



Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK

المنظمة العربية لحقوق الإنسان في بريطانيا

In the Service of Israeli Occupation

Palestinian Authority Security Forces

Arbitrary Arrests and Torture



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About AOHR-UK

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK is an independent human rights organisation based in London.

It campaigns for human rights and freedom in the Middle East and North Africa.

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Executive Summary

Arab Organization for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK) conducted field research in the Occupied Palestinian Territories between January and December 2015 so as to document human rights violations committed by the Palestinian Authority security apparatuses. The research revealed that more than 1392 Palestinians were arrested for political reasons in various parts of the West Bank, 22 of whom were charged with carrying out anti-Israeli activities. Another 323 were summoned for questioning before being released on the same day, Some of those arrested were summoned several times throughout the year. A recorded 273 were summoned and detained in June alone.

Detainees included 25 women, 27 children, 68 journalists, 41 teachers and 422 university and school students. The largest number of detainees, approximately 969, comprised Palestinians who had been previously freed from Israeli jails.

The geographic distribution of arrests and summons was as follows:

- 462 from Hebron;
- 246 from Nablus;
- 208 from Ramallah and Al-Bireh;
- 173 from Tulkarm;
- 153 from Bethlehem;
- 151 from Qalqilya;
- 125 from Jenin;
- 72 from Salfit;
- 70 from Tubas;

- 32 from Jerusalem; and
- 23 from Jericho.

Torture is now being used with abandon as an acceptable tactic in PA prisons. AOHR UK documented 37 instances of individuals being subjected to torture whilst under arrest, including physical assaults with batons and ropes, being hung from windows and doors, being held in stress positions for hours, and near-death strangulations. A number of detainees were held in solitary confinement for several months, prompting a number of them to go on open-ended hunger strikes to protest against the inhumane treatment and torture, and demand their immediate release.

All PA security apparatuses participated in these arrests, summons, and acts of torture.

AOHR has evidence to suggest that:

- The Preventive Security Force were involved in 949 incidents involving human rights violations;
- The General Intelligence Services with 740 cases;
- The National Security Services with 17 cases;
- The Military Intelligence Services with 6 cases; and
- The Special Forces and Presidential Guard with 3 cases each.

The Security forces also seized personal belongings and property belonging to 76 Palestinians during the course of the arrests including ID cards, mobile phones, computers, cars, sums of money and various documents.

On fourteen occasions, the PA security forces used live bullets to intimidate Palestinians, injuring a 12-year old child on one occasion. At least 43 Palestinians were brutally beaten, and one was hit by a car during the course of his arrest. Security forces also held four Palestinians in custody so as to force members of their family who

were sought by the security services, to hand themselves in. A man and a woman were also banned from travelling outside the West Bank.

The PA security forces often refused to comply with court orders for the release of detainees. At least 26 Palestinians remained in custody even after the court ordered their release. Another 11 Palestinians were held under “administrative detention” by the governor of their respective towns.

Only court decisions extending detainees’ remand in custody are usually routinely implemented, as was the case with verdicts sentencing four Palestinians to prison for periods ranging between 3 to 10 years. One of those Palestinians was sentenced in absentia since he is currently detained in Israel where it is expected he will be sentenced to life imprisonment.

Security forces cracked down on many peaceful protests held to oppose human rights violations by Palestinian security forces and Israeli occupation troops. At least 33 peaceful protests were disrupted and stopped in the West Bank, with officers, some dressed in plain clothes, assaulting protesters and seizing personal belongings, banners and brochures. Media outlets were often banned from covering these protests.

Introduction

The Oslo Accords of 1994 were followed by increased powers for PA security forces which promptly began to arrest anyone suspected of involvement in anti-Israeli occupation activities.

Despite Israel's failure to comply with its obligations under the Oslo Accords, PA security forces were more than willing to carry out their obligations as stipulated by the secret security-related annexes that make it incumbent upon the PA to work tirelessly to protect Israel's security.

A security council comprising Israeli, Palestinian, European and American members was established in 2005 with the logistical and training support of western donors. Trainees are carefully selected and are subject to the approval of US and Israeli security forces.

The European Union, whose police force has a permanent office in Ramallah, offered PA National Security Forces training on how to conduct interrogations, carry out arrests, and disrupt protests. Western intelligence services also offered training to their Palestinian counterparts in exchange for security information⁽¹⁾.

