

'Palestine Hunger Strikers Moved to Jails With Field Hospitals'

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – A prisoners' rights group says all hunger-striking Palestinian inmates in the Zionist regime's jails have been transferred to three detention facilities with field hospitals as the protesters' health conditions are deteriorating.

In a statement, Head of Palestinian Committee of Prisoners' Affairs Issa Qaraq said an estimated 1,300 hunger strikers had been transferred from across dozens of the Zionist regime's prisons and concentrated into the Beersheba, Shatta and Ramla prisons "due to their proximity to Israeli hospitals."

The Palestinian activist added that all the three facilities are equipped with in-prison field hospitals set up since the beginning of the strike.

"This step indicates the seriousness of the health conditions of the hunger strikers," Qaraq noted.

In an interview with the Palestinian Ma'an news agency, a spokesperson for the Israeli Prison Service (IPS), however, dismissed the report, saying that only strikers from Ketziot and Nafha prisons had been transferred to Beersheba prison "in order to be closer to central Israel, in the case that they need to be treated at a hospital."

The mass protest action, dubbed



The file photo shows an ambulance leaving the occupying regime's Sharon Prison near Raanana

the "Freedom and Dignity" strike, began on April 17 in response to a call by Marwan Barghouti, a popular Palestinian leader. The protesters are angry at inhumane conditions in Israeli prisons.

The strikers are demanding basic rights, such as an end to the policies of administrative detention, solitary confinement and deliberate medical negligence. The much criticized administrative detention is a policy under which Palestinian inmates are kept in Israeli detention facilities without trial or charge.

After a month of taking nothing but salt water, many strikers are growing increasingly weak. Reports say they are considering also refusing water since their demands have not been met.

A recent Palestinian media statement warned that striking detainees have "entered a critical health condition," marked by chronic vomiting, vision impairment, fainting and an average weight loss of 20 kilograms.

The prisoners have also been denied family visits, and face continuous arbitrary prison transfers in an

IPS attempt to break up the strike, according to the statement.

Young Palestinian Killed

A Zionist settler has killed a young Palestinian man and injured a journalist in the northern part of the occupied West Bank during a march in solidarity with hundreds of Palestinian hunger-striking inmates in Israeli jails.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health confirmed that 23-year-old Mutaz Hussien Hilal Bani Shamsa succumbed to his wounds shortly after the unidentified settler stepped out of his car and opened live fire on him near the town of Huwwarah, located 9 kilometers south of Nablus, on Thursday afternoon.

Palestinian journalist, Majdi Eshtayya, was also injured during the shooting and was transferred to Rafidia Hospital, where doctors described his gunshot wounds as moderate.

Witnesses, requesting anonymity, said Zionist troops were quickly deployed in the area, which resulted in skirmishes between locals and Zionist troops. There were no immediate reports of casualties or detentions.

The regime's authorities later sealed off Huwwarah, preventing cars from entering or getting out of the town.

Qatar's Migrant Sponsorship System 'Repressive'

DOHA (Dispatches) – Migrant laborers working on stadiums for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar are still subject to abuse and exploitation, Amnesty International says.

"It's a year since Amnesty International exposed the exploitation of migrant workers who helped to build the Khalifa International Stadium, but abuses on Qatar 2022 sites have continued," James Lynch, Amnesty's deputy director of Global Issues Programme, said in a Thursday statement.

"Qatar's World Cup organizers have placed special requirements on contractors that are supposed to stop this happening, but the reality is that workers on their sites still live under Qatar's repressive sponsorship system, which gives employers powerful tools to abuse them," Lynch added.

Doha introduced the Wage Protection System in November 2015 to ensure that wages were paid electronically. Under the new system, employers that do not comply with the law face fines or imprisonment. In addition, a law making it easier for the migrant workers to change jobs and leave the country came into effect in December last year.

