



**The Policy of Medical Negligence in the  
Israeli Occupation Prisons**

**Blatant Violation of the International  
Humanitarian Law**

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## **Introduction:**

The Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights “Hurriyat” issues its second report which talks about the suffering of the sick prisoners in the Israeli occupation prisons and the medical negligence that they face.

We hope that this report will constitute a database and motivation to the relevant international bodies and institutions which need to take the necessary measures to end the suffering of the prisoners and work for the release of the critical cases in line with the provisions of the international law and the relevant WHO decisions.

The Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights “Hurriyat” appreciates the efforts of Palestinian organizations that aim to highlight the cause of the sick prisoners and defend the rights of prisoners, mainly the Ministry for Prisoners Affairs, the Palestinian Prisoners Club, the Palestinian Physicians Union and the National Committee Defending the Cause of Sick Prisoners.

The Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights “Hurriyat” also extends gratitude to the NGO Development Center – Secretariat for Human Rights and Good Governance, which supported this project and the project to support the sick prisoners in the Israeli occupation prisons.

*The Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights  
“Hurriyat”*

## **The Policy of Medical Negligence in the Israeli Occupation Prisons –**

### **Blatant Violation of the International Humanitarian Law**

#### **The health conditions in the Israeli prisons:**

The living conditions of male and female prisoners in the Israeli occupation prisons violate the relevant international standards and agreements as the prisoners suffer from crowded cells, malnutrition, poor ventilation in the cells and poor exposure to the sun, in addition to the repeated attacks on the prison cells by the special forces of the Israeli Prison Administration, which includes torture and the use of teargas, thus endangering the lives of sick prisoners who suffer respiratory and chest problems. There is also the problem of depriving the prisoners from relatives' visits and solitary confinement and imposing high fines on the prisoners and depriving them from their daily outdoor walk.

Because of the inappropriate clinics in every prison, the Prison Authority resorts sometimes to the transfer of prisoners to the so-called Ramleh Prison Hospital which lacks the most basic medical care requirements and staff, and in that facility, sick prisoners suffer a lot and instead of receiving medical treatment, they suffer more physically and psychologically and their health conditions deteriorate even more. In many cases, sick prisoners refuse to go to that clinic because of the suffering that they face during the transfer or during the staying at the clinic. When the sick prisoners stay at the clinic, they don't receive any useful medical treatment and they hear the cries of pain and suffering of the sick prisoners who stay there permanently. The clinic is in the fourth floor and the sick prisoners, especially those on wheelchairs, don't get a chance to be exposed to the sun or walk outdoors, or get out to see relatives or meet with attorneys. The two physicians of the ICRC and the Physicians for Human Rights Organization use the

term “clinic” instead of a hospital for the same above-mentioned reasons. In the clinic, there are sixteen prisoners, including seven prisoners who suffer permanent paralysis, and three patients who suffer from cancer, while three others suffer heart problems, and one prisoner suffers from tuberculosis and a prisoner with diabetes. The policy of medical negligence adopted by the prison authorities cause the deterioration of the health conditions of prisoners, and this is a basic problem that faces the prisoners who are pushed to take several protest steps in order to exert pressure and highlight the need to show more attention to medical care. The prisoners also seek to close al-Ramleh clinic which has become a nightmare in their minds and they called it the cemetery of al-Ramleh Prison; the prisoners now demand that they be transferred to other hospitals.

The Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights “Hurriyat” which follows up the conditions of the sick prisoners joins its voice to the voice of the prisoners and demands from the international community and the international human rights organizations, mainly the ICRC and WHO, to support the prisoners humanitarian demand and exert pressure on the Israeli government towards the closure of that clinic and transfer the sick prisoners to other hospitals on condition that they receive humanitarian medical treatment without having their legs and hands cuffed.

