



Ministry of Women's Affairs

The Situation of Palestinian Women and Men Prisoners

On Palestinian Prisoners' Day
17 April 2026

Issued by the Ministry of Women's Affairs

The Ministry of Women's Affairs affirms that the issue of Palestinian prisoners is central to the national context and struggle. It clearly reflects the scale of the grave violations inflicted on the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation, underscoring the systematic nature of a colonial system of control based on repression and subjugation. The Ministry stresses that this issue is no longer confined to its human rights dimension; it has become an essential entry point for understanding the interplay between political, legal, social and economic dimensions amid the continued absence of international accountability and the erosion of protection mechanisms.

The Ministry pays tribute to the steadfastness of Palestinian women prisoners in the occupation's prisons as an exemplary expression of the national struggle. Women prisoners embody resilience in the face of systematic policies targeting their dignity and fundamental rights and seeking to break their will through repression and abuse. This reflects their role as active partners in the pursuit of liberation and nation-building, culminating in the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

The Situation of Men and Women Prisoners amid Escalating Arrest Policies

Current data indicate an unprecedented escalation in arrest policies, particularly since October 2023, in the context of the ongoing aggression that amounts to the crime of genocide. The number of prisoners in the occupation's prisons has exceeded 9,500 men and women, including women and children, in addition to thousands of administrative detainees held without charge or trial, in flagrant violation of international standards of justice. This reality reflects the expansion of arrests to encompass different segments of Palestinian society, confirming their use as a central instrument within the system of colonial control.

Men and women prisoners are held in harsh conditions marked by overcrowding, deteriorating health conditions and deprivation of fundamental rights, including deliberate medical neglect. Palestinian women prisoners face compounded suffering because their basic gender-specific needs are unmet and they are subjected to violations of their physical and psychological dignity. The continuing crime of enforced disappearance against women prisoners from the Gaza Strip constitutes a further, compounded violation that deprives them of any legal protection and prevents access to them or verification of their conditions.

Palestinian Women Prisoners: Systematic Gender-Based Violence

The Ministry of Women's Affairs affirms that the treatment of Palestinian women prisoners constitutes a systematic pattern of gender-based violence amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity, given the multiple, direct and intersecting forms of abuse targeting them. These violations begin at the moment of arrest, when raids are carried out in degrading circumstances, often in front of family members, including children. Such scenes are intended to humiliate and intimidate and are used as a means of exerting collective psychological pressure.

These violations do not end at the moment of arrest; they continue inside interrogation centres and prisons, where women prisoners are subjected to physical and psychological torture, deliberate medical neglect and deprivation of basic necessities, including personal hygiene supplies, alongside degrading practices that violate their human dignity. In this context, the Ministry affirms that sexual violence and threats of such violence are used systematically within this system. Documented testimonies indicate that women prisoners have experienced forms of harassment, degrading searches and threats of assault, sexual violence and rape, in flagrant violation of their dignity, with women's bodies used as a site for reproducing domination and control.

The Ministry considers the escalation of these violations following the latest aggression to reflect a dangerous trend towards intensifying the use of gender-based violence as a tool for subjugating Palestinian women. This requires urgent international action to hold those responsible accountable.

The Social and Economic Impact of Detention on Women

The Ministry of Women's Affairs notes that the effects of detention extend beyond women prisoners themselves to women within Palestinian families. Women bear compounded burdens as a result of the absence of a family member, whether a husband, son or breadwinner. This reality reshapes roles within the family and increases psychological and social pressures in a complex economic environment characterised by high poverty and unemployment rates and restricted access to resources and employment opportunities.

In this regard, the Ministry affirms that these repercussions intersect with its efforts to strengthen an inclusive Palestinian economy and economically empower women as one of the pathways to community resilience in the face of the effects of occupation.

Child Prisoners: Systematic Violations of Children's Rights and Their Impact on Women

The Ministry affirms that the detention of children represents one of the gravest forms of violation. Hundreds of children are held in conditions that directly contravene the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly those concerning the prohibition of torture and guarantees of a fair trial. This also leaves profound psychological effects that persist for many years. These effects extend beyond the children themselves to mothers, who experience heightened psychological and social pressures, reflecting the compounded gendered impact of these policies.

A Dangerous Escalation: Attempts to Legalise Extrajudicial Killing

The Ministry of Women's Affairs warns against moves to adopt the so-called "Prisoner Execution Law", viewing it as a dangerous escalation in the occupation's policies and an attempt to give legal sanction to extrajudicial killing. This constitutes a grave violation of the right to life, undermines fundamental fair-trial guarantees and reinforces a climate of impunity.

The International Legal Framework and the Responsibility for Accountability

The Ministry affirms that the violations committed against men and women prisoners constitute grave breaches of the international legal framework, including the Geneva Conventions, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It considers the systematic nature and widespread scope of these violations to elevate them to the level of international crimes requiring accountability. This necessitates activating international justice mechanisms and strengthening the role of the United Nations.

The Role of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the National Response

The Ministry of Women's Affairs affirms that the issue of women prisoners is a national policy priority. It has been incorporated into the third-generation Women, Peace and Security Plan (2026-2028), strengthening pathways for protection and accountability. The Ministry has also worked to develop the National Observatory on Gender-Based Violence by dedicating a section to monitoring violence perpetrated by the occupation, thereby contributing to the documentation and analysis of violations and linking them to legal accountability.

In coordination with national and international partners, the Ministry continues to develop a comprehensive response to this issue, linking protection, empowerment and influence on public policy.

A Call for Urgent International Action

The Ministry of Women's Affairs affirms that the continuing violations against men and women prisoners pose a direct threat to the international legal and human rights framework and undermine international efforts to achieve justice.

The Ministry calls on the international community to fulfil its legal and moral responsibilities and take urgent, effective steps to ensure an end to these violations, provide international protection, hold those responsible accountable and end impunity.

The Ministry also renews its commitment to continuing its work at all levels, nationally and internationally, to advocate for Palestinian women prisoners and empower them economically, socially and legally, as an integral part of the Palestinian national struggle and the pursuit of justice, freedom and independence.