Arbitrary arrests and torture increased significantly following the intra-Palestinian rift of 2007. PA security forces have since arrested thousands of Palestinians. During the same period, systematic torture became rampant, resulting in the death of six Palestinians. PA authorities refused to investigate the circumstances surrounding the deaths or bring those responsible to justice as it continued to deny

1 - <http://aohr.org.uk/images/reports/siasat-e3teqal.pdf>

that torture was even practiced in its prisons.

At the end of October 2009, the PA, under pressure from the international community and local organizations, finally admitted that torture had been used, and issued a decree banning it in all its forms. The decree however was never implemented and security forces continued to torture, especially in cases involving resistance to Israeli occupation.

The establishment of the Palestinian Authority 21 years ago has effectively meant that Palestinian rights have since been abused by both PA security forces and the Israeli occupation.

Despite feeble threats by the PA to suspend security coordination with Israel in light of the latter's crimes against the Palestinian people and against holy places within the West Bank, the two sides continue to coordinate their efforts which have been largely one-sided, with the PA offering Israel intelligence without receiving anything in return. The PA have been known to compile files on activists and extract information through torture before passing on all the data to the Israeli side. The latter uses the information to arrest activists upon their release from PA prisons and put them on trial before military courts that sentence them to significant terms of imprisonment.

The security coordination with Israel, and the crimes committed by the latter have had a significant impact on the Palestinian people's ability to resist Israeli occupation. Despite Israeli crimes and its refusal to comply with its obligations under the Oslo Accords, the PA has refused to slow down its joint efforts with Israel. Instead of siding with the Palestinian people, the PA has opted to conspire against them.

This report sheds light on some of the major human rights violations committed by the Palestinian Authority in 2015, especially those related to arbitrary arrests, torture, freedom of expression, and crackdown on peaceful protests.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected and documented by field researchers who monitored events in the West Bank on daily basis. The data is organized by type and time frame. The report also includes testimonies from victims of arrests and torture, most of whom have chosen to remain anonymous for their own safety. The data contained in this report is not exhaustive and represents a fraction of the total cases of human rights abuses in Palestine.

Arrest Policies



Since the 1967 occupation of the West Bank, Israel has arrested many thousands of Palestinians in an attempt to crush all anti-occupation activities. The year 2015 was not the exception. Many Palestinians from various West Bank cities and towns, supposedly under PA control, were arrested by Israeli forces during raids approved by PA security forces.

The latter are usually informed in advance of the raids and choose to remain in their headquarters while Israel conducts late night raids on Palestinian homes to arrest whomever they want. It is estimated that Israeli occupation forces arrested 6815 Palestinians in 2015, including 1930 minors and 291 women, and that most of them were subjected to torture.

Arrests by PA Security Forces



PA security apparatuses have adopted similar policies in arrest as those of Israel, further adding to Palestinian suffering. At least 1392 Palestinians from various parts of the West Bank were arrested in 2015. Another 323 were summoned for questioning before being released on the same day. Some were summoned several times throughout the year. Arrests peaked in June 2015 when 273 were summoned and/or arrested.

Those arrested and summoned included 68 journalists, 41 teachers and 422 university and school students. The largest number of detainees, approximately 969, were former prisoners who had been previously released from Israeli jails.

By the end of 2015, PA security forces had still been holding 13 Palestinians for extended periods of time, including Khalid Al-Quqa from Nablus who has been held since 31 July 2007. Most of those men have been sentenced for periods up to 20 years.

Similar to their Israeli counterparts, most raids are usually carried out late at night by a large dispatch of security forces. Residents are terrorized, homes are inspected and many items are seized during the course of these raids. Security forces seized personal belongings and property belonging to 76 Palestinians during the course of the arrests including ID cards, mobile phones, computers, cars, sums of money and various documents. On fourteen occasions, PA security forces used live bullets to intimidate Palestinians, injuring a 12-year old child. At least 43 Palestinians were brutally beaten up and one was hit by a car during the course of his arrest. Security forces also held four Palestinians in custody to force members of their family who were wanted, to hand themselves in. A man and a woman were also banned from travelling outside the West Bank.

Nor did these arrests spare women and children. It is estimated that no less than 25 women and 27 minors were summoned and/or arrested during 2015.

