

Israel Intends Force-Feeding Palestinian Hunger Strikers

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On Sunday, Israel's cabinet approved force-feeding Palestinian hunger strikers in blatant violation of medical ethics. The practice needs three Knesset readings to become law - virtually rubber-stamp given hardline racists in charge.

Force-feeding is torture by other means. It causes extreme pain and suffering. Victims are restrained for treatment to keep them from purging.

Tubes are forced painfully through their noses and throats to their stomachs. It's done abrasively. It draws blood.

Liquid nutrients are pumped into their stomachs. No sedatives or anesthesia are given. The procedure is repeated twice daily. If vomiting occurs, the procedure is repeated.

Tubes are generally reused. They're covered in blood and stomach bile. At US torture prisons they're passed from one inmate to another. Israel likely intends the same procedure.

The World Medical Association (WMA) is the preeminent international group in the field of medical ethics and practice.

It condemns force-feeding, saying it violates fundamental medical ethics. When accompanied by "threats, coercion, force, and use of physical restraints, (it's) considered inhuman and degrading treatment."

Israel is a rogue terror state. Thousands of Palestinian political prisoners languish in its gulag - one of the world's worst.

Inmates are brutally treated. At times, they hunger strike for justice. Hardline Internal Security Minister Gilad Erdan outrageously said "(a)longside attempts to boycott and delegitimize Israel, hunger strikes of terrorists in prisons have become a means to threaten Israel."

Force-feeding was initially approved in one June 2014 Knesset reading when 80 Palestinian hunger strikers were hospitalized.

Israeli Medical Association (IMA) chairman Leonid Eidelman denounced the practice. Force-feeding prisoners against their will is "unethical," he said.

In a letter to Erdan and Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked, he explained the IMA would “order doctors to act solely according to the rules of ethics, and not feed or nourish hunger strikers against their will.”

Physicians for Human Rights said Israel

“again proposed a disgraceful law that was condemned from the medical community in Israel and the world, and which will legalize torture and gross violations of medical ethics and international conventions.”

“Instead of force-feeding prisoners who are humiliated and whose lives are in danger, Israel should deal with the demands of the hunger strikers – through the ending of administrative detentions.”

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) issued a statement saying medical ethics prohibit force-feeding.

“Any decision on medical procedure, including feeding or nourishing a person, should be made by an independent medical team and in according to the legal rights of the patient. Hunger strikes for prisoners are a legitimate means of objection” to abusive treatment, it explained.

Earlier Guantanamo hunger striker Samir Naji al Hasan Moqbel described “how painful it is to be force-fed.” A tube forced down his throat “made me feel like throwing up.”

“I wanted to vomit, but I couldn’t. There was agony in my chest, throat and stomach. I never experienced such pain before.”

Medical experts say the practice risks major infections, pneumonia, collapsed lungs, heart failure, PTSD and other psychological trauma.

It blatantly violates Geneva’s Common Article 3 and other human rights laws prohibiting cruel, humiliating and degrading treatment.

It has no place in civil societies under any circumstances. It bears repeating. It’s torture by other means.

It compounds the brutality of oppressive imprisonments. It’s standard US practice – apparently now in Israel after Knesset hardliners approve it.

It’s more proof about two rogue states’ contempt for fundamental human rights.

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