



[Rights Groups Outline the Alarming Number of Palestinians Held by Israel Without Trial or Charge](#)

Rights groups have recently outlined the troubling number of Palestinian detainees being held by Israeli authorities without charge or trial – the highest such figure since 2008. Nearly 800 Palestinians are currently imprisoned via Israel’s widely criticized policy of so-called “administrative detention,” with the number having risen steadily this year as a result of arrest raids in the illegally-occupied West Bank. Under the method, which is used to target Palestinians, detainees are arrested based on secret supposed evidence and can be held indefinitely, as they are not aware of the accusations against them and are denied the ability to defend themselves in court. Social justice activists point out the abusive nature of the system which blocks individuals from the right to due process. Experts estimate that there are more than 4,400 Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails, and several of those in administrative detention have gone on hunger strikes in protest against their unlawful imprisonment. These prolonged strikes have left many with serious health issues and without access to independent lawyers.

The millions of Palestinians residing in the illegally Israeli-occupied West Bank are subjected to Israel’s military justice system, while unlawful settlers on the land are rarely dealt with and are done so via civilian courts. Israeli courts also subject Palestinians to severe prison policies such as medical neglect and isolation as punishment. Israel claims this procedure allows authorities to hold suspects while they continue to gather evidence, however the international community condemns this behavior as they hold prisoners for years with no trial or charge to stand on. Jessica Montrell, the director of HaMoked, an Israeli human rights organization, has stated that nothing justifies the detainment of hundreds of people for months and years without charge. In addition to HaMoked, Amnesty International has collected evidence over many years indicating that administrative detention is used regularly by the Israeli authorities as a form of political imprisonment, enabling them to arbitrarily detain prisoners, including prisoners of conscience. This kind of imprisonment can last indefinitely without having to disclose any supposed evidence against the victims, offering authorities an excuse for engaging in this type of egregious and repressive behavior.

Some Palestinians are served with the administrative detention order directly upon their arrest, while others are interrogated after arrest, tortured, or were subjected to other ill-treatments during their interrogations. The majority of administrative detainees are held in one of three prisons: Ofer in the illegally-occupied West Bank near Ramallah; Ketziot/Ansar 3 in the Negev Desert; and Megiddo in northern Israel near Haifa. All three facilities were previously controlled by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), but are now managed by the Israel Prison Service. Families of the detainees are unable to visit unless they are granted a special permit from Israel. If provided this permit, which is done so on rare occasions, members of the detainee’s families are made to visit their relative on unspecified security grounds.

A few administrative detainees have been released if they agree to leave and go into exile abroad. Ultimately, administrative detention and other forms of continuing discrimination against Palestinians are destructive and only serve to further exacerbate ongoing injustices and potentially inflame tensions.