of a journalist simply for doing their job? This is systematic torture and abuse aimed at instilling terror. History will record that the Israeli occupation is among the most brutal and hostile toward journalists worldwide and that it has committed one of the largest massacres of media professionals in modern history.

**The President of the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, Nasser Abu Bakr, states:**“The protection of journalists is guaranteed by international humanitarian law, international human rights law, the Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols, as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Journalists are considered civilians and are entitled to the same protections as civilian populations. Therefore, the arrest, torture, and killing of journalists because of their professional work is a blatant violation of international law and may constitute war crimes. UN Security Council Resolution 2222, passed in 2015, unanimously condemns all violations against journalists and strongly denounces impunity for such crimes.”

Journalists are being subjected to systematic crimes and attacks, which have escalated to the point of massacre. Since October 7, 167 journalists have been killed, and the intent behind these systematic attacks is to prevent them from reporting on the situation in Gaza and across the Palestinian territories.

In addition to the killings, 125 journalists have been arrested. These arrests were either on charges of incitement and publication or through administrative detention, where detainees are held without knowing the charges against them or the duration of their imprisonment. Amnesty International defines this as "detaining a person without trial for a specified period under the pretext of a secret file that neither the detainee nor their lawyer can access."

The arrest of journalists, in addition to violating international law and humanitarian law, involves violence, physical torture, and psychological terrorism. The Palestinian Journalists Syndicate has been actively monitoring the conditions of detained journalists, documenting the crimes committed against them, and regularly publishing reports on their situation. These reports are shared with the International Federation of Journalists and human rights organizations. According to the syndicate's data, 125 journalists have been detained since October 7, with 61 held under administrative detention. Among them are 6 female journalists who remain in custody and 32 journalists from Gaza. However, due to

the dangerous conditions in Gaza and difficulties in gathering information, it is documented that 15 journalists from Gaza remain in administrative detention.

The syndicate believes that the occupation authorities use detention as part of a systematic policy to intimidate journalists and prevent the truth from being reported. Based on testimonies gathered, it is clear that the occupation's goal is to punish journalists for their professional roles and create a climate of fear and anxiety, so they cease performing their duties. Despite being a signatory to many international conventions, including those protecting journalists—such as Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which enshrines the right to freedom of opinion and expression—the occupation disregards these obligations. Journalists view this systematic targeting as creating a hostile environment for their profession, a strategy that is carried out daily in Gaza, the West Bank, and Jerusalem. These challenges pose great risks to Palestinian journalism. Yet, Palestinian journalists continue to cover the situation with remarkable courage, despite the violence, censorship, repression, detention, intimidation, and killings they face.

The Israeli occupation's military methods of suppressing press freedom challenge the very values and principles of free journalism, as well as the freedom of opinion and expression. These actions also challenge international law and the responsibility of global institutions to ensure that the perpetrators of such crimes do not escape accountability.

## Information about imprisoned journalists since October 2023

| Name                      | Date of Detention | Location                | Charges/Status             | Current Status       |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1.Nidal Al-Wahidi         | 07/10/2023        | Gaza                    | Enforced Disappearance     | Forcibly disappeared |
| 2.Haitham Abdul Wahid     | 07/10/2023        | Gaza                    | Enforced Disappearance     | Forcibly disappeared |
| 3.Mohammad Nemer Asida    | 10/10/2023        | Nablus                  | Administrative Detention   | Still Detained       |
| 4.Sabri Jibril            | 15/10/2023        | Bethlehem               | Administrative Detention   | Still Detained       |
| 5.Abdel Nasser Laham      | 15/10/2023        | Bethlehem               | Administrative Detention   | Still Detained       |
| 6.Mustafa Al-Khawaja      | 16/10/2023        | Ramallah                | Administrative Detention   | Released             |
| 7.Muath Amarna            | 2023-10-18        | Bethlehem               | Administrative Detention   | Released             |
| 8.Alaa Al-Rimawi          | 19/10/2023        | Ramallah                | Administrative Detention   | Still Detained       |
| 9.Imad Abu Awad           | 19/10/2023        | Ramallah                | Administrative Detention   | Released             |
| 10.Osama Shaheen          | 19/10/2023        | Hebron                  | Administrative Detention   | Still Detained       |
| 11.Alaa Al-Rabaie         | 19/10/2023        | Hebron                  | Administrative Detention   | Released             |
| 12.Loay Amro              | 20/10/2023        | Dura/Hebron             | Detained for Two Days      | Released             |
| 13.Thaer Al-Fakhouri      | 20/10/2023        | Hebron                  | Administrative Detention   | Still Detained       |
| 14.Musab Qfeisha          | 20/10/2023        | Hebron                  | Administrative Detention   | Still Detained       |
| 15.Akram Deriya           | 23/10/2023        | Bethlehem               | Detained for Hours         | Released             |
| 16.Mohammad Atta Sharakah | 23/10/2023        | Jalazone Camp /Ramallah | Detained for 10 Months     | Released             |
| 17.Radwan Qutnani         | 25/10/2023        | Nablus                  | Administrative Detention   | Still Detained       |
| 18.Abdul Karim Darwish    | 26/10/2023        | Jerusalem               | House Arrest + Social Work | Released             |
| 19.Lama Khater            | 26/10/2024        | Hebron                  | Detained for Weeks         | Released             |
| 20.Bilal Arman            | 27/10/2023        | Ramallah                | Administrative Detention   | Still Detained       |
| 21.Mohammad Badr          | 28/10/2023        | Ramallah                | Administrative Detention   | Still Detained       |
| 22.Nizar Al-Najjar        | 28/10/2023        | Bethlehem               | Detained as Hostage        | Released             |
| 23.Sujud Assi             | 28/10/2023        | Ramallah                | Detained for One Day       | Released             |
| 24.Ramez Al-Laham         | 29/10/2023        | Bethlehem               | Administrative Detention   | Still Detained       |
| 25.Nawaf Al-Amer          | 30/10/2023        | Nablus                  | Administrative Detention   | Still Detained       |
| 26.Zakaria Abu Fannar     | 30/10/2023        | Hebron                  | Administrative Detention   | Still Detained       |
| 27.Murad Shomroukh        | 30/10/2023        | Bethlehem               | Administrative Detention   | Still Detained       |
| 28.Abdullah Shtat         | 01/11/2023        | Salfit                  | Administrative Detention   | Still Detained       |
| 29.Hamza Najaji           | 03/11/2023        | Jerusalem               | House Arrest + Social Work | Released             |
| 30.Mohammad Abu Bakr      | 03/11/2023        | Jenin                   | Detained for Hours         | Released             |
| 31.Jafar Sadqa            | 03/11/2023        | Nablus                  | Detained for Hours         | Released             |
| 32.Musab Saeed            | 05/11/2023        | Hebron                  | Detained for Hours         | Released             |