The geographic distribution of arrests and summons was as follows:

- 462 from Hebron;
- 246 from Nablus;
- 208 from Ramallah and Al-Bireh;
- 173 from Tulkarm;
- 153 from Bethlehem;
- 151 from Qalqilya;
- 125 from Jenin;
- 72 from Salfit;
- 70 from Tubas;

- 32 from Jerusalem; and
- 23 from Jericho.

A table of Arrests, Summons and Other Violations

Type of Human Rights Violation	Total
Arrests	1392
Summons	323
Property seizures	76
Physical assault	37
Shooting	14
Administrative detention by the Governor	11
Refusal to comply with release orders	26
Hostage taking	4
Travel bans	2
Running over with a vehicle	1
Signing pledges under coercion	11
Hunger strikers	43
Prison sentences	4

Types of Victims

Type of Victim	Total
Palestinians previously held in Israeli prisons	969
School and University students	422
Journalists	68
Women	25
Children	27
Teacher	41

Security Apparatuses

The PA has six active security apparatuses operating within the Palestinian Territories, in accordance with Palestinian National Security Forces Law number 8 for the year 2005⁽²⁾ which merged all security divisions into three general branches: National Security under the direct authority of the president and comprises National Security, Military Intelligence, and Presidential Guard; Interior Security under the direct authority of the minister of interior and comprises Preventive Force, the Police and Public Security; and General Intelligence under the authority of PA president ⁽³⁾.

According to figures released in 2014, Palestinian security forces comprise 75,000 members out of a total of 167,000 (nearly 44.9%) of salaried government employees⁽⁴⁾, including 34,000 in Gaza who don't work for the security forces there.

This number is considered very high when taking into account the population of West Bank and Gaza Strip which was estimated to have been around 4.5 million in 2014. The Palestinian ratio of 16.6 security members per 1000 Palestinian is six times higher than the international average which is 2.6 security member per 1000⁽⁵⁾. The population of New York was 8.34 million in 2014 (double the population of the Occupied Territories) but with a security force of no more than 35,000 members, i.e. one police officer per 236⁽⁶⁾.

2 - Security forces used to be regulated by different laws prior to 2005.

3 - <http://www.plc.gov.ps>

4 - <http://www.aman-palestine.org/ar/reports-and-studies/2375.html>

5 - <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/census/popcur.shtml>

6 - <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/census/popcur.shtml>

Security expenditure has drained Palestine's budget with allocations to the security services in Palestine's 2014 budget amounting to \$1.078 billion (28%) of the total budget of \$3.860 billion. This figure equals the total budget of both the ministries of health and education. Many observers have noted that these figures do not reflect the reality on the ground and that security expenditure is in fact much higher. They also remark that divisions among Palestinians have made it difficult to estimate security expenditure since the executive branch now prepares, legislates and passes the budget with parliamentary oversight.

Security Apparatuses carrying out Arrests

Arrests and summons in 2015 were carried out by the majority of PA security apparatuses despite the divergent nature of their duties and functions. The Preventive Security Force committed the highest number of violations (949), followed by General Intelligence (740), National Security (17), Military intelligence (6), and Special Police and Presidential Guard (3). Members of the police force and National Security, which have been trained by the EU, accompany security forces on all their night raids and protest disruption exercises⁽⁷⁾.

A photo of Palestinian police being trained by EU police



7 - <http://eupolcopps.eu>

1 Preventive Security Force

The Preventive Security Force, part of the Interior branch, is commanded by the Minister of Interior. The director of the Force and his deputy are appointed by presidential decree upon the recommendations of the Minister of Interior and the



Director of Internal Security. The current director is Major General Ziad Hab Alreeh from Jenin. Most of its officers are Fatah members. The Force has more than 18 prisons and centers all over the West Bank.

2. General Intelligence Services

The General Intelligence Services are subordinate to the President and perform their functions and commence its jurisdictions pursuant to provisions of the law under the presidency and command of its Head, who also



issues the decision necessary for the management of its work and the regulation of its affairs. The Director of General Intelligence Services is appointed by a presidential decree. The current director is Major General Majid Faraj from Al-Duheisha refugee camp in Bethlehem. The Services boast 18 prisons and centers all over the West Bank.

3. Military Intelligence Services

Along with Military Police, Military Intelligence services carry out both internal and external duties. It was originally established in 1994, shortly after the birth of the Palestinian Authority. Major General Zakaria Musleh is the current director.