### **Number of sick prisoners**

Number of sick prisoners has increased recently when compared with the previous phases. The number now is more than 700 out of 4,600 male and female prisoners at the occupation prisons. The number of sick prisoners before the prisoners exchange deal that took place on October 18, 2011 was 800 prisoners according to The Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights “Hurriyat”. The reason for this notable increase is the policy of medical negligence towards the prisoners and the open hunger strikes by

groups of prisoners and the individual prisoners' hunger strikes that have started since September 18, 2011. The Israeli government and the physicians of the prison authorities are to blame for the deterioration of the health conditions of the sick prisoners. This requires an urgent international intervention to save the lives of prisoners and offer them the necessary medical treatment. The number of difficult medical cases is over 50 cases, including sick prisoners who suffer permanent or partial paralysis, such as Khaled al-Shawish, Mansour Mouqadeh, Walid Masalmeh, Nahed al-Aqra', Amir As'ad, Yousef Rshaid, Othman Khalili, Munadel Sharqawi. Other prisoners suffer from cancer, such as Amer Bahar, Tareq Asi, Kayed Heiron, Fawwaz Ba'ara, Ahmad Samara, Ra'fat Turkman, Walid Abu Lihieh, Hazem Miqdad and Nabil Natsheh. A third group of prisoners suffer from heart problems, such as Ala' Hassouneh who was released recently after legal follow up of his case, Riyad al-Amour, Ahmad Ja'afrah, and Atef Wreidat. Some prisoners suffer from Kidney failure, such as Hussein Faisal Nassar, Othman Ibrahim Younes, and Nour Mohammed Jabr. There are also 15 prisoners who suffer from various psychological problems and are kept in solitary confinement cells to the point that some of them don't even recognize their families anymore or cannot take care of themselves. All of these prisoners did send urgent appeals to the international community and the human rights organizations and to the Pope and the UN Secretary General urging them to interfere immediately in order to save their lives which are in real danger. The prison authorities physicians closed the medical files of some prisoners (Khaled al-Shawish, Mansour Mawqadeh, and Nahed al-Aqra") under the claim that the medical treatment offered to them has become in vain.

## **Victims of medical negligence**

Based on the documentation of the Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights "Hurriyat", the policy of medical negligence

and oppression has led to the death of 85 prisoners inside the occupation prisons since 1967. Dozens of prisoners died after they were released after sustaining health problems that they suffered while in prison, including Saytan al-Wali who spent 23 years in prison and died after less than three years after he was released after suffering from cancer in prison, and Zakaria Daoud Issa who spent ten years in prison and died in less than four months after his release, especially when the prison authorities made sure that the cancer had spread all over his body. The latest case was of prisoner Zuheir Rashid Labbadeh who was under administrative detention and he was suffering from kidney failure, and while he was staying at Ramleh Hospital clinic, his health condition deteriorated very critically and was about to die there, but the prison authorities released him while he was in a comma on May 24, 2012 in order to evade any responsibility. Then, he was transferred to the National Hospital in Nablus where it was found out that he also suffered from Cirrhosis and serious lung infection and that he was not offered the appropriate treatment in the prison. While in the prison hospital, he used to undergo dialysis with his hands and legs cuffed. Zuheir died on May 31, 2012, in less than a week after his release.

### **Deliberate medical negligence and a crime committed against the prisoners who are on hunger strike**

In its efforts to keep violating the rights of prisoners, the Israeli Prison Authority continued adopting the medical negligence policy towards the prisoners who are on hunger strike, not showing the minimum degree of care to their lives. In fact, officers and guards attacked some of these prisoners on several occasions in order to break their strike, as the case of Samer al-Eisawi and Ayman Sharawneh. The prison authority also conducts repeated transfer of prisoners between the prisons without any justification for such steps. The prisoners who are on hunger strike demand

better detention conditions or release because they are either administrative detainees or Palestinians who were re-detained following the prisoners exchange deal “Loyalty to the Free People”.

