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The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), Al Mezan, and Al-Haq demand an end to the enforced disappearance of hundreds of Palestinian detainees, including dozens of women, from Gaza, and that their whereabouts and names are revealed, as well as the immediate halt to the ongoing torture and abuse during arbitrary arrest and detention of people from Gaza. It is imperative that the international community acts to prevent these ongoing atrocities.

Based on the information and testimonies obtained by our teams, Israeli authorities have been conducting mass arrest operations for several days, particularly in northern Gaza, arresting Palestinians from their homes or UNRWA schools. Subsequently, they force them to undress, stand in lines, and sit half-naked in the streets. Enduring cruel, inhuman treatment and torture. They are then transported, stacked in trucks, to unknown locations.

In a statement from a displaced woman at Khalifa School in Beit Lahiya, she told our researchers the following:

"Israeli forces encircled us, and instructed all women and children, using loudspeakers, to gather in the school's yard. Simultaneously, they took all the men, including children as young as 14, to an unknown destination. We didn't know anything about them since they were taken. There are snipers surrounding us, and we cannot move. We endure the harsh cold without basic necessities, no food, no water, nothing to protect us, and our children from cold."

An eyewitness provided the following testimony to our researchers:

"On the morning of December 7, 2023, a large number of Israeli forces and vehicles invaded my residential area in Beit Lahiya. One of them ordered all residents of the area— men, women and children—through loudspeakers, to leave their homes, and threatened to burn homes with their inhabitants if they disobeyed. We followed the army's instructions and we all went down to the street. Subsequently, the military directed women, children, and people aged over 60 to proceed to Kamal Odwan Hospital. The remaining individuals were forced to strip down to their underwear. We were then ordered to kneel, place our hands on our heads, and hold our IDs. Following this, they took us to a nearby street where a large number of residents, like ourselves, had followed the army's orders. The area was heavily manned with soldiers and snipers positioned on houses and the ground, along with various vehicles and tanks. We spent hours seated on the ground before our hands were handcuffed with restraints and ropes. They brought three large trucks and put us inside. They were not

spacious enough, but they crammed us inside. They took us towards the sea, off the coast of Beit Lahiya, specifically near the Zikim area. They made us sit on the sand, blindfolded with cloth strips, and then they started identifying our names and checking our IDs. Soon after, we were divided into three groups: one was subjected to violent, coercive interrogation, another wasn't interrogated, and the rest were taken by a truck to an undisclosed location. I was in the group they decided to release. They took a group from us [to be released] to an unknown direction. At 1:30 after midnight, two trucks arrived, and we boarded them. They transported us to an area called Al-Shaima, where we were dropped off and instructed to make our way home barefoot through unsuitable walking routes and for a long distance."

Our teams came across an image depicting Israeli forces detaining a Palestinian woman among dozens of half-naked men in a truck, transporting them to unknown locations—a blatant violation of the woman's dignity.

According to a statement released on 10 December 2023 by the Palestinian Commission of Detainees Affairs and the Palestinian Prisoners' Club, Israeli forces are holding 142 female prisoners, including infants and elderly women, from Gaza. They are detained in Israeli prisons, particularly in Damon and Hasharon, after being arrested during the ground invasion of Gaza.

In addition, our teams received information and testimonies about detainees from Gaza, including women, who were subjected to torture and abuse for no reason other than being from Gaza.

A released detainee from the West Bank shared the following testimony with our researchers:

"At approximately 2:00 p.m., on 27 November 2023, the prison guards emptied a room in the facility. Four women, aged between their twenties to forties, were then presented—hands and legs bound, blindfolded, and their headscarves removed. These four women were connected by a rope and were brought to the courtyard of the section. They were dressed in beige prison clothing, marked with the Hebrew letter 'ע', signifying Gaza. The deputy prison director cruelly mocked them, commenting to one woman that they smelled bad. Later, I had the chance to speak to one of the detainees through the window. She told me she is from Jabaliya and was arrested as she was moving from northern Gaza to the south. I also met another woman who recounted leaving her four children because of her arrest with an unfamiliar person among the displaced. Another woman had her baby with her. These women recounted the brutal experiences of other female detainees, describing how soldiers forced them to sleep on the ground, deprived them of food and subjected them to humiliating naked searches by female soldiers."

According to the Palestinian Commission of Detainees Affairs (an official government body responsible for monitoring the issues of detainees in Israeli prisons), Israeli occupying forces are committing horrifying and heinous crimes against Gaza detainees, refusing to disclose their fate, including the number of people detained, their places of detention, and their health condition.

It is worth mentioning that the Israeli Prison Service (IPS) announced at the end of November 2023, that there were 260 detainees from Gaza classified as "unlawful combatants." In recent days, hundreds more have been arrested, and the number of people detained is yet to be revealed.

Israeli Minister of National Security, Itamar Ben-Gvir, has requested the head of the prison administration to transfer Gaza detainees to the Rikuvit section. This section is located under the Nitzan Ramla prison, known as the worst and oldest prison. This move is considered a continuation of Israel's policy of solitary confinement against detainees.

In the aftermath of the armed attack on October 7, 2023, Israeli occupying forces, as part of their widespread retaliatory operations, arrested thousands of Palestinian workers from Gaza from their workplaces inside Israel and in the West Bank, despite holding valid work permits. They were held in extremely poor conditions, resulting in the death of two detainees while in custody. When human rights organizations sought information regarding their places of detention and conditions, Israeli authorities did not respond to these requests. Subsequently, a petition was filed to the Israeli Supreme Court, numbered (23/7637), demanding the Israeli army, police, and IPS disclose the location of the detainees. At one stage, the response was that the authority responsible for providing such information is the General Security Headquarters.

Following instances of abuse and ill-treatment of thousands of Palestinian workers who were previously unlawfully detained, then later some were released and returned to Gaza, while others remained in detention, the policy of enforced disappearance and harsh treatment of detainees from Gaza, including civilians detained from their homes and shelters, continues to prevail. Until now, no lawyer has been able to ascertain the identities of the detainees or inquire about the conditions of their detention. Concerns and evidence strongly suggest that they may be subjected to systematic torture.

In light of all this, our organizations strongly condemn the acts of torture against Palestinian detainees, including their humiliation through forced nudity and the dissemination of their images while in degrading positions and conditions. Israel's attempts to portray them as militants poses a threat to their lives, and rights. These Palestinians were subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

Our organizations hold Israel fully responsible for the lives of the detainees. We call for an end to the enforced disappearance of the detainees, the disclosure of their names and places of detention, clarification of charges, if any, and the facilitation of legal teams' access to meet with them. We further call for an immediate cessation of all retaliatory torture and abuse against them.

Furthermore, we call on the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to investigate cases of arbitrary deprivation of liberty against hundreds of Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons and to compel Israel to adhere to relevant international standards as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or other applicable international legal instruments.

Finally, we call on the relevant international organizations and the international community to intervene promptly to protect Palestinian civilians and exert pressure on the Israeli authorities to release all arbitrarily detained Palestinians. Additionally, we call on the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to take serious steps by conducting investigations, issuing arrest warrants, and considering the above-mentioned crimes, as they fall within the jurisdiction of the court.