



## **Targeting the ICRC Entrenches & Grants Additional Immunity to Occupation Crimes Against Palestinian Political Prisoners**

Palestinian Commission of Detainees' Affairs and the Palestinian Prisoner's Society

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Ramallah, occupied Palestine – The Palestinian Commission of Detainees' Affairs and the Palestinian Prisoner's Society (PPS) stated that the approval by the so-called National Security Committee in the Knesset of a bill that would prohibit representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) from entering Israeli occupation prisons and visiting Palestinian political prisoners constitutes a new link in a chain of legislation and policies entrenched by the occupation system through the Knesset and its various institutions. These measures are aimed at legalizing and shielding serious violations against the Palestinian people within the broader context of the ongoing genocide, of which Israeli occupation prisons are considered one of the most prominent arenas.



The two institutions stressed that the introduction of this bill clearly demonstrates the occupation system's determination to transform the exceptional prison measures imposed after the start of the genocide into permanent and systematic policies and legislation. This is intended to consolidate the system of repression and torture upon which Israeli occupation prisons are built. They added that the move also reflects an effort to circumvent rulings issued by the Supreme Court, including a decision regarding ICRC prison visits, which deemed the continued denial of such visits unlawful.

The organizations further stated that recent developments confirm that the occupation's judicial decisions have little practical effect as long as a legislative system continues to rapidly institutionalize punitive and genocidal policies against Palestinians. This reveals the nature of the relationship between the legislative and judicial institutions of the occupation state, whereby certain judicial rulings are used to improve the image of the legal system before the international community while legislation is simultaneously enacted to entrench violations and provide them with legal cover.

The Commission and the PPS noted that this trend is not new. For many years, occupation authorities have worked to undermine the role of the ICRC and limit its ability to carry out its humanitarian and monitoring functions under various security pretexts. The role of the ICRC gradually diminished until it was largely confined to organizing family visits for prisoners. With the onset of the genocide, authorities escalated their measures by completely barring the ICRC from entering prisons, halting family visits, imposing an unprecedented isolation regime on prisoners and detainees, and placing severe restrictions on the work of legal teams.

The two institutions emphasized that these measures have coincided with an unprecedented escalation in torture, mistreatment, starvation, and systematic humiliation, as well as threats and assaults against prisoners when they are taken to meet lawyers. These practices are part of an integrated system of organized violence that has become one of the defining features of the current period inside Israeli occupation prisons.

They stressed that enabling international bodies—foremost among them the ICRC—to access prisons and detention centers is especially important at this stage, which is the bloodiest in modern Palestinian history. Continued efforts to undermine and target the role of these international institutions, they said, constitute a direct attack on international humanitarian law and on the monitoring and protection mechanisms established after decades of humanitarian struggle and sacrifice by peoples around the world in pursuit of justice, accountability, and the rule of law.

The two organizations called on the international community and the global human rights system to take urgent and concrete steps to protect the role of international monitoring institutions and to confront attempts by the occupation to impose a logic of force and impunity at the expense of international law and its binding provisions. They warned that the continued absence of effective international accountability encourages occupation authorities to deepen the crime of genocide and to escalate torture and systematic violations against Palestinian prisoners and detainees.

They also reiterated that the crimes committed by the occupation do not affect only the Palestinian people but also extend to human rights defenders and supporters of the



Palestinian cause around the world. This, they argued, reflects the expanding scope of targeting and violations imposed by occupation policies and underscores that undermining international law and international protection mechanisms poses a threat to the global human rights system as a whole.

The number of Palestinian political prisoners and detainees held in Israeli occupation prisons has reached approximately 9,500 people, including 3,324 administrative detainees, around 95 female prisoners, nearly 360 children, and 1,316 detainees classified by Israeli occupation authorities as "unlawful combatants." This comes amid ongoing large-scale arrest campaigns and escalating crimes associated with the continuing genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.