4. National Security Forces

Headed by Major General Nidal Abu Dukhan since 2012 (formerly the director of Military Intelligence), the National Security Services are the PA's closest thing to an army. These services are supposed to protect Palestinians' security but instead plays a major role in providing security services with logistical support during raids and protest crackdowns.



Security Forces Prisons

City	Intelligence Services	Preventive Security	Military Intelligence
Nablus	Juanid Prison and Jabal Al-Tour Centre	Juanid Prison and Jabal Al-Tour Centre	Juanid Prison Centre
Jenin	Intelligence Services headquarters	Preventive Security headquarters	Military Intelligence Headquarters
Tubas	Intelligence Services headquarters	Preventive Security headquarters	Military Intelligence Headquarters
Qalqilya	Intelligence Services headquarters	Preventive Security headquarters	Military Intelligence Headquarters
Salfit	Intelligence Services headquarters	Preventive Security headquarters	Military Intelligence Headquarters
Tulkarm	Intelligence Services headquarters	Preventive Security headquarters	Military Intelligence Headquarters
Ramallah	Al-Balou' Headquarters	Betounia	Umm Al-Sharaeit
Bethlehem	Intelligence Services headquarters	Preventive Security headquarters	Military Intelligence Headquarters

City	Intelligence Services	Preventive Security	Military Intelligence
Hebron	Two Intelligence Services Centres	Two Preventive Security Centres	Military Intelligence Headquarters
Al-Dahiryia	Intelligence Services headquarters	Preventive Security headquarters	Military Intelligence Headquarters
Tfouh	Intelligence Services headquarters	Preventive Security headquarters	Military Intelligence Headquarters
Beit Kahel	Intelligence Services headquarters	Preventive Security headquarters	Military Intelligence Headquarters
Beit Awla	Intelligence Services headquarters	Preventive Security headquarters	Military Intelligence Headquarters
Halhoul	Intelligence Services headquarters	Preventive Security headquarters	Military Intelligence Headquarters
Saeer	Intelligence Services headquarters	Preventive Security headquarters	Military Intelligence Headquarters
Jericho	Intelligence Services headquarters	Preventive Security headquarters	Military Intelligence Headquarters

Torture at PA Prisons

Despite vehement denials by PA officials that detainees have been tortured and a presidential decree ordering an immediate cessation of all acts of torture, all evidence collected throughout 2015 revealed that most detainees were subjected to inhumane treatment and that 37 were tortured, including physical assault with batons and ropes, hanging from windows and doors, being held in stress positions for hours, near-death strangulations, sleep deprivation, and verbal abuse.

Most torture victims were university students who were often held for days or months as punishment for their political activism. They were tortured to extract information about their activities, especially during elections for student union councils at universities. The arrest campaigns intensified after the Islamic Bloc won most of the seats on the Birzeit University Student Union on 22 April 2015.

Although torture occurred at most detention centers, the worst instances were recorded at prisons in Bethlehem, Nablus and Jericho. Most acts of torture were carried out after midnight to ensure they did not coincide with any sudden visits from human rights organizations or the Red Cross. During torture sessions, interrogators would brag they were not afraid of these international organizations and that they would continue to torture detainees to extract information.

Torture Methods

PA security forces employed a variety of torture methods at West Bank prisons and detention centers. Victim testimonies list the following as some of these methods:

1 Shabh (various stress positions)

Blindfolded with hands tied behind their backs, detainees are hung from the ceiling or a window by the wrists without allowing their feet to touch the floor. This is usually accompanied by physical assault.

2 Foot whipping or caning

Victims' hands are tied behind their backs and their feet are either inserted into the back of a chair or left hanging over the side of the bed before he is caned on the inside of his feet with a thick cable or a baton until they swell up and victims can no longer walk on them. Detainees were often forced to walk on cold water to reduce the swelling and hide evidence of torture.

3 Beatings

Detainees are beaten all over their bodies with sticks, batons, hoses and bare hands.

4 Punching

Detainees are punched in the face, chest and abdomen.

5 Slapping

Detainees are slapped across the face several times in a row either to hurt them physically or by way of insulting him.

6 Kicking

Detainees are kicked all over their bodies and pushed against the floor or the wall.

7 Solitary Confinement

Detainees are held in solitary confinement in a small cells (2m²) which are often damp with an awful stench and lack basics such as a toilet or blankets. Water is spilled all over the floor to prevent detainees from sleeping, sometimes for up to ten days.