|                              |             |                     |  |  |
|------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|--|--|
| 33. Mohammad Qudumi          | 05/11/2023  | Ramallah            | Detained for One Day                         | Released                                     |
| 34. Somaya Azam Jawabra      | 05/11/2023  | Nablus              | House Arrest                                 | Released                                     |
| 35. Ameer Abu Aram           | 05/11/2023  | Ramallah            | Administrative Detention                     | Released                                     |
| 36. Abdul Muhsin Shallalda   | 2023-11-07  | Hebron              | Detained for One Day                         | Released                                     |
| 37. Hudhayfa Abu Jamous      | 2023-11-07  | Abu Dis / Jerusalem | Administrative detention                     | Released                                     |
| 38. Mohammad Halabiyah       | 2023-11-07  | Abu Dis / Jerusalem | Administrative detention                     | Still Detained                               |
| 39. Mohammad Al-Atrash       | 2023-11-08  | Hebron              | day Detained for one                         | Released                                     |
| 40. Amer Abu Arfa            | 2023-11-08  | Hebron              | Charge of incitement                         | Still Detained                               |
| 41. Moamen Al-Halabi         | 2023-11-13  | Gaza                | Without charge                               | Still detained                               |
| 42. Baha Al-Ghoul            | 2023-11-16  | Gaza                | Without charge                               | Still detained                               |
| 43. Mervat Al-Azza           | 2023-11-17  | Jerusalem           | detention                                    | Released                                     |
| 44. Abdul Afoo Zughair       | 2023-11-17  | Jerusalem           | Detained for days                            | with Released the condition of .arrest house |
| 45. Ibrahim Al-Zuheiri       | 2023-11-18  | Ramallah            | Charge of incitement                         | Still Detained                               |
| 46. Tareq Al-Sharif          | 2023-11-19  | Ramallah            | 10 months administrative detention           | Released                                     |
| 47. Fathi Edkeedek           | 2023-11-19  | Hebron              | detention Administrative for six months      | Released                                     |
| 48. Momen Samrin             | 2023-11-20  | Ramallah            | Detained for Hours                           | Released                                     |
| 49. Alaa Al-Siraj            | 2023-12-01  | Gaza                | Without charge                               | Still Detained                               |
| 50. Ayman Rabai'a            | 2023-12-05  | Bethlehem           | Charge of incitement, sentenced to 16 months | Still detained                               |
| 51. Diao Al-Kahlout          | 2023-12-07  | Gaza                | arrested for 33 days                         | Released                                     |
| 52. Hani Issa                | 2023-12-07  | BEIT-LAHYA/GAZA     | Without charge                               | Still Detained                               |
| 53. Mashhour Wahwah          | 2023-12-12  | Hebron              | Arrested for hours                           | Released                                     |
| 54. Ikhlas Sualha            | 2023-12-12  | Jenin               | detention Administrative .for eight months   | Released                                     |
| 55. Hatem Hamdan             | 2023-12-16  | Tulkarm             | detention Administrative .for eight months   | released                                     |
| 56. Mohammad Nabet Al-Rimawi | 2023-12-22  | Ramallah            | Detained for 4 weeks                         | Released                                     |
| 57. Raseem Obeidat           | 2023-12-12  | Jerusalem           | Detained for two Weeks                       | Released                                     |
| 58. Osama Rashdi Dabbour     | 2023-12-14  | Gaza                | Without charge                               | Still Detained                               |
| 59. Amin Abu Warda           | 20/12/2023° | Nablus              | Arrested for hours                           | Released                                     |
| 60. Hamad Taqatqa            | 2023-12-26  | Bethlehem           | Charge of incitement                         | Still Detained                               |
| 61. Adeeb Al-Atrash          | 2023-12-26  | Hebron              | Charge of incitement                         | Still detained                               |
| 62. Azmi Binat               | 2023-12-27  | Hebron              | Arrested for hours                           | Released                                     |
| 63. Wafa Awad                | 2024-01-04  | Tulkarm             | Arrested for hours                           | Released                                     |
| 64. Ali Abu Shari'a          | 2024-01-05  | Gaza                | Without charge                               | Released                                     |
| 65. Fayha Khenfer            | 2024-01-17  | Tulkarm             | Detained for Hours                           | Released                                     |

|                                     |            |           |   |  |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-----------|---|--|
| <b>66. Siqal Qudum</b>              | 2024-02-01 | Hebron    | Detained for 10days   | the by Exiled occupation<br>to the Gaza<br>.Strip                                  |
| <b>67. Mohammad Alyan Abu Sinna</b> | 2024-02-07 | Jerusalem | One day   | Released with the<br>of condition<br><br>being<br>banned from<br>Al-Aqsa<br>Mosque |
| <b>68. Hamza Salama Safi</b>        | 2024-02-10 | Tulkarm   | Charge of incitement  | Still Detained   |
| <b>69. Samer Barahmeh</b>           | 2024-02-19 | Jericho   | One day   | Released   |
| <b>70. Ilham Hudeib Abu Awad</b>    | 2024-02-19 | Jericho   | One day   | Released   |
| <b>71. Mohammad Jawad Zughb</b>     | 2024-02-19 | Jericho   | One day   | Released   |
| <b>72. Wahaj Bani Muflih</b>        | 2024-02-25 | Nablus    | Detained for Hours  | Released   |
| <b>73. Sami Al-Shami</b>            | 2024-02-25 | Nablus    | Detained for Hours  | Released   |
| <b>74. Saeed Rokn</b>               | 2024-03-06 | Jerusalem | Initially arrested under<br>administrative detention<br><br>, then turned into a case | Still Detained   |
| <b>75. Bushra Al-Tawil</b>          | 2024-03-07 | Ramallah  | Initially arrested under<br>administrative detention<br><br>, then turned into a case | Still Detained   |
| <b>76. Rola Hasanein</b>            | 2024-03-09 | Ramallah  | Charge of incitement  | Still detained   |
| <b>77. Ibrahim Al-Sinjlawi</b>      | 2024-03-10 | Jerusalem | Arrested for hours  | Released   |
| <b>78. Hisham Abu Shaqra</b>        | 11\03\2023 | Bethlehem | One day   | Released   |
| <b>79. Basim Zaidani</b>            | 2024-03-17 | Jerusalem | Arrested for hours  | Released with<br>the condition<br>of being<br>banned from<br>Al-Aqsa<br>Mosque     |
| <b>80. Ismail Al-Ghoul (Martyr)</b> | 2024-03-18 | Gaza      | Detained for One Day  | Martyred on<br>31/07/2024  |
| <b>81. Walid Khalid Zayed</b>       | 2024-03-18 | Ramallah  | Without charge  | Still Detained   |
| <b>82. Mohammad Arab</b>            | 2024-03-18 | Gaza      | Without charge  | Still detained   |
| <b>83. Mahmoud ALEWA</b>            | 2024-03-19 | Gaza      | Without charge  | Still detained   |