The occupation authorities insist on denying the just demands of those prisoners who face slow death and this is in itself is a pre-meditated crime which requires immediate intervention by the ICRC and WHO and the UN Secretary General in order to exert pressure on the Israeli government towards their release and stop this crime and hold it responsible for the ramifications of this policy.

This policy has been used by the Israeli prison authorities against all prisoners who joined the open hunger strikes, mainly those who observed the hunger strike for long periods of time in a step to protest against administrative detention and to demand recognizing them as war prisoners or to protest against medical negligence.

This policy is still used against Samer Tareq al-Eisawi and Ayman Sharawneh who continue with their hunger strike which they started since the beginnings of July and August 2012. Because of their long strike which is considered the longest in history (Ayman has been on hunger strike for the last five months while Samer has been on hunger strike for the last four months), their health condition is extremely dangerous; they lost weight considerably and suffer from comma and serious pain with unstable blood pressure and heart beats. They also face psychological pressure by the clinic administration and its physicians to the point they refuse to go the clinic to undergo medical examination as a sign of protest against medical negligence. In a further escalatory step, they stopped taking vitamins and refrained from drinking water several times. Despite their serious health conditions, the occupation authorities didn't take any action and left them face their destiny. Moreover, the international and human rights organizations have not made

any effective intervention to condemn this crime or to hold the Israeli government responsible for their lives or to exert pressure towards their release before it is too late.

### **Preventing physicians from visiting the sick prisoners**

In order to reduce the impact of medical negligence, several Palestinian organizations have tried to send physicians to examine the sick prisoners but have failed because of the stalling measures by the Israeli Prison Authority; for example, the Israeli prison authorities refused to allow a medical allow to visit prisoner Hamzeh Samer Qa'qour, 32, from Jenin, who is serving an eight-year sentence in Megiddo Prison, despite the deterioration of his health condition as he suffers from infections in the intestine and glands.

The prison authorities also refused to allow a physician to examine prisoner Ala Ibrahim al-Hams, 38, from Rafah, who is detained in Rimon Prison. Ala suffers from partial tuberculosis which is affecting his eyes and this led to infection in the left eye and caused a 70% loss of sight.

The prison administration at Gilboa refuses in principle allowing specialized physicians from entering the prison to examine the sick prisoners.

The Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights “Hurriyat” proceeds in its efforts with determination and full cooperation with the relevant Palestinian organizations and also works with the Ministry for Prisoners Affairs and the Palestinian Physicians Union. The efforts led to the preparation of a list of names of physicians who showed readiness to visit the sick prisoners; this list needs to be approved by the Prison Authority. Until the list is endorsed, the sick prisoners will send a request to the prison administration on the physicians that they need in coordination with the relevant organizations. There are indicators on the possible adoption of this approach.

## **Critical medical cases**

Based on the documentation of the Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights “Hurriyat”, there are 50 critical cases distributed over several prisons, mainly:

### **1- Riyadh Dakhllallah Ahmad al-Amour**

He is 42 years old, from the village of Taqqou’ in Bethlehem District. He is married and father of five children. He was sentenced to 11 life sentences; he is currently detained at al-Ramleh Hospital Clinic. Riyadh was arrested on May 4, 2002 while he was sick as he was suffering from weak heart muscle due to a previous bullet injury in the abdomen that led to other medical complications. The health condition of Riyadh deteriorated in prison as a result of medical negligence. He underwent surgery where they placed a pace-maker (organizer) inside his chest. By time and with further medical negligence, Riyadh faints several times a day and suffers from severe cases of exhaustion; he cannot control his bladder. The pace maker needs to be changed but nothing happened. Based on the statements of physicians at al-Ramleh Hospital clinic, the health condition of Riyadh is very critical; Riyadh fears to go to take a shower because he might faint in the bathroom; physicians asked him not to sleep on his back because this causes problems in breathing.