8 Verbal Abuse

Detainees are verbally abused and accused of collaboration with Israeli occupation authorities.

9 Psychological and emotional abuse

Detainees are forced to hear the sounds of others being tortured and are made to believe they are next. Detainees are frequently summoned over their party affiliations. They are often forced to wait for hours in the cold or heat before they are told to go home and return the following day. The same pattern would be repeated for days.

10 Sleep deprivation

Detainees are deprived of sleep for days or weeks on end.

11 Food and Drink deprivation

Detainees are not given enough food or drink to sustain their most basic needs.

It is worth mentioning that brutal and inhumane treatment is not restricted to the detainees and sometimes extends to their families who are verbally and physically assaulted during arrests. There have also been confirmed reports of detainees being arrested and taken to unknown locations without informing their families where they were being held. In some instance, family members had to wait weeks to find out where their relatives were imprisoned.



Torture Victim Testimonies

Case (1) Death threats and brutal torture

On 8 August 2015, at approximately 2:30 pm, A. G. was abducted from downtown Nablus in the West Bank by intelligence officers. A.G. was then taken to Juanid prison in Nablus before being transferred the following day to an interrogation centre in Bethlehem where he was tortured and threatened to be killed. According to A.G.:

“The interrogator said to me “Had this been a different time, I would not have tortured the likes of you here. I would just shoot you dead on the spot without bothering to arrest you and bring you to Bethlehem. I would have killed you in Nablus.” They blindfolded me and tied my hands behind my back before hoisting me up off the floor with my feet dangling off the floor. I felt my arms go numb almost immediately. AN interrogator slapped me across the face so forcefully that my nose began to bleed. Another policeman kicked my legs to force them further apart. He alternated between hitting me on the back of my neck and the small of my back while the other interrogator continued to slap me across the face. I was left dangling for more than an hour until I was bleeding all over my face and clothes.”

Case (2) Extreme torture

A number of intelligence officers raided the home of the relative of Palestinian citizen J.A. in Al-Bireh without producing a search or arrest warrant. J.A. was then taken to the intelligence services headquarters in Al-Balou'. When he arrived there, an officer called Ala' Hijazi proceeded to physically assault him before he had even entered the building. A number of officers pulled him away and said "let him go in at least." In other words, they were asking him to wait until J.A. was inside the building before subjecting him to physical abuse. According to J.A.:

"After I was taken into the interrogation room, someone tied my hands behind my back and I poised myself for what was to come. A few minutes later, they hung me from the window by a pulley. I dangled like a slaughtered animal with my feet off the ground. They used a water hose to beat me all over my body, including my genitals. I began to bleed and scream in pain but they took no notice. The torture session lasted an hour and a half."

Case (3) Abduction from the street without notifying family and being forced to hear sounds of others being tortured.

ON 19 August 2015, H. Y. flagged down a taxi to head back home to Nablus. H. Y, a university student, noticed a silver Hyundai following them. The Hyundai cut them off and he later found out it belong to the local branch of the General Intelligence Services. He was taken to Juanid prison and this is his account of what happened next:

“I demanded that my family be told where I was being held but they refused. At midnight, a prison warden told me that my father had been to the prison to ask about me and that they had told him I was being held there. When I was released, my parents told me they had learned of my whereabouts very late at night from social media. At 9 p.m. of the night of my arrest, I was in the interrogation room when the interrogator opened a window so that I could hear other detainees being slapped, assaulted and tortured. He said to me, “Can you hear that? Prepare yourself. You are next.” I was very shaken by the experience and the sounds of torture.”

Case (4) Torture targeting past injuries

On 18 November 2015, M. R. from Nablus decided to hand himself in to the Preventive Security Force following two weeks of harassment both on campus and outside, which resulted in him missing many of his classes. His family's shop had also been raided many times. M.R. suffered from various chronic diseases when he was arrested. The following is his testimony:

“One of the interrogators ordered me to stand against the wall and kicked the chair away from me. He grabbed me by my shirt and started to beat me against the wall. He then kicked me in the legs many times and began to curse me. “You are a pig. I am going to teach you a lesson about political activism on campus.” The two men grabbed me by the shoulders, pushed me against the wall and began to kick me in the legs with their military boots to widen the space between my legs. I was screaming in pain as I felt my knees being dislocated. I felt they could break my knee joints at any moment. I could hardly stand up and I eventually fell to the floor, my screams echoing around the room while the two of them were laughing.”