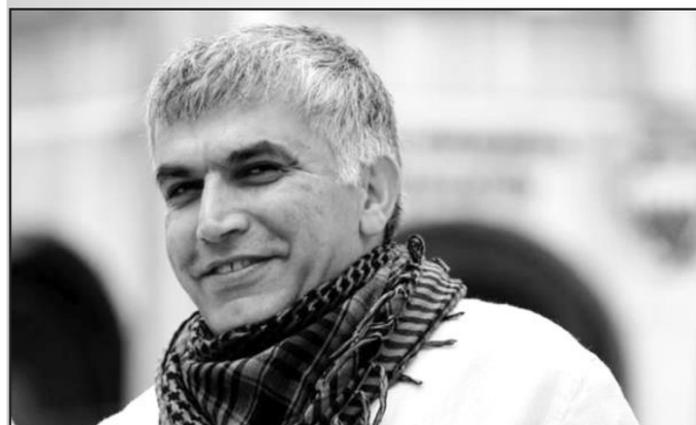
However, activists and trade unions said earlier this year that the Persian Gulf state violated the new labor reform by refusing to allow scores of the foreign workers to return home. Moreover, thousands of the migrant workers remain unpaid months after being recruited.

"With hundreds of thousands more people being recruited to build and service at least seven more World Cup stadiums, along with the infrastructure to support the tournament, many more migrant workers are at serious risk over the next five years," the Amnesty International official stated.

The 80,000-seat Lusail stadium, which is among at least eight venues for the 2022 World Cup, is due to host its first match -- the country's Emir Cup final between Al Sadd and Al Rayyan -- on Friday.

Since becoming the World Cup 2022 host in 2010, Qatar has spent billions of dollars in city renovations such as a new airport, seaport and an underground train system. Hundreds of thousands of migrant workers have been recruited for the task and reportedly account for around 90 percent of the country's 2.2 million population.

U.S. Slammed for Selling Arms to Bahrain, Saudi Arabia



Bahraini human rights activist Nabeel Rajab arrives for his appeal hearing at a court in the capital Manama, February 11, 2015.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – Prominent Bahraini human rights activist Nabeel Rajab has slammed the U.S. government for arms sales to the Manama regime and Saudi Arabia.

The jailed activist made the remarks in an op-ed article published in The New York Times ahead of a scheduled visit by U.S. President Donald Trump to Ri-

yadh for a regional summit.

The Trump "administration already decided to lift all human rights restrictions on arms sales to my country, Bahrain, which is a partner in the Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen," he said.

Saudi Arabia has been incessantly pounding Yemen since March 2015 in an attempt to reinstate Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, a staunch

ally of Riyadh, and to undermine the Houthis Ansarullah movement. The Riyadh regime has, however, failed to reach its goals despite suffering great expense.

The military aggression has claimed the lives of more than 12,000 people, mostly civilians.

"It fills me with shame that my country, Bahrain, is bombing Yemen, with United States support. And while the Saudi-led coalition continues its air assault on Yemen, Bahrain is also trying to crush civil society back home," he added.

Earlier this month, a senior official in the Trump administration announced that the U.S. was close to completing an over \$100 billion dollar arms sale with the kingdom.

"Does the Trump administration know that former Bahraini soldiers have left the country to join Daesh? Does Washington know that Bahrain allows no Shia citizens in its military even though Shias are a majority of the population? Does the White House know that the Bahraini army is a sectar-

ian force that publishes books endorsing the murder of Shias who do not "repent?" he added.

Rajab is being held in detention, pending trial on alleged charges of insulting the Bahraini ruling dynasty. He has been arrested multiple times in recent years over anti-regime protests in Bahrain. The activist was pardoned for health reasons in 2015 before being rearrested in June 2016. He is currently on trial for tweets and statements deemed insulting to the Manama and Riyadh regimes.

Anti-regime protesters have taken to the streets of Bahrain on an almost daily basis ever since the popular uprising began in the tiny Persian Gulf country in February 2011.

The demonstrators are demanding that the Al Khalifah dynasty relinquish power and let a just system representing all Bahrainis be established.

Scores of people have been killed and hundreds of others wounded or detained amid Manama's crackdown on dissent and widespread discrimination against Bahrain's Shia majority.

Iranians...

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jobs and more welfare benefits for the poor.

Based on Iran's election law, if no candidate manages to secure over 50% of the votes, a runoff will take place a week later.

Before the elections, Ayatollah Khamenei had called on Iranians to turn out en masse, saying the nation and Islamic establishment were the true winners of the vote no matter which candidate emerged victorious.

U.S. ...

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to its list of sanctions for their "confirmed role in blatant human rights violations."