During a visit by the attorney of Ministry for Prisoners Affairs Fadi Obeidat on June 11, 2012 to Riyadh, the prisoner said: What are you waiting for? Are you waiting to see me die like Zuheir Labaddeh and then you might say that there was a prisoner called Riyadh al-Amour who died of medical negligence and because he was not offered any treatment?

Obeidat added: Al-Amour had difficulty in talking because of his illness; his voice was filled with anger and oppression. He said: What are you waiting for? You want me to leave this prison a

dead body? I don't want to die; I die every moment and every day; I accuse the prison administration of deliberate medical negligence. With increased negligence, al-Amour needed more medical attention and he needed at some point to undergo surgery to change the pace-maker but the prison administration refused under the claim that they couldn't diagnose his illness. On June 19, 2012, he started an open hunger strike protesting against the medical negligence.

The health condition of Al-Amouri became very critical and the prison administration transferred him to Asaf Harofeh Hospital where they replaced the pace-maker, but his health condition remained unstable and he was transferred once again to Tal Hashomer Hospital where he underwent open heart surgery. On October 21, 2012, he was returned to Al-Ramleh Hospital clinic but his health condition remains unstable and his life is in danger and he needs permanent and specialized medical attention.

Al-Amour did run as candidate in the Local Council List in his village Taqqou' and won unanimously by the residents of his village who considered this as appreciation to his heroic steadfastness in the Israeli prisons and as support to the prisoners cause.

## **2. Mohammad Rafiq Kamel Al-Taj**

Al-Taj was born in the town of Toubas on October 17, 1972. He studied Political Science. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison; he is in Hadareem Prison. Al-Taj was arrested during the first Intifada when he was 17 years old; he was sentenced then for two and a half years. Then he was arrested several times and survived several assassination attempts until he was arrested on November 19, 2003. He was sentenced for 15 years; he refused to recognize the court's sentence and adopted the slogan that he is a war prisoner. He started to demand treatment as a war prisoner. On March 15, 2012, he declared an open hunger strike

for 67 days and demanded to be treated as war prisoner. The health condition of Al-Taj deteriorated in prison. He suffers from problems in breathing and lack of adequate oxygen in his blood. He was transferred to Kfar Saba Hospital for medical examination. Al-Taj faces medical negligence. The physicians in prison offer him pain killers only.

In October, Al-Taj started to go to the clinic three times a day to receive oxygen to assist him in breathing. During medical exams, the physicians at the clinic were surprised by the examination results at Kfar Saba Hospital as it was found out that he needed lung transplant and must use the breathing machine for 18 hours a day. The physician at Me'ir Hospital said there is no solution to his problem and that he has to live using more oxygen or lung transplant. The health condition of Al-Taj is very critical and this requires his release in order to receive proper medical treatment.

The Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights "Hurriyat" issued a press release explaining the case of Al-Taj and demanded his immediate release and held the occupation authorities for his life.

The following is the text of the press release:

The Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights "Hurriyat" holds the Israeli government full responsibility for the life of prisoner Mohammad Attaj in Hadareem prison. Attaj is being subjected to a systematic policy of medical negligence, thus further endangering his life. Attaj suffers lung deficiency, lack of adequate oxygen and constant cough. At this point, Attaj is unable to breathe normally without a ventilator machine. Attaj's critical health condition prevented him from seeing Hurriyat's lawyer "Ibtisam Al Anati" who visited Hadareem yesterday the 15th of October 2012. The three prisoners whom al-Anati visited, including Naser Oweis, Hasan Buzour and Naser Abu Srour, assured that Attaj's health