Case (5) Death threats

The family of B.F. were stunned when security forces arrived in ten cars at 11 p.m. at their home. B.F. had been in bed for an hour and the whole area was covered in snow. He was taken to Junaid prison. The following is his testimony:

“I was not interrogated for long. I was then taken back to the cell which by then had been stripped of everything including the mattress. Only a bottle of water and an empty bottle for unration were left in the cell. I was blindfolded, handcuffed and hung by the arms before being forced to spend all night standing up in that position. During one of the interrogation session at Jericho Prison where I had been transferred, the interrogator said to me, “You will suffer like you had never suffered before.” He then whispered something to a private who pulled me away and began kicking me and shouting at the top of his voice until we reached the toilet area where detainees are usually tortured. The private blindfolded me, forced me to sit on a wobbly, backless stool, and tied my hands behind my back. I felt a great pressure on my spine. A few minutes later, the pain had travelled from my arms down my spine. Ten minutes later, I began to scream in pain. The private threatened to shove his socks into my mouth if I did not stop screaming. They made me think they were going to pour boiling water all over. One of them said to the other, “Go heat the water,” and then pretended to be looking around for a pot. In the end, they poured very cold water all over my body which was by then almost naked.”



Case (6) Deceiving human rights organisations

On 4 May 2015, A. M. received a phone call from someone at his place of work. The caller claimed he worked for the Water Company and wished to be put through to A.M. When A.M. took the call, the man on the other end informed him that he was from the General Intelligence Services and that wished to meet him. When A.M. rejected the summons, a patrol showed up at his place of work the following day and arrested him. The following is A.M.'s testimony:

“I was taken to the office of the Prison Warden, known as Abu Al-Laith. The whole session was nothing more than a series of threats. After I rejected all the charges against me, I was taken to the interrogation room where a private tied my hands behind my back and hung me from a window until my feet were barely touching the floor. Sometimes they would allow me to sit on my toes to relieve some of the pain. Soon my screams of pain filled the place. The ordeal lasted three hours. I was then forced to sit down and stand up again more than 200 times within the span of twenty minutes which caused unbearable pain in my thighs. They tied me up again and hung me from the window from another two hours.

On 13 May 2015, four days after I was arrested, someone came into the cell and gave me a mattress and a blanket. Five minutes later, a private opened the cell door and a human rights worker accompanied by an interrogator, Abu Mohammed. She asked me about the conditions at prison and, fearing the ramifications, I replied that all was well. The mattress and blanket were taken away the moment she left and I was hung up from the window again. On 21 May 2015, I appeared before a Ramallah Court and I requested that the judge release me. I told him I would be more than willing to go trial if there were anything for which I was to be held accountable. The judge rejected my request and ordered everyone including the press to leave. My mother and fiancée were allowed to attend the last parts of the court session. My fiancée stood before the judge and told him we were supposed to get married in a week's time and that they had nothing to charge me with. The judge rejected her pleas.”

Case (8) Stripping detainees in freezing temperatures and pouring cold water all over them with windows kept open.

S. M was arrested on 13 January 2015 after he was summoned by the intelligence services Nablus branch. Two hours after he was questioned there, he was transferred to the intelligence services branch at Juanid prison. The following is his testimony:

“ There was a snow storm on the first day of questioning. The interrogator said to me, “ I will start you off with the following plan. I am going to ask you a question every half an hour and if you answer me, I will be happy. If you don’t, I will make you take off one item of clothing.” All his questions were about things I knew nothing about. Every half an hour, I was forced to take off an item of clothes, until I was left wearing nothing but a pair of briefs. I was shivering by then, yet he poured a bucket of cold water all over me and opened the window to let in the winter air. A private he had asked for a fan told him they did not have any at the station. The interrogator went looking for one in other departments. He kept saying to me, “I swear to Allah, I am going to turn you into a dry rag tonight.” The cold air was taking its toll on me and I began to feel my muscles spasming. I could no longer move my back or my arms. He kept questioning me while I was in that state, making up stories as he went along in order to find an excuse to hurt me. He would slap me, or punch me or knead my flesh forcefully.”