|  |            |           |   |                                    |
|--|------------|-----------|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>84. Khader Bakr Khalil Abdel Aal</b>  | 2024-03-19 | Gaza      | Without charge                                  | Still detained                     |
| <b>85. Ahmed Bakr Khalil Abdel Aal</b>   | 2024-03-19 | Gaza      | Without charge                                  | Still detained                     |
| <b>86. Emad Zekaria Badr Al-Ifranji</b>  | 2024-03-19 | Gaza      | One day   | Still detained                     |
| <b>87. Samer Al-Tirzi</b>                | 2024-03-19 | Gaza      | One day   | Still detained                     |
| <b>88. Iyad Al-Rifi</b>                  | 2024-03-19 | Gaza      | One day   | Still detained                     |
| <b>89. Mohammad Al-Rifi</b>              | 2024-03-19 | Gaza      | One day   | Still detained                     |
| <b>90. Shadi Abu Sidu</b>                | 2024-03-19 | Gaza      | Without charge                                  | Still detained                     |
| <b>91. Wasim Saeed Mohammad Al-Amawi</b> | 2024-03-20 | Gaza      | Without charge                                  | Still detained                     |
| <b>92. Youssef Al-Hindi</b>              | 2024-03-21 | Gaza      | Without charge                                  | Released                           |
| <b>93. Mohammad Al-Hindi</b>             | 2024-03-21 | Gaza      | Without charge                                  | Released                           |
| <b>94. Ihab Diab</b>                     | 2024-03-22 | Gaza      | Without charge                                  | Still detained                     |
| <b>95. Hamza Khader</b>                  | 2024-04-01 | Tulkarm   | Charge of incitement                            | Released                           |
| <b>96. Asmaa Hraish (Journalist)</b>     | 2024-04-03 | Ramallah  | Administrative detention                        | Still detained                     |
| <b>97. Tareq Khamaysa</b>                | 2024-04-24 | Hebron    | Arrested for hours                              | Still detained                     |
| <b>98. Amer Al-Shaloudi</b>              | 2024-04-24 | Hebron    | Arrested for hours                              | Released                           |
| <b>99. Mahmoud Mat'an</b>                | 2024-05-19 | Ramallah  | Charge of incitement                            | Released                           |
| <b>100. Bilal Al-Tawil</b>               | 2024-05-29 | Hebron    | Charge of incitement                            | Still detained                     |
| <b>101. Dr. Mahmoud Fattfta</b>          | 2024-05-29 | Hebron    | Charge of incitement                            | Still detained                     |
| <b>102. Rasha Harzallah (Journalist)</b> | 2024-06-02 | Nablus    | Charge of incitement                            | Still detained                     |
| <b>103. Amaal Shujaiya</b>               | 2024-06-06 | Ramallah  | Charge of incitement                            | Still detained                     |
| <b>104. Saif Al-Qawasmi</b>              | 2024-06-07 | Jerusalem | Arrested  | Released                           |
| <b>105. Ahmed Rokn</b>                   | 2024-06-14 | Gaza      | Detained for 2 weeks                            | Released                           |
| <b>106. Mohammad Nafez Khalil Qa'oud</b> | 2024-06-16 | Gaza      | Without charge                                  | Still detained                     |
| <b>107. Samer Yousef Mustafa Abed</b>    | 2024-06-16 | Jerusalem | Without charge                                  | Still detained                     |
| <b>108. Abdul Rahman Almi</b>            | 2024-07-06 | Jerusalem | Detained for hours                              | Released                           |
| <b>109. Hamza Jaber</b>                  | 2024-07-21 | Jenin     | Administrative detention                        | Still detained                     |
| <b>110. Hazem Nasser</b>                 | 2024-07-25 | Tulkarm   | Administrative detention                        | Still detained                     |
| <b>111. Ramzi Abbasi</b>                 | 2024-08-02 | Jerusalem | Detained for days                               | Released                           |
| <b>112. Asim Al-Shunnar</b>              | 2024-08-03 | Nablus    | Charge of incitement                            | Still detained                     |
| <b>113. Hamza Zyoud</b>                  | 2024-08-11 | Jenin     | 5 and a half months<br>administrative detention | Still detained                     |
| <b>114. Ramez Awad</b>                   | 2024-08-30 | Ramallah  | Charge of incitement                            | Still detained                     |
| <b>115. Ashwaq Ayad (Journalist)</b>     | 2024-08-31 | Hebron    | Charge of incitement                            | Released                           |
| <b>116. Ali Dar Ali</b>                  | 2024-09-05 | Ramallah  | Charge of incitement                            | Released                           |
| <b>117. Roz Al-Zarou</b>                 | 2024-09-10 | Jerusalem | Detained for one day                            | Released on the condition being of |

|                                   |            |          |                |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|------------|----------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
|                                   |            |          |                | banned from the Old City Jerusalem of |
| <b>118. Qutaiba Hamdan</b>        | 2024-09-17 | Ramallah | Detained       | Still detained                        |
| <b>119. Du'aa Al-Qadi</b>         | 2024-09-17 | Ramallah | Detained       | Still detained                        |
| <b>120. Mujahid Al-Saadi</b>      | 2024-09-19 | Jenin    | Detained       | Still detained                        |
| <b>121. Amjad Arafat</b>          | 2024-09-20 | Gaza     | Detained       | Still detained                        |
| <b>122. Khalil Ouda</b>           | 2024-09-20 | Gaza     | Without charge | Still detained                        |
| <b>123. Abdul Hameed Hamdouna</b> | 2024-09-20 | Gaza     | Without charge | Still detained                        |
| <b>124. Hamza Akram Radwan</b>    | 2024-09-20 | Gaza     | Without charge | Still detained                        |
| <b>125. Jihad Badwy</b>           | 2024-10-05 | Hebron   | Detained       | Still detained                        |

## **Detention Testimonies from Palestinian Journalists**

### **Exceptional Treatment of Journalists**

Journalists are being deliberately targeted by the occupation in an attempt to silence their voices. This is not merely a hypothesis but a fact, supported by the harrowing testimonies of journalists who endured severe torture during their detention by Israeli forces. Dozens of testimonies, collected by the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, confirm that journalists are subjected to specific and harsh treatment during their detention, solely because of their profession.