situation is very critical. They appealed to all free people in the world and human rights organizations to exert pressure on the Israeli government for his immediate release. Hurryyat considers the Israeli government, the Israeli Prison Services (IPS) and its medical team fully responsible for Mohammad Attaj's life. The dangerous and critical situation of his health is a result of denying him the basic human rights of prisoners that were guaranteed by all human rights conventions, especially the third and fourth Geneva Conventions. Instead; they ignored the just demands of the prisoners during their long hunger strikes, and they are fully aware of the dangerous consequences. Hurryyat can clearly observe the daily crimes that are committed against prisoners who have been on hunger strike since September 18th 2011, especially Ayman Sharawneh (108 days), Samer Issawi (78 days) and Samer Al Barq who resumed his hunger strike yesterday the 15th of October 2012 in response to the Israeli Occupation Authorities' retracting from the agreement that was reached earlier for his release. Hurryyat Center calls on the international community to break its silence and stand behind our prisoners who are sacrificing their lives for the sake of their human and national dignity.

The critical health situation of prisoner Mohammad Attaj brings yet again an alarming signal on the dangerous situation of the ailing prisoners, especially those who are kept in Ramlah prison hospital and other prisons. Therefore, Hurryyat calls upon the international community, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the UN Council for Human Rights, Amnesty International, the International Committee of the Red Cross and all human rights organizations to support the Palestinian and Arab prisoners in the Israeli jails who are sacrificing their lives for their human and national dignity, while their basic rights are violated and war crimes are committed against them on a daily basis. The Israeli government should be held responsible for the life of Mohammad Attaj and all the ailing prisoners who are subject to medical negligence. Hurryyat affirms that it's high time for the international community to break its silence

and condemn the Israeli policy against prisoners and activate the international resolutions regarding the prisoners' rights and send fact-finding missions and medical delegations to have a closer look at the inhuman and tragic situation of these prisoners because of the systematic policy of the IPS and the Israeli government. This policy aims to break the prisoners' will and weaken their morale. An urgent must be taken to save the lives of ailing prisoners and immediately release them before it's too late.

Hurryyat Center also calls on the Arab League, the Islamic Conference Organization and the Non-Aligned Movement to activate the resolutions that support the prisoners' cause. There is urgency to transfer this file to the UN General Assembly and request the issuance of a UN resolution that provides protection to Palestinian prisoners and condemns the daily crimes that are committed against them.

### **3- Ala' Ibrahim al-Hams**

Ala' al-Hams is from Gaza city; he was arrested on February 24, 2009. He is kept at Hadareem Prison spending his 29-year prison sentence. Al-Hams was injured in 2004 in the lower part of his spinal cord during the Israeli shelling. He also suffers from Asthma. In 2011, he suffered an infection in his left eye but he was not given the right medication, thus causing an infection in the other eye. This situation remained without any improvement for months. Later, he was examined by a Russian physician who was shocked by delay in treatment. After receiving treatment, al-Hams can open his eyes with the help of his fingers now. His eyes are all red. He suffers now tuberculosis by 18% and the virus is in the lungs. Al-Hams cannot sleep now. He lives a state of anxiety because he is not receiving the proper treatment. Al-Hams says: "The process of arrest and investigation was hard and it affected my health condition; I suffer from a list of diseases; physicians differ on diagnosing my case; every day is a new setback and suffering".

#### **4- Othman Jamal Mahmoud al-Khalili**

He was born on September 1, 1980. The Israeli occupation authorities placed him under administrative detention. He is on a wheelchair now at al-Ramleh Hospital clinic. On March 5, 2012, al-Khalili was arrested for the second time from his home in al-Dahiet in the city of Nablus. He suffers paralysis after receiving a bullet in his spinal cord. He was released almost three years ago after spending 16 months at al-Ramleh Prison clinic. He was arrested on the wheelchair to Huwwara Detention Center and then to Ofer and finally to al-Ramleh Hospital clinic. He also suffers from diabetes. He cannot exercise his daily life activities independently. Prisoner Othman is under administrative detention. He issued several appeals to President Abbas to work for his release and the release of all sick prisoners who live in a “ward like a tomb and not a hospital”.