Case (9) Torture and inhumane treatment

M. K. was arrested on 10 August 2015 at 11 pm as he headed back home from a wedding in Nablus. He and seven others were arrested by intelligence services officers. M. K. was taken a few days later to the intelligence services prison in Bethlehem where he was subjected to inhumane treatment, threats and beatings over his father's and uncle's activities. The following is his testimony:

“As we walked into the prison building in Bethlehem, a private asked us what our names were and every time one of us answer, he would be slapped across the face. When it was my turn, I gave him my full name. He shouted, “what?” and I repeated my name. He asked me if that was the name of an animal. I told him it was my name. He mocked all our names. There was a picture of the president in the hall and we were ordered to salute it. They would then ask us, “Who is son of the(a dirty word)” and he would say we did not know. They would say “Ismail Hania.” During the first round of questioning, I told the interrogator that I had told them everything I knew in Junaid prison before they brought me here. He slapped me twice and ordered me to go fetch his shoes. I thought he wanted to put them on, but he told me to get only one shoe. He told me I had a choice between confessing or putting the shoe on my head. He then threatened to shove it in my mouth. He ordered me to stand up again and keep my feet further apart. He approached me and placed a stick on my calf and remarked that I had prominent muscles. He fetched a baton from behind his desk, similar to the one used by anti-riot police. The baton was 40cms in length and 5cms in width. He beat me on the back of my legs a few times. He would repeat his questions then beat me with the baton for a few minutes. The pattern was repeated throughout the interrogation session.

Case (10) Bethlehem prison: a slaughterhouse of torture

S. M. was arrested on 18 June 2015 by intelligence services after officers raided his family's home looking for him. He gave himself up after he received promises he would not be tortured. S.M. was nonetheless tortured. The following is his testimony:

“The interrogator at the Bethlehem interrogation centre said to me, “We have created the impression that Junaid and Jericho prisons are slaughterhouses of torture in order to attract the media, human rights organisations and the Red Cross. But when they go there, they conclude that rumours of torture are unfounded. But we have small detention centres that the Red Cross know nothing about. We can do whatever we want there without anyone ever finding out.”

ON one occasion, the interrogator did not like my responses so he ordered a private on the ground floor to fetch some ropes. They tied my hands behind my back and hung me from the door until my feet were barely touching the ground. I was left hanging from 9:30 pm until 3 a.m. Every half an hour, the interrogator would ask me a question and if the answer was not to his liking, he would beat me all over my body. Sometimes he would apply pressure on my back. He would slap me on one side of my face twenty times in a row or punch me continuously in the shoulder. When he took a break, he would play on his smartphone while swearing at me and ordering me to denounce some Palestinian leaders. He assured me they could not care less about breaking very single one of my bones as long as my heart did not stop working. He then threatened to shove a stick up my anus. He tried to take off my trousers but I resisted, as he stood laughing out loud. I was then forced to kneel with my feet on top of each other. He told me that he would beat me up if I lost my balance. No one could remain in this position for longer than two minutes. When I could not remain kneeling in that position, Abu Shanab ordered me to stand up and began punching me in the shoulders, while Al-Ghazwi slapped

me across the face many times in a row and punched me on the back of my legs. They had been beating me up for almost an hour when the head interrogator entered the room and asked them what was going on. They told him I was a liar and was refusing to answer their questions. He said, "I am authorising you to use any form of torture deem necessary. Do whatever you like." When he left, one of the interrogators said, "Did you hear that? We can do whatever we want with you, even if it kills you." One night, I was hung from the window. They lifted my blouse over my head to allow for cold night air to beat against my naked body. One of them said to me, "We don't care if your kidneys stopped working."

One Thursday, during another interrogation session, one of them threatened to refer me to the public prosecutor on Sunday charge me with collaborating with Israeli occupation forces and that he would destroy me and my family. He asked me to think very carefully about what I was going to say next. He wanted me to choose between treason charges and union work charges. A week later, a Red Cross delegation came but I was not allowed to meet with them. The interrogator told me that I was not allowed to talk to them because I had not been there for 15 days. A private had been to see me earlier and ordered me to hide all evidence of torture if the delegation spoke to me. He told me that my stay in custody could be extended if I revealed anything to them. At the time, I was administratively detained by the governor of Nablus, Akram Al-Rujoob."