One such case is that of Diaa Al-Kahlout, director of the Al-Arabi Al-Jadeed office in Gaza Strip and a father of five. Al-Kahlout was arrested by occupation forces while at his family's home in the new Beit Lahia Housing Project. He was forcibly led, naked along with dozens of other citizens, to the market street. Occupation soldiers filmed and photographed him, and these images were later shared publicly by the soldiers, humiliating him in the middle of the market.



**(Journalist Diaan Al-Kahlout After His Release)**

**Colleague Diaan Al-Kahlout**, in an interview with Al-Arabi TV after his release from the "Zkayim" detention center, where he was held for 33 days, shared his experience: "From the moment of my arrest, I identified myself as a journalist, hoping the investigators would respect my profession. However, the occupation soldiers immediately took my press card from the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate and broke it. Instead of being treated with any respect, the situation worsened. Several soldiers gathered around me, and during interrogation, their questions focused solely on my 'crime' of being a journalist."

In another testimony, a journalist from Gaza (S.F.) expressed: "We have become direct targets, as if conveying the truth is now considered a crime." Another journalist (A.L.) added: "Journalists are no longer seen as observers; we are now treated as enemies."

A Palestinian journalist from the 1948 territories (S.S.), who asked to remain anonymous to avoid reprisals, shared: "Despite holding an Israeli press card, the discrimination between foreign or Jewish journalists and Arab journalists is stark. The restrictions on movement and work have reached unprecedented levels, particularly for Arab and Palestinian journalists."

Jerusalem-based journalist Rajai Al-Khatib recounted his ordeal: "I was preparing a television report with my press card visibly hanging around my neck, and I was carrying a camera. As soon as I arrived at Bab al-Asbat, four Israeli police officers approached and began beating me with their hands and feet. One of them yelled, 'You journalists are the main cause of the war. Everything happening is because of you—you're the ones taking pictures and spreading them.' Every time I told them I was a journalist, the attacks intensified. One soldier even told me, 'Go to hell.'"

## Torture in Israeli Prisons

**Moaz Ibrahim Amarneh**, a Palestinian photojournalist residing in Dheisheh camp in Bethlehem governorate, lost his left eye while covering peaceful popular confrontations in the village of Surif northwest of Hebron in 2019, as a result of direct targeting by Israeli occupation forces. On October 16, 2023, colleague Amarneh was arrested by the occupation authorities.



(Journalist Ammarneh at the Moment of His Release)

### **"I was afraid I would end up in the 'black bag'"**

**Amarneh** describes in his testimony to the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate his experience in detention, saying: "When I arrived at Megiddo prison, I was subjected to great violence and physical assault. I was beaten on the head until I lost consciousness, and after I regained consciousness, I found myself in front of an Israeli officer trying to wake me up. I asked to be transferred to the hospital

because of an old injury to my head and my need for treatment for diabetes. My request was met with refusal, and I was left to suffer pain. For a moment I was afraid I would end up in the 'black bag'.. before I was able to see a doctor for the first time after four months."



**Martyr Journalist Ismael Al Ghoul together with his colleagues following their release from Israeli detention**

The martyr journalist Ismail Maher Khamis Al-Ghoul (correspondent for Al Jazeera satellite channel), was born on January 14, 1997 and was assassinated by an Israeli drone minutes after his live journalistic coverage on July 31, 2024 while he was in his car bearing the press sign with his colleague photographer Rami Al-Rifi. They were killed in a deliberate assassination operation by the Israeli occupation forces in Al-Shati camp west of Gaza City.

**Colleague martyr Al-Ghoul** was previously arrested by the occupation forces with a group of journalists when the occupation stormed the Al-Shifa Medical Complex in Gaza City on March 17, 2024. His wife Malak describes in her testimony to the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate the details of the assault on her husband before his assassination: "My husband was with a group of journalists in a room in the Al-Shifa Medical Complex. They took a group of them to the courtyard of Al-Shifa Hospital, and assaulted them with beating and cursing throughout the night in front of the displaced in the hospital."

The wife of the martyr Al-Ghoul continues with a speech full of pain: "Ismail never revealed to me the details of the assault by the occupation soldiers on him. He did not want to scare me, but the effects of the attacks by the occupation soldiers were clearly visible on parts of his body."



(Colleague Rasha Herzallah)

**Rasha Hirzallah**, a journalist from Nablus city, works as a news editor at the Palestinian News and Information Agency "Wafa". She was arrested on June 8, 2024 by Israeli intelligence on charges related to her media work and is still in Damon prison north of the occupying state at the time of preparing the report.

**Osama Hirzallah**, Rasha's brother, says about her arrest: "The family lives in constant worry about Rasha. Family visits are prohibited. Even during the trial, we were prevented from seeing her, and we know nothing about her except her place of detention."



(Colleague Journalist Nidal Abu Aker and His Son Mohammed)

**Nidal Abu Aker**, a journalist from Dheisheh camp near Bethlehem, 56 years old, has been arrested several times by Israeli authorities, during which he spent about 15 years in administrative detention. He founded Radio "Voice of Unity" which broadcast from the camp between 2012 and 2016.

**Muhammad, Nidal Abu Aker's** son, quoted one of the occupation soldiers during his father's arrest: "We arrest Nidal Abu Aker because he is Nidal Abu Aker", explaining: "This confession of the reasons for the arrest reveals that the journalist is targeted without any charge."

About the night of the arrest, he says: "That night, occupation soldiers stormed our house and beat us, cursed and insulted us, then they moved to the stage of destroying the house, and after they finished the task of assault and destruction. They arrested both my father and me."

Muhammad continues to narrate what happened to him and his father: "They put us with a group of detainees in a yard, and tied our hands behind our backs with our feet, and made us sit on our knees. Whoever tries to raise his head or move his leg will receive a stick on his body from one of the soldiers. One of the soldiers shouted in Arabic at one of us: Say I love Israel."

The suffering of the Abu Aker family did not stop at this point. Muhammad Abu Aker says: "I was placed in the Negev prison. During my detention period, occupation soldiers repeatedly stormed our house, and each time they practice their sadism in breaking the contents of the house, and assault my mother and sisters with beating. More than once they summoned my mother to the Etzion settlement complex or at (Checkpoint 300), they threatened me more than once with assassinating my father."

## **"Like sheep.. they threw us on top of each other"!**

**Ali Abdul Aziz Muhammad Abu Sharia**, a Palestinian journalist from Gaza City, was living in the Sabra neighborhood before displacement. He was arrested by Israeli occupation forces on January 25, 2024 while he was displaced with his family to the south in search of safety.

Describing the moments of his entry into the occupation's detention centers, Abu Sharia says: "I was without clothes. They beat me all over my body.. The Israeli soldier told me "Come to me", as soon as I reached him dozens of soldiers beat me all over my body from every direction."



"Like sheep.. they threw us on top of each other," with these words Abu Sharia described the scene of him and the prisoners at the moment of their arrest and transfer to occupation detention centers in trucks. He adds: "Of course, considering we were naked, they threw us on top of each other. Our number was large, exceeding fifty to sixty detainees, on top of each other in trucks. I'm sorry for the expression, but like sheep.. we were thrown on top of each other.. a scene that has nothing to do with humanity at all."

**Lama Ghosheh**, an independent Jerusalem journalist, was arrested on September 4, 2022 and interrogated by Israeli authorities because of her journalistic work. She says: "I was threatened with imprisonment more than once, just because I am a journalist".



(Lama Ghosheh with her child)

Ghosheh adds: "Thousands of Palestinians in Jerusalem and the 48 territories have their **"throats shackled"**, because the price of words and opinion is either death or arrest."

**Mishal Mohammed Al-Masri**, a 43-year-old Palestinian journalist from the Beit Lahia area in northern Gaza Strip, was arrested on December 9, 2023. He says: "The soldiers interrogated us so brutally that we could not bear, using batons and sticks, and soldiers' metal-tipped shoes, and police dogs, and cold water in the bitter cold, after they forced us to strip naked."

**Journalist Ikhlas Sawalhah**, wife of detained journalist Ibrahim Abu Safiya, was arrested by the occupation on December 12, 2023. She said in her testimony to the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate that she was severely beaten by female occupation soldiers after they forced her to undress.

## **Assault during arrest**

Israeli occupation forces deliberately follow brutal methods during the arrest of Palestinian journalists, where their homes are raided in the early hours of dawn unexpectedly, followed by breaking doors and terrorizing family members.

Journalist (**A.M**) described the moment of his arrest as terrifying, where soldiers suddenly stormed his house and searched it savagely, and used violence against his family members who tried to inquire about the reason for the arrest. In many cases, journalists are violently restrained in front of their relatives, then transferred to military vehicles without allowing them to wear appropriate clothes or collect their basic belongings.

Journalist (**M.R**), in his interview with the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, stated that he was beaten and insulted during his transfer, where soldiers were directing insults at him and threatening him with torture. These practices represent part of the occupation's strategy to terrorize journalists and dissuade them from performing their media tasks.



(Roz Al-Zarou)

Jerusalem journalist Roz Al-Zarou (47 years old) reported in her statement to the Journalists' Syndicate that the occupation forces stormed her home on 9/9/2024, causing a state of terror and intimidation for her family, especially her young child. They ransacked the house and surrounded it with a large number of Israeli police officers.

She added: "The occupation soldiers confiscated all my press cards (Palestinian, international, and Israeli), as well as my passport. I was then taken to the Moscobiyyeh detention center, where I spent an entire day under harsh interrogation."

Al-Zarou explained that the occupation police decided to release her on a financial bail of 6,000 shekels, with the condition of house arrest for eight days.

"It is beyond description..." With these words, Al-Zarou described the terror and intimidation caused by the raid on her home, affecting her family, especially the children, and leaving her with severe psychological trauma

Journalist **Moaz Amarneh** says: "During my transfer from home to detention, I was subjected to beating and threats, and I was used as a human shield during confrontations that occurred on the way. As soon as I arrived at the detention center, I was severely beaten until I lost consciousness. It took four months before I was able to see a doctor."

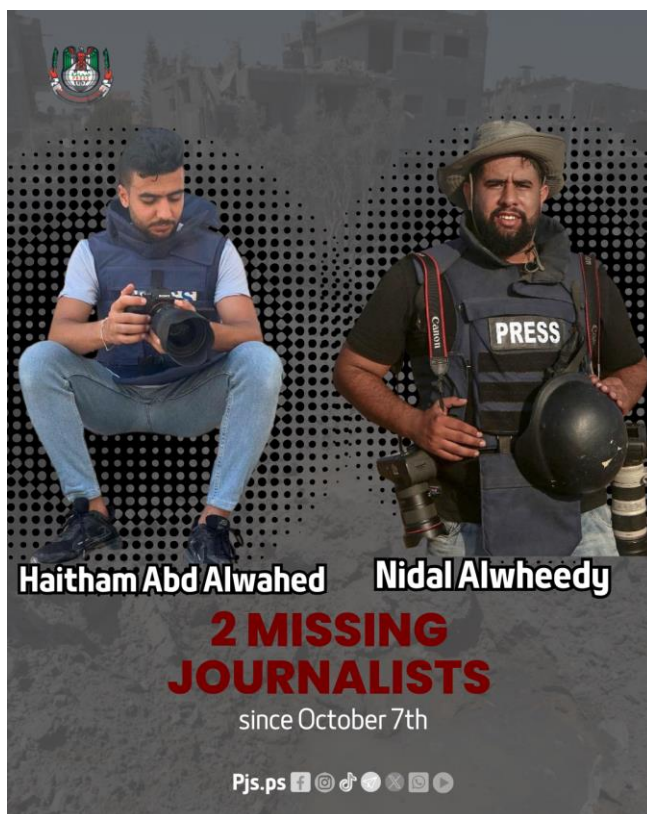
As for **Muhammad Nidal Abu Aker**, he says: "In 2018, Israeli forces stormed the family home and arrested Muhammad and his father together, where they were beaten and transferred in military vehicles separately. The family mentioned

that these attacks were repeated periodically, where forces would storm the house, break its contents, and assault family members, including his mother and sisters." Journalist **Mishal Al-Masri** says: "We were interrogated during the first hours of arrest, and the interrogation was brutal. No one could bear the violent beating. The soldiers used batons (a tool similar to a stick) and sticks, and they used all brutal means against us during the arrest."

**Malak**, wife of the martyr journalist Ismail Al-Ghoul: "Ismail was arrested late at night, where occupation forces entered his room and beat him severely in front of all detainees in the courtyard of Al-Shifa Medical Complex. According to eyewitness accounts, Ismail was subjected to brutal beating on his head, hands and legs. The torture continued throughout the night."

## **Enforced Disappearance and Deprivation of Visits**

Enforced disappearance and deprivation of visits represent two serious violations of human rights to which Palestinian prisoners are subjected in Israeli prisons. The past months have witnessed an unprecedented rise in cases of enforced disappearance against journalists.



Information received by the PJS indicates that two journalists from the Gaza Strip have been subjected to enforced disappearance since October 7, 2023. They are

colleagues Nidal Al-Wahidi and Haitham Abdul Wahed, both photojournalists. The occupation authorities refuse to provide any information about their whereabouts - like thousands of prisoners who were arrested from Gaza - and the occupation authorities refuse to allow their lawyers and international organizations alike to visit them. According to testimonies, enforced disappearance increases the suffering of prisoners and their families, as it becomes difficult for families to obtain any information about their conditions or health status.

According to the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, adopted by the UN General Assembly in its resolution 47/133 of 18 December 1992 as a set of principles applicable to all states, enforced disappearance occurs when: **"persons are arrested, detained or abducted against their will or otherwise deprived of their liberty by officials of different branches or levels of Government, or by organized groups or private individuals acting on behalf of, or with the support, direct or indirect, consent or acquiescence of the Government, followed by a refusal to disclose the fate or whereabouts of the persons concerned or a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of their liberty, which places such persons outside the protection of the law."**



## **Deprivation of Care and Treatment in Occupation Prisons**

**Journalist Moaz Amarneh**, who suffers from a bullet lodged in his head, spoke about his suffering given his need for constant care and treatment for his condition, saying: "After being severely beaten, I was suffering from severe pain and requested medical treatment several times, but the prison administration ignored my condition. Being a diabetic patient and having an occupation bullet lodged in my head, my health condition required continuous follow-up. They did not present me to a doctor until after four months, after great pressure from the lawyer."

**Mishal Al-Masri**, a Palestinian journalist, says in his testimony about medical neglect in Israeli prisons: "There was a doctor supervising us, but he does not do his duty. We were bound with wire cables and the stains of our blood were on them. Wounds are treated after more than 4 hours, when the wound has dried. This was repeated every day, and the pain was continuous around the clock, day and week."



**Diaa Kahlout**, a Palestinian journalist, narrated horrific details about the health conditions of prisoners: "The unfortunate thing is that there are children - 16 and 17 years old - and elderly and sick people. I know a detainee suffering from Alzheimer's who is 77 years old. I was detained with people suffering from cancer and another injured by a bullet from the occupation army, detained in the same way."

**The Head** of the Palestinian Prisoners and Ex-Prisoners Affairs Commission, Qadura Fares, spoke about the spread of skin diseases in prisons, saying: "The lack of water, specifically hot water, and the lack of cleaning materials such as soap and shampoo, all this leads to the spread of skin diseases, specifically scabies, which has affected more than 60% of prisoners. Prisoners suffer from

this disease in a very disturbing way, where they cannot sleep because of it. In addition, the occupation forces' storming of prison sections and their assault on prisoners causes wounds to prisoners, and due to lack of cleanliness and treatment, the wounds turned into ulcers, then developed into infections, and poisoning. The poisoning reached the bone, and there was fear of gangrene, and some prisoners' limbs were amputated as a result."

**Lawyer (A.J)** from the Prisoners and Ex-Prisoners Affairs Commission, (who refused to disclose his name for fear of occupation policies), confirmed that "Israeli prisons suffer from deliberate medical neglect towards prisoners, where they are deprived of necessary health care. Detained journalists suffer from this neglect to the same degree as other prisoners. This neglect leads to the aggravation of their health conditions and makes them vulnerable to chronic and serious diseases without receiving appropriate treatment."

**The General Director of the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) Ammar Dwaik**, says: "Deliberate medical neglect is a policy followed in Israeli occupation prisons. Prisoners are deprived of necessary treatment, and serious health conditions are left to deteriorate without any real medical intervention. This neglect not only leads to the aggravation of diseases and injuries, but also leads to the death of a number of prisoners inside prisons."

**Shawan Jabarin**, director of Al-Haq Foundation, confirmed that "medical neglect is one of the most dangerous tools of repression used by the occupation authorities against Palestinian prisoners. The authorities deliberately did not provide appropriate treatment to detainees with serious diseases, which led to the tragic aggravation of their conditions. Cases of limb amputation have been documented as a result of not providing appropriate treatment in a timely manner, reflecting the magnitude of flagrant violations."

## **Starvation in Israeli Prisons**

Journalist prisoners, like all Palestinian prisoners, face harsh conditions, one of the manifestations of which is revealed in the methods of torture through starvation that Israeli occupation authorities use systematically.

**Journalist Moaz Amarneh**, according to his testimony to the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, lost about 30 kilos of his weight, and describes his experience saying: "The food in prison was getting worse as the quantity was very little, and I suffered badly from lack of food. I am a diabetic patient, and this requires special nutrition, but they didn't care about that. The food was unhealthy,

and sometimes not well cooked. Meals were distributed to ten or sixteen people depending on the number in the cell, and it was barely enough for one person."

**Ali Abu Sharia**, who lost no less than 18 kilograms of his weight during 23 days of detention, says: "The meals do not nourish or satisfy hunger, to the extent that I lost no less than eighteen kilos of my weight during twenty-three days of detention. My weight decreased at a rate of almost one kilogram everyday."

**Osama Hirzallah** confirms: "Every prisoner freed from Israeli prisons lost no less than 30 or 40 kilograms of his weight, due to ill-treatment and malnutrition."

As for **Ikhlas Sawalhah**, who was detained in Damon prison, she recounts her painful experience saying: "When I first entered the prison, the quantities were very small, the varieties were poor and very scarce divided over the days of the week. We would get half a cup of tea daily. Except for Saturdays we didn't get it. As for (jam), it was on Wednesday. Lunch meals were limited to soup - sometimes it was barley soup - and rice for lunch, in very small quantities that do not nourish or satisfy any."

**Ikhlas Sawalhah** continues her talk about suffering in prisons saying: "Due to the poor quality and scarcity of food, most female prisoners suffered from constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, hemorrhoids, and irregular menstrual cycles."



(Journalist Dr. Mahmoud Ftifatah)

**Rasha Ibrahim**, wife of the detained journalist **Dr. Mahmoud Fatafta**, describes the food situation in prison according to what her husband's companions in the same cell told her after they were released: "The food was little in quantity and poor in quality, a number of prisoners preferred to stay hungry rather than eat the food provided."

In this context, Qadura Fares, head of the Palestinian Prisoners' Affairs Commission, elaborates on the impact of the starvation policy, saying: "The starvation policy has reduced the amount of food provided to prisoners by more than a quarter, leading to a collective drop in prisoners' weight. The average weight loss is about 30 to 35 kilograms. This was not accidental but a result of the starvation policy".

Shawan Jabarin, Director of Al-Haq Organization, adds: "In some cases, five prisoners share a single egg or a small amount of labneh, which is served as a meal for 12 prisoners. This is a systematic and deliberate starvation policy".

## **(ICHR): Starvation is One of the Methods Used to Torture Prisoners**

Amar Dweik, Director General of the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR), states: "Starvation is one of the methods used to torture prisoners in Israeli occupation prisons. This starvation not only involves reducing the amount of food provided but also includes providing poor-quality and unfit food for human consumption. These practices aim to weaken the prisoners physically and psychologically, putting their lives at risk and increasing their daily suffering."

In these dire conditions, the cruelty and neglect that Palestinian prisoners endure become clear, as the starvation policy has become an integral part of the oppression tools used by Israeli occupation authorities to break their will and strip them of their humanity.

In this context, the head of the Prisoners and Ex-Prisoners Affairs Commission Qadura Fares explains the extent of the impact of the starvation policy, saying: "The starvation policy reduced the quantities of food provided to prisoners to less than a quarter, which led to a collective decrease in prisoners' weights. The average weight loss is about 30 to 35 kilograms. This did not come haphazardly, but as a result of the starvation policy."

**Shawan Jabarin**, director of Al-Haq Foundation, says: "In some cases, 5 prisoners share one egg only or a small amount of labneh is provided as a meal

for 12 prisoners, and this constitutes a systematic and programmed starvation policy."

**Ammar Dwaik**, the General Director of the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) says: "Starvation is one of the methods used to torture prisoners in occupation prisons. This starvation is not only through reducing the quantities of food provided, but also includes providing poor quality food unsuitable for human consumption. These practices aim to weaken prisoners physically and psychologically, which endangers their lives and increases their daily suffering." In light of these miserable conditions, the extent of cruelty and neglect suffered by Palestinian prisoners becomes clear, where the starvation policy has become an integral part of the repression tools used by the Israeli occupation authorities with the aim of breaking their will and stripping them of their humanity.

## **Sexual Harassment in Israeli Prisons**

Testimonies from released prisoners and human rights institutions revealed that Palestinian detainees were subjected to severe torture and treatment degrading to human dignity, including stripping and sexual harassment or threats of it.

Palestinian female prisoners suffer from sexual harassment and other violations. Journalist **Ikhlas Sawalhah** reveals in her testimony to the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate: "I was subjected to naked search in Ramon prison twice, and in Damon I was searched naked five times, whether upon entering or leaving the prison, in addition to being subjected to naked search four other times during transfer operations from one prison to another." She confirmed: "Of course, all girls and women were subjected to naked search, this is a compulsory procedure... There are young girls who were searched naked collectively in Hasharon prison."



(Journalist Ikhlas Sawalha and Her Husband,  
Journalist Ibrahim Abu Safieh, Before Their Arrest by the Occupation)

She explains: "Occupation soldiers ask female prisoners to strip naked, and on one occasion, the female soldier hit me while I was naked with her metal-tipped shoe."

Jerusalemite journalist **Lama Ghosheh** was arrested and interrogated by Israeli occupation authorities.

**Lama** recounted her experience to the Journalists Syndicate saying: "They put me in a special section for criminal inmates where only males are imprisoned, then to Hasharon prison. During that period it was only for criminals, most of them arrested on the background of rape and drug cases.. you can imagine what that means!!"

These testimonies are not just passing events, but evidence of systematic and continuous violations that Palestinian journalists and their families are subjected to. Through these repressive practices, the occupation authorities attempt to silence free voices that seek to convey the truth and document Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people.



**A Body Facing Naked Search (23/10/2023)**

**A painting drawn by colleague Lama Ghosheh during her house arrest period**

Jerusalemite journalist Lama Ghosheh drew this painting during her house arrest period to document a harsh experience she lived through during her detention. In her description of the painting she said: "This painting embodies the harsh moment that every female prisoner goes through inside occupation detention centers during her exposure to naked search, where female prisoners are forced to remove all their clothes under the pretext of searching for security reasons by female soldiers in the prison service (Shabas). I personally went through this moment, and I saw fit to document it for the humiliation and oppression it carries that do not end with the end of the moment, but their effect continues forever."

Ismail Al-Ghoul, the martyr journalist, spoke about his experience before his martyrdom, saying: "The occupation forces forced us to remove our clothes completely and kneel on the ground and put our hands on our heads for about an hour in very cold weather, and we remained in this state for about 12 hours, after the occupation forces stormed the hospital and demolished the journalists' tent." The martyred colleague Al-Ghoul said: "We were forced to sit on the ground naked, and in very cold weather inside a room in the hospital courtyard, at a time when occupation forces were firing heavily in the vicinity of the hospital, and despite the fact that we were blindfolded and handcuffed."

As for journalist **Diaa Kahlout**, he narrated details of his suffering saying: "We were forced to remove all our clothes, and we were only allowed to keep one

piece of underwear for the lower part, before we were transferred to the Zkayim military base."

In the context of investigations into gross violations suffered by Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons, testimonies emerge confirming that some prisoners were subjected to sexual assaults, including systematic rape cases.

These testimonies shed light on a dark aspect of occupation practices against prisoners, where violations are not limited to physical torture only, but extend to include more severe violations that degrade human dignity and target their humanity. These practices are not crimes against individuals only, but are part of a policy aimed at breaking the will of the Palestinian people and humiliating them in brutal and inhumane ways.

Shawan Jabarin, General Director of Al-Haq Foundation, highlights one of the most dangerous and heinous violations that Palestinian prisoners are subjected to, saying: "Sexual harassment and rape are among the most atrocious violations that Palestinian prisoners are subjected to. These practices include direct sexual assaults that reach the level of rape, and are used as a means to humiliate prisoners and break their will. These assaults are accompanied by severe physical and psychological violence, which increases the suffering of prisoners and leaves long-term psychological effects. These violations are not individual cases, but reflect a systematic policy aimed at destroying the morale of prisoners and deepening their isolation."

In the context of discussing these violations, it should be noted that there is a possibility that some journalists who were imprisoned may have been subjected to sexual assaults but refused to disclose this for social reasons. These cases often remain undeclared, making it difficult to accurately assess the extent of this type of violation.

This refusal to disclose these crimes, whether stemming from societal or psychological constraints, adds another level of cruelty to the suffering experienced by prisoners, where they suffer in silence without being able to obtain the necessary support or psychological treatment to deal with these horrific experiences committed in the absence of accountability, and will remain a witness to the extent of flagrant violations that Palestinians, including journalists, are subjected to in occupation prisons.