#### **5- Amer Mohammed Eid Bahar**

He is 31 years old. Amer was born in the town of Abu Deis in Jerusalem District. He is single and holds a B.A. in Islamic Sharia. He was arrested while he was a student on July 21, 2004 and was sentenced to 12 years. Amer never suffered any health problems before his arrest. In prison, he felt stomach pains; then, he was diagnosed as suffering from appendix and must undergo surgery. When he was transferred to hospital, it was found out that he needed immediate surgery. The prison administration didn't approve surgery. He was given some medication which caused serious allergy. Prisoner Bahar faced severe medical negligence, thus causing deterioration of his health condition. He suffers now from severe stomach pains after the surgery. He lost weight (from 95kgs to 75kgs); he cannot stand on his own. He is on temporary medication now and some antibiotics to treat the serious inflammations in the stomach and intestines.

## **6- Mohammed Suleiman Saleh al-Arouri**

Mohammed was born on July 16, 1985. He is from Aroura village in Ramallah. He was arrested from his home on April 18, 2011. Mohammed is married and father to one daughter. He is under administrative detention at Ofer Prison. His administrative detention has been renewed for three times now under the pretext of the “secret file” without showing any consideration to his illness – Thalassemia. He also suffers from problems in his heart and kidney. The physicians affirmed that al-Arouri needs dialysis once every 21 days, in addition to daily medication to help his weak heart muscle. Al-Arouri started an open hunger strike because the occupation authorities renewed his administrative detention without any charges; he said: I cannot bear anymore the oppression and arbitrary punishment which is depriving me from my freedom; this is destroying me; every moment in prison is worth one thousand years”.

## **7- Fawwaz Sabe' Fayez Ba'ara**

Fawwaz is 31 years old. He is from al-Yasmineh Quarter in the city of Nablus. He was arrested on October 21, 2004. Fawwaz was sentenced to four life sentences and an additional period of 47 years. He is kept now at al-Ramleh Prison clinic.

Ba'ara was arrested by the Zionist occupation army during its incursion inside the Old City of Nablus. Then, he didn't suffer from any diseases. His suffering started with the surgery he underwent in 2007 at Afouleh Hospital. A tumor appeared close to his ear and they removed it. Later, he started to feel weakness in his left eye; then, he started suffering from Asthma and after some time he started to suffer from tumors in the head and neck amid deliberate medical negligence. Then, he started taking chemotherapy but didn't feel any better. In a letter, he wrote: The world has to open the prison gates so that it can listen and see what is happening to

our bodies; we are diminishing in the darkness amid the silence of the international community”.

## **8- The martyr of medical negligence policy who departed from death... to death...!**

Zuheir Labbadeh... I will not quote the words of Darwish: The horse fell off the poem, but I will say that your jailer has fallen in the blood of the black horse and you will remain an icon and a medal of pride and honor on our chests. (*Shehadeh Ma'moun*)

Martyr prisoner Zuheir Rashid Hamed Labbadeh was born on March 3, 1961. He was born in Ras al-Ein in Nablus, married and father of four children. He was arrested several times in the Israeli occupation prisons. Year 1988 was the start of his journey with pain and torture in the Israeli occupation prisons. He was arrested then on charges of participating in the activities of the first Intifada; he was kept then in prison for six months in administration detention. Later, he was arrested for one whole year in 1991. In 1992, he was deported to Marj al-Zohour in South Lebanon; at the end of the year, he returned and was arrested immediately after his return. In 2007, he was arrested once again for 30 months and was released on October 7, 2010.

On December 6, 2011, the occupation authorities arrested him despite his critical health condition. He was kept at al-Ramleh Prison clinic; Labbadeh suffered from kidney failure. Dialysis was delayed and this caused serious side effects with problems in the nerves of his hands and legs. He also suffered from osteoporosis. Zuheir used to take 22 pills on a daily basis.

On May 24, 2012, the occupation authorities released Zuheir after the deterioration of his health condition; Salem Court issued a decision to release him with a fine reaching 1000 Shekels. He was released in an Israeli ambulance which transferred him to a Palestinian ambulance straight to National Hospital in Nablus. He

was in a state of comma. Medical exams in the hospital in Nablus showed that Zuheir's health condition was very critical and he was not provided with the proper treatment. On May 31, 2012, he passed away as a martyr. The director of the hospital in Nablus Dr. Hussam al-Johari said martyr Zuheir suffered from many diseases and complications and all our attempts to rescue his life failed.

Author Hisham Saqallah wrote: When the occupation authorities make a good-intention move, we have to raise doubts and look into such a step; the occupation does not have good intentions. They release him because they knew that he will not live for long; they wanted him to die in his home and not die as a martyr inside the occupation prisons.

The Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights "Hurriyat" believes that the death of prisoner Labbadeh is a new crime committed against the sick prisoners and this requires holding those responsible for this accountable before the international criminal courts. This sad event highlights the policy of medical negligence and the bad detention conditions of Palestinian prisoners. The Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights "Hurriyat" stresses that it is high time for immediate intervention by the international community, mainly WHO, Amnesty International, and the ICRC, in order to form a specialized medical committee to visit the Israeli prisons and look at the conditions of prisoners and exert pressure on the Israeli government towards their immediate release.

The wife of Zuheir Um Rashid said: What has the occupation done? Can this body have this impact on a country which possesses a huge arsenal of weapons? He was chained while undergoing dialysis. What is this treatment? Where is the world to watch?

The documentation of the Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights "Hurriyat" points to the fact that the policy of medical negligence and oppression since 1967 has led to the martyrdom of 58 prisoners in the Israeli occupation prisons, the last of whom was Zuheir Labbadeh.

The question that needs to be posed to the international community: When will Israel be tracked down for its crimes? Why haven't the international law and the Geneva Conventions granted due justice to the Palestinian prisoners?

The Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights "Hurriyat" calls for the formation of a neutral international commission to investigate the death of prisoner Labbadeh and bring to justice those responsible for his death.

## **The sick prisoners at al-Ramleh Prison Clinic appeal with an outcry of pain and hope**

The sick prisoners at al-Ramleh Prison Clinic issue an outcry to the international community demand immediate intervention to save their lives:

### *An outcry of pain and hope*

We appeal to you to save us from the pain and torture; our souls will remain steadfast but our bodies are getting weaker and weaker. We appeal to you with an outcry of hope and we tell you that we are not afraid of death; we have chosen the path of liberation and freedom.

### *Our freedom first*

We address you with full awareness of all the efforts and struggle exerted for the sake of the prisoners and sick prisoners; President Abbas raised our issue at the UN platform; our leadership and its various institutions are adamant and determined to highlight our cause and set a condition that our release is a condition prior to the resumption of any form of talk with the occupation which violates the human principles. The sick prisoners said from the clinic in Ramleh Prison: This occupation exercises the most outrageous form of torture against the sick prisoners.

### *Martyrdom is more merciful*

The prisoners affirmed that the prison administration treats all kinds of diseases with pain killers, thus further endangering their lives. They recalled the prisoners who died martyrs as a result of medical negligence: Mohammed Abu Hadwan, Joma'a Ismail, Zuheir Labbadeh, Abdul Fattah Raddad, Murad Abu Zaqqout, Hayel Abu Zeid, Saytan al-Wali, Abu Rizeq al-Araeer and Fadel Shahin. The sick prisoners say martyrdom is even more merciful, especially when there are 16 prisoners living under risky conditions.

### *Don't leave us alone*

The sick prisoners appealed to all free people in the world and to the Palestinian masses to ring the alarm bell before it is too late. The sick prisoners call on the national and Islamic factions to declare unity and end the internal split and set up a national strategy to confront the challenges. They say: Our strength is in our unity; ending the internal split is a condition for our freedom. Those who don't exert real efforts to end the split are criminals. We have to show solidarity with the cause of our prisoners.

## **The letter of sick prisoner Khaled al-Shawish to the international community**

Prisoner Khaled al-Shawish, who is on a wheelchair at Ramleh Prison clinic serving his ten life sentences, sent a letter to the international community and the human rights organizations to intervene immediately and exert pressure on the Israeli government for his release. He adds: Ramleh Prison Clinic is not a hospital; it is a mass grave; we die every minute there. We invite you to our mass grave: no physician, no medicine, endless pain.

### *Slow death*

Prisoner Shawish points out that the occupation has kept him behind bars for the eighth year in a row while he is on wheelchair. He says: Where are the human rights organizations that care for democracy? Why don't we see them visit us? Until when are we expected to stay in this grace? This is slow death. Ramleh Prison Clinic is a lie; the prisoner needs good health in order to resist the prison and its torture but sick prisoners are defenseless.

### *High hope*

Prisoner Shawish adds in his letter: We are sick of the slogans and statements while death is threatening us every moment as if we are not human beings. We don't want medals; we want our most basic human rights; we have a just cause and we have no regrets regarding the sacrifices we are making. The occupation is punishing us for our positions but we won't give in. Our message is our hope in freedom; we demand that you all rise to demand visiting al-Ramleh mass grave and to exert pressure for the closure of this clinic and transfer us to hospitals.

### *The responsibility of the international community towards the sick prisoners inside the Israeli prisons*

The silence of the international community – countries and

institutions – including the UN and its organizations, regarding the suffering of the prisoners make us feel concerned regarding the position of the world vis-à-vis the policies of Israel against the Palestinian prisoners. We demand that the international community break its silence and condemn the Israeli policy and interfere immediately to guarantee our rights which were granted by the international norms and standards, mainly the Geneva Third and Fourth Conventions of 1949. We also demand your efforts to exert pressure on the Israeli government which must abide by the international standards.

Hurryyat can clearly observe the daily crimes that are committed against prisoners who have been on hunger strike since September 18th 2011, especially Ayman Sharawneh (108 days), Samer Issawi (78 days) and Samer Al Barq who resumed his hunger strike yesterday the 15th of October 2012 in response to the Israeli Occupation Authorities' retracting from the agreement that was reached earlier for his release. Hurryyat Center calls on the international community to break its silence and stand behind our prisoners who are sacrificing their lives for the sake of their human and national dignity.

This important conference has to assume its responsibility in order to activate the resolutions issued by the Arab League and the Non-Aligned Countries and the UN Conference which was held in Geneva in April 2012 and build on these resolutions; this conference has to continue with its efforts and struggle in order to place this cause on the agenda of the UN General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Commission; we need to remain loyal to the cause of our prisoners until they are released, especially the sick prisoners and the administrative detainees. Without such efforts, the Israeli occupation authorities will continue to violate all international norms and charters and will continue to act as a state above the international law in the absence of accountability and pressure. In order to support the sick prisoners

cause and work towards their release, we propose the following recommendations:

**First:** To accelerate work towards the formation of a specialized international medical commission by WHO and the ICRC in order to visit the prisons and look into the conditions there, including the health conditions of prisoners and present a report to the UN Secretary- General and the UN Human Rights Commission on the results of the visits in implementation of the WHO resolution which was taken on May 20, 2010.

**Second:** To demand the immediate release of the critical health cases which will be decided by the above-mentioned medical commission and hold the Israeli government responsible for these cases.

**Third:** To cooperate with the Palestinian National Authority and other international bodies with the purpose of submitting an international complaint at the international criminal courts in order to track down the Israeli officials for the death of Zuheir Labbadeh and other prisoners who died of medical negligence.

**Fourth:** The international organizations need to act urgently and exert pressure on the Israeli government in order to offer the proper medication to the sick prisoners and ease their pains.

**Fifth:** To close down the so-called al-Ramleh Prison Clinic and transfer the sick prisoners to civilian hospitals.