The banned U.S. firms and individuals have directly and indirectly cooperated with Israel in its "crimes against humanity in the occupied Palestinian territories" or in the occupying regime's "terrorist acts," according to the statement.

They have also supported Takfiri terrorism and crackdown on the popular movements in the Middle East or have had effective participation in actions against Iran's national security, it added.

The statement further said an updated version of the blacklist would be released after going through legal proceedings and being approved by relevant officials.

Reaction to the new U.S. sanctions, Defense Minister Hussein Dehqan said Iran will spare no effort in meeting its national security needs, and will not allow any party to intervene in the imperative.

Dehqan said this was not the first time that Washington displays its enmity towards Iran's Islamic Revolution, Islamic establishment and capabilities.

The sanctions were the second of their kind since U.S. President Donald Trump came to power in January.

Dehqan said Iran's missile activities are obvious. "We do what we consider to be in our best interest."

China also lodged a complaint with the United States. Chinese

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said Beijing followed local rules and regulations and closely adhered to its responsibilities to the international community.

Beijing "is opposed to the blind use of unilateral sanctions particularly when it damages the interests of third parties. I think the sanctions are unhelpful in enhancing mutual trust and unhelpful for international efforts on this issue," she said.

Cholera...

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Sufferers were overwhelming Yemen's remaining hospitals, but it would be better to treat them in specialized centers, 50 of which are already operating, along with 300 oral rehydration points. But such numbers were too few, and the WHO will release an emergency response plan in the next 48 hours, Zagaria said.

"We have a target of 350 cholera treatment centers and 2,000 oral rehydration points, and we are covering around 10-12% of this target at the moment."

But the epidemic could not be addressed without ensuring that healthworkers were paid, he said, after seven months of no public sector salary payments because of a central bank crisis.

Ayatollah...

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decided to quit his post a while ago as he felt responsible to defend incumbent President Hassan Rouhani and his administration, on the one hand, and the need to keep the Leader's position clear of common political groupings, on the other hand.

Iran simultaneously held its 12th presidential election and the 5th City and Village Councils Elections on May 19.

The four candidates vying in the race were the incumbent president, former deputy judiciary chief, Seyyed Ebrahim Raesi, member of Iran's Expediency Council Mostafa Aqa-Mirsalim, and former vice president, Mostafa Hashemi-Taba.

Turkey:

German Troops Welcome to Leave Incirlik

ANKARA (Dispatches) – Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has hit back at German threats to pull its troops out of a key NATO base on its soil near Syria.

Cavusoglu said that Germany was welcome to withdraw its troops from Incirlik air base in southern Turkey if it desired.

"If they want to leave, let's just say goodbye," he told Turkey's broadcaster NTV, adding, "That's up to them and we won't beg."

Cavusoglu also aired a previous grievance over Germany's decision to prevent him and other Turkish ministers from holding rallies on German soil before Turkey's April 16 referendum on expanding presidential powers.

"If what we are doing is blackmail, then what was that?" he said.

He was responding to comments from German politicians, who have raised the prospect of withdrawing troops from the base in southern Turkey.

Turkey have prevented German lawmakers from visiting the country's soldiers at the base in response to Berlin's decision to grant asylum to Turkish soldiers accused of participating in last year's failed coup.

Germany has about 250 military personnel stationed there, flying Tornado surveillance missions over Syria and refueling flights for partner nations allegedly battling Daesh militants.

Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel in an interview with German newspaper

Neue Osnabrucker Zeitung accused Ankara on Wednesday of "looking to blackmail" the German parliament.

"If it is not possible to work normally at Incirlik - and this includes visits by German parliament lawmakers - then we will have to look for alternatives," Gabriel said.

"I can only hope that the Turkish government will change its mind in the coming days. Otherwise, the parliament will no longer let our soldiers go to Turkey," he added.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel earlier denounced Turkey's position as "unfortunate" and said Berlin would search for alternative bases, including in Jordan.

Since Germany's military missions always require parliamentary mandates, "it is absolutely essential that our lawmakers are able to visit our soldiers," Merkel said.

Over the past year, ties between the two NATO allies have been strained due to a number of issues, including Germany's move to grant asylum to alleged coup supporters.

Their ties further strained during the recent Turkish referendum aimed at boosting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's powers and after Turkey jailed Deniz Yucel, a journalist for Die Welt daily, on charges of being a German "agent."