## **Release Conditions After Leaving Occupation Prisons"**



Jerusalemite journalist Lama Ghosheh shared her harsh experience under house arrest, stating: "After ten days, on September 14, I was transferred to Damon prison. Upon arriving there with other Palestinian female prisoners, I learned of the conditional release decision, which subjected me to open-ended house arrest without any time limit. The conditions included a 50,000 shekel fine and a complete ban on using social media, the internet, and even having devices like smartphones or smart TVs in the house”.

Lama continued: "Since I lived in Kafr Aqab, an area with limited security control, they decided to transfer me to my parents' home in Sheikh Jarrah, an area with tighter security control. My retired parents were required to be in the house 24 hours a day to monitor me on behalf of the occupation authorities. They signed release conditions, which included severe penalties—50,000 shekels and possible arrest—if any violations occurred, including my re-arrest. This house arrest not only uses parents as enforcers but attempts to create conflict within the Palestinian family structure."

Similarly, journalist Sumaya Azzam from Nablus, who is seven months pregnant, was arrested on November 5, 2023, for her Facebook posts. She was released under the conditions of indefinite house arrest, with the added restriction of being banned from using the internet. Her legal case remains ongoing. The Palestinian Journalists Syndicate attempted to interview one of Sumaya's family members, but they declined, fearing further punitive actions from the occupation authorities.



(Journalist Sumaya Jawabra)

These testimonies reveal the systematic policy employed by the occupation to use house arrest as a tool to intimidate Palestinian journalists and their families. Such measures are not just about limiting individual freedoms, but also aim to dismantle the social fabric of Palestinian families, turning parents into unwilling enforcers tasked with monitoring their own children.

## **A Source from the Red Cross Reveals to the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate**

A source from the Red Cross revealed to the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate that 8,500 Palestinian citizens from the Gaza Strip are missing, and the International Committee of the Red Cross is unable to determine their fate.

The source added that the Red Cross has not conducted visits to prisoners since October 7, 2023. He continued: "We have done a lot, and this is central to our humanitarian role and our field and diplomatic work. We document the stories of martyrs and released detainees, engage in dialogue with families, and assist released detainees. We demand that everyone be treated with dignity, in accordance with international agreements, including the Geneva Convention."

The source added: "According to humanitarian law, the arrest of journalists is a serious violation of the Geneva Conventions. Such actions undermine the basic protection granted to journalists in conflict zones. We are currently reviewing these violations in coordination with relevant authorities to ensure accountability and adherence to international law principles."

## **Intimidation of Arab Journalism in the '48 Territories**

A state of intimidation and abuse has been, and continues to be, practiced by the Israeli occupation authorities against journalists within the '48 territories. Despite

differences in the level of discrimination and abuse against Palestinian journalists in various regions (Gaza, the West Bank, and the '48 territories), journalists in the '48 territories have faced assaults and intimidation that have severely restricted their ability to perform their journalistic duties. Among the most prominent of these abuses are physical and verbal assaults during field coverage and work. These attacks have led to a significant decrease or complete withdrawal from fieldwork, especially during the first few months of Israel's extermination war. Journalist Abdul Qader Abdul Haleem, a journalist from the '48 territories, confirmed to the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate that he stopped fieldwork after October 7th, as there were at least 20 assaults on Arab journalists and media institutions, the most notable being the assault on journalist Ahmed Darawsheh. An Armed Israeli Policeman Threatens Al-Araby Reporter Ahmed Darawsheh Live on Air.

Colleague Abdul Haleem adds, "Although this number may seem small compared to what is happening in the West Bank and Gaza, it has a significant impact, especially considering that the number of Arab journalists in the '48 territories is relatively low. In addition to the assaults, excessive censorship, intimidation, and pressure on the agencies employing these journalists have contributed to Palestinian journalists in the '48 territories practicing strict self-censorship to avoid prosecution, punitive measures, or financial penalties due to their journalistic work. For example, particularly in the early months, Palestinian journalists avoid using specific words like 'occupation'".



**(Armed Israeli Policeman Threatens Al-Arabi Reporter Ahmed Darawsha Live on Air)**

He continues: "Regarding arrests, there is one case involving a Palestinian journalist from the '48 territories—Tariq Taha—who was detained for days due to a post about the weapon phenomenon in universities. There have been several

instances where journalists have been summoned in connection with their journalistic work, and they have received direct warnings regarding their reporting. In addition, the headquarters of the Arabs 48 news site was raided and searched both before and after October 7th."

Aside from the arrests and assaults on journalists during fieldwork, there have been arrests of many non-journalists for social media posts, which has led journalists to engage in self-censorship, refraining from addressing any issues that have not already been covered by prominent Israeli media outlets like Haaretz and others, especially in the early months.

Abdul Haleem continued: "There is a feeling of falling short in supporting journalists in Gaza and the West Bank and in confronting the occupation's crimes against them. The solidarity shown by journalists in the '48 territories has been timid, including refraining from hosting journalists from Gaza, particularly in the months immediately after October 7th, as a form of self-censorship. However, it is clear that the crimes committed by the occupation against journalists in recent months have been lessons for journalists in the '48 territories, as the partial protection once provided by a press card has significantly diminished. Although this partial protection has somewhat returned in recent months, it remains far less than it was before October 7th."

## **Conclusion**

The Palestinian Journalists Syndicate (PJS) observes, based on the testimonies of released journalists, that the occupation authorities systematically use detention as a tool to intimidate journalists, obstruct the truth, and instill fear. This is done to conceal their crimes and punish journalists for their professional roles, creating an atmosphere of fear and anxiety to discourage them from continuing their work, especially as they face constant and severe threats from the occupation authorities.

In response, the PJS calls on all international and human rights organizations to launch the largest international campaign to stop the targeting of Palestinian journalists. The syndicate also urges the international community and its institutions to hold the occupation state accountable for its departure from the values of human civilization and its blatant disregard for the principles and laws of universal human rights, despite being a signatory to international agreements and treaties, particularly those concerning the protection of journalists.

The Israeli occupation's attempt to create a hostile environment for journalism will not succeed, as Palestinian journalists have consistently demonstrated a profound ethical and national commitment to their profession. They uphold the values of justice and truth, wielding their pens and camera lenses with unmatched courage, continuing to cover the largest massacre and aggression in contemporary history.

The Israeli occupation's military suppression of press freedom is a direct challenge to the principles of free journalism, freedom of opinion, and expression. It also violates international law and undermines the role of global bodies responsible for ensuring accountability. The international community must put an end to its complacency and hold the Israeli occupation accountable for its systematic efforts to suppress the truth and silence its witnesses.