Raids on University Campuses

While civilised countries consider universities seats of knowledge and development that deserve protection and respect, universities in Palestine are a frequent target for raids and arrests by both the Israeli occupation forces and PA security forces. Both sides have regularly raided university campuses, shooting and arresting students, or ambushed students outside university gates. Many students' graduation have been delayed by these brutal measures. Security forces have also interfered to change the outcome of student unions elections, especially when most of the seats were won by the Islamic bloc. At least 399 students were summoned and arrested, some brutally tortured, in 2015. Students were arrested following raids on their homes or halls of residence, and outside university gates.

Suppression of Peaceful Arrests

The families of detainees staged many protests outside security forces headquarters, in public squares and outside university gates all over the West Bank to condemn political arrests. Despite the peaceful nature of these protests and sit-ins, many were crushed with brutal force. Shots would be fired in the air in very close proximity to the protesters to force them to disperse. Security forces also cracked down on all protests organised to condemn Israeli and Jewish settler crimes. Despite the rise in Israeli occupation crimes in the West Bank since beginning of October 2015, PA security forces had no qualms about forbidding Palestinians from protesting these crimes. Scores of plain-clothed and uniformed officers armed with batons were deployed all over the West Bank to prevent protesters from reaching Israeli soldiers while the latter stood idly by and watched as PA security forces acted on their behalf.

A list of protests and sit-ins attacked by PA security forces

Date	Governorate	Protest/Sit-in and crackdown method
15/01/2015	Ramallah	A protest by the Committee for the Families of Political detainees in Ramallah was organised to denounce political detentions and the harassment of university students. Security forces seized banners and arrested all journalists, later transferring them to a local police station to prepare a list of their names and places of work.
29/01/2015	Hebron	Harassment of people who showed up to welcome Muath SI-Shurbati after he was released from Israeli prisons. Cars were thoroughly inspected and ID cards were seized.
10/02/2015	Nablus	Fifteen youths from the village of Til were arrested during a gathering organised to welcome Waleed Asida who had just been released from Israeli prisons. The crowds were attacked and beaten up. Security forces pointed their weapons at the people there and forced some of them to get into police cars.
14/04/2015	Tulkarm	Security forces stopped a motorcade that was headed to welcome Abdulrahman Zeidan who had been released from Israeli prisons. Cars were searched and flags were seized near the eastern entrance to Tulkarm.
26/04/2015	Ithna, Hebron	Security forces refused to allow the family of the Mahmoud Abu Jahisha to collect his body from a hospital mortuary in Hebron until it has been autopsied.
29/06/2015	Hebron	Security forces broke up a sit-in organised by the family of political detainee Mohammed Hussein Hadid near Al-Manara circle in Hebron.
5/07/2015	Hebron	Anti-riot police attacked participants in a peaceful march organised in support of Islam Hamed. Protesters were not allowed to reach Al-Manara square. Islam's brother, Khalil,

Date	Governorate	Protest/Sit-in and crackdown method
05/07/2015	Hebron	Security forces beat up participants in a sit-in organised to protest political detentions and fired teargas at them.
08/07/2015	Jenin	Musab Al-Khateeb, a reporter working for Al-Quds satellite channel, was arrested while covering a protest attended by the families of political detainees in Jenin.
09/07/2015	Al-Bireh, Ramallah	The press were banned from covering a protest and the families of detainees were not allowed to reach the venue of the protest held in support of Islam Hamid. Security forces set up checkpoints outside the Red Cross in Ramallah and seized cameras and video tapes.
28/07/2015	Ramallah	Members of Al-Quds singing group were arrested after they sang at the wedding party of journalist Mohammed Awad. All their equipment was seized.
15/08/2015	Nablus	Security forces shot at the families of political detainees taking part in a sit-in. They also arrested a reporter working for the Al-Quds satellite channel and seized all of his equipment.
30/08/2015	Jenin	Security forces attacked the former Minister of Prisoners' Affairs Wasfi Kabha and prevented him from delivering a speech at a gathering to welcome released prisoner Saeed Lahlouh.
15/09/2015	Ramallah	Shouting profanities and threats at women related to the political detainee Maher Shreiteh during a sit-in organised in support of Maher who had been taken to that hospital that same day.
15/09/2015	Jenin	Security forces raided a gathering held to support Al-Aqsa Mosque and political prisoners. Electricity was cut off and shots were fired at protesters. Tariq Issa was injured in the shooting and later arrested. Several homes were raided including those of Fath leