

Medical Neglect in Israel's Gulag. Conditions for Palestinians in Israeli Prisons

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Conditions for Palestinians in Israeli prisons are horrific by any standard. Some of the worst anywhere.

Including children treated like adults. Brutalizing longterm isolation for any reason or none at all.

Severe overcrowding. Poor ventilation and sanitation. Inadequate clothing.

Wooden planks with thin filthy mattresses and blankets. Inadequate food in terms of quality, quantity and conformance with dietary requirements.

Restricted or no access to family members, friends or counsel. Poor or denied medical care when most needed.

UN Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners require they “be treated with the respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings.”

“There shall be no discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

“(A)ll prisoners shall be discharged in keeping with a State’s other social objectives and its fundamental responsibilities for promoting the well-being and development of all members of society.”

International human rights law prohibits cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Affirming the right to health.

Requiring all members of society receive proper treatment to the extent feasible. Incarceration is no excuse for denial.

Article 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) requires treating “(a)ll persons deprived of their liberty (with) humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.”

Geneva’s Common Article 3 requires “humane treatment for all persons in enemy hands, specifically prohibit(ing) murder, mutilation, torture, cruel, humiliating and degrading treatment (and) unfair trial(s).”

Fourth Geneva's Article 56 states:

"To the fullest extent of the means available to it, the Occupying Power has the duty of ensuring and maintaining, with the cooperation of national and local authorities, the medical and hospital establishments and services, public health and hygiene in the occupied territory, with particular reference to the adoption and application of the prophylactic and preventive measures necessary to combat the spread of contagious diseases and epidemics."

"Medical personnel of all categories shall be allowed to carry out their duties."

Article 91 requires "(e)very place of internment...have an adequate infirmary, under the direction of a qualified doctor, where internees may have the attention they require, as well as an appropriate diet. Isolation wards shall be set aside for cases of contagious or mental diseases."

Article 92 states "(m)edical inspections of internees shall be made at least once a month."

"Their purpose shall be, in particular, to supervise the general state of health, nutrition and cleanliness of internees, and to detect contagious diseases, especially tuberculosis, malaria, and venereal diseases."

"Such inspections shall include, in particular, the checking of weight of each internee and, at least once a year, radioscopic examination."

Palestinians are willfully denied proper treatment. On January 31, the [International Middle East Media Center](#) said:

"Sick Palestinian detainees held in Israeli jails continue to suffer from the prison administration's systematic policy of medical negligence..."

"(F)urther worsening already precarious health conditions," according to "the detainees and ex-detainees affairs committee..."

Most Palestinian prisoners are incarcerated for political reasons. For wanting fundamental rights everyone deserves.

Imprisonment in insect and rat infested cells is standard Israeli practice. So is extreme cold in winter and lack of heating.

Wastewater leaks into cells. Making horrific conditions worse. Committee attorney Mo'taz Shqirat highlighted three cases among many others.

Examples of untreated deteriorating health. Because prison authorities deny it.

Mohannad al-Arqan was sentenced to life imprisonment. Suffering from "extremely difficult health conditions."

After being diagnosed with live cancer almost 13 years ago. Prison authorities denied him essential surgery needed to remove his early stage tumor.

His condition worsened over time. Especially in recent months. He reported getting no relief.

No painkillers. Deliberate medical negligence amounting to cruel and unreasonable punishment.

He's slowly dying in pain. Imagine his life ending this way when proper care could save him.

Khaled al-Qadi was sentenced to 14 and a half years in prison. Reports indicate he urgently needs medical treatment.

His immune system is gravely impaired. He's unable to move. He's diagnosed with Hepatitis B. Transmitted through improper prison dental clinic treatment in March 2014.

Uncared for ever since. Doctors refuse to help. Hepatitis B is sometimes fatal if not treated.

Ali Hassan was imprisoned for life plus seven years. He suffers from various health problems. Including respiratory and spinal ones.

Prison authorities denied him treatment. He suffers from back pain. It's worsening. He needs crutches to walk.

Minister of Prisoners Affairs Issa Qaraqe reports about 1,500 ill Palestinian prisoners denied vitally needed medical care.

Around 80 are in serious condition. Suffering from cancer, other major diseases, paralysis, disabilities, neurological disorders and mental illness.

According to the Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association:

"Israeli authorities responsible for prisoners regularly neglect their duties to provide medical support for Palestinian prisoners in their care, as required by the Geneva Conventions."

"Medical problems are widespread, and range in severity from chest infections and diarrhea to heart problems and kidney failure."

"Treatment is often inadequate and is delivered after substantial delays. Often medication is limited to over-the-counter pain killers."

"Although all prisons include a medical clinic, physicians are on duty irregularly and specialized medical healthcare is generally unavailable."

"Prisoners are not treated outside the assigned clinic hours and typically must wait for long periods of time before being examined."

"Once they are examined, however, most prisoners are simply prescribed painkillers without any thorough medical follow-up."

"Transfers to hospitals for needed treatment may take place only after weeks or months" if at all.

"Detention conditions have a huge impact on the health of prisoners and detainees."

"...released detainees are often faced with chronic health problems such as skin diseases, extreme fatigue, anemia and weakness, kidney problems,

rheumatism, problems with their teeth and ulcers.”

Since 1967, dozens of Palestinian prisoners died from medical neglect. Many painfully over a prolonged period. A crime against humanity by any standard.

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