

**From the Cemetery of the Living: A Plea for the Rights of Palestinian Detainees Statement by the freed Palestinian detainee, Munther Amira**

**8 March 2024**

With a heart heavy yet buoyant with gratitude, I reach out to you through these words, a testament to the resilience of the human spirit against oppression. Your steadfast commitment, vocal advocacy, and unwavering support have been the lifeline for those of us who have endured the shadows of incarceration under the Israeli occupation. Today, I stand as a voice for the voiceless, a beacon for the countless souls still languishing in what can only be described as living tombs, to express our profound thanks and to bear witness to the atrocities that bespeak a grave humanitarian crisis.

The conditions under which Palestinian detainees live are a stark violation of every tenet of humanity and dignity. Subjected to extreme forms of torture, degrading treatment, and deliberate deprivation of basic needs, including food and medical care, Palestinian detainees are living through what can only be described as a systemic campaign of dehumanization. The Israeli occupation, through its policy of mass arbitrary detention, aims not just to suppress Palestinian voices but to erase their existence, their rights, and their struggle for freedom and self-determination.

In the broader context of the ongoing genocide against Gaza and the catastrophic impact on the Palestinian population, the situation of detainees becomes even more harrowing. This genocide against the Palestinian people casts a long shadow over the fate of those behind bars. The link between the mass arbitrary detentions and the wider war against Palestine is unmistakable and intentional, designed to break the will of the people and to quash any form of resistance against the occupation.

My personal ordeal, characterized by severe mistreatment, deprivation of medical care, and exposure to torture and sexual violence, mirrors the unfathomable suffering of many. These prisons, akin to graveyards for the living, stand as stark symbols of a settler colonial regime that seeks to erase our identity, our dignity, and our very existence. The draconian measures imposed upon us—ranging from the denial of familial and legal connections to the restriction of basic human necessities and freedoms—underscore a systematic campaign to dehumanize and demoralize.

This policy of widespread and systematic abuse is not merely an affront to Palestinian dignity but constitutes a blatant violation of international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions. The complicity of the Israeli judicial system, with its alarmingly high conviction rates for Palestinians and the virtual impunity granted to perpetrators of crimes against Palestinians, underscores a judicial apparatus that functions as an instrument of occupation.

I cannot express enough gratitude to the countless individuals, organizations, and the vast sea of humanity who have taken to the streets in solidarity, raising their voices high to demand justice for Palestine and calling for a ceasefire. Your impassioned pressure and relentless pursuit of justice have not only contributed to my release but also continue to shine a light on the ongoing struggle for the freedom of all Palestinian detainees. Your unwavering support is a powerful testament to the strength of collective action and the indomitable spirit of global solidarity.

The international community must recognize that the plight of Palestinian detainees is not an isolated issue but a reflection of the systemic violence and oppression perpetrated by the Israeli occupation. The widespread and systematic violations of their rights, including through the use of torture, inhumane and degrading treatment, and the forcible transfer of detainees to jails within Israel, constitute grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and amount to war crimes under international law.

The silence and inaction of the international community in the face of these atrocities only serve to embolden the perpetrators and perpetuate the violence and suffering. It is incumbent upon all states, in line with their legal obligations under international law, to take immediate and decisive action to protect the rights of Palestinian detainees. This includes holding the Israeli occupation accountable for its actions, demanding the immediate release of all arbitrarily detained Palestinians, and ensuring that those responsible for such egregious violations are brought to justice.

Moreover, the international community must work tirelessly to address the root causes of the settler colonial regime, advocating for the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. This includes acknowledging and addressing the illegal occupation of Palestinian territory.

As a freed detainee, I have witnessed firsthand the unimaginable horrors faced by my fellow Palestinians behind bars. The scars of torture, the pain of separation from loved ones, and the constant fear of death are experiences that no human being should ever have to endure. Yet, despite these atrocities, the spirit of the Palestinian people remains unbroken, their resolve unwavering.

In solidarity with those who continue to suffer in silence, I urge you to lend your voice to this cause, to stand up for justice, and to join us in the fight for the freedom and dignity of all Palestinian detainees. Together, we can shed light on the darkness of their existence and pave the way for a future where human rights are not just a privilege for the few but a fundamental right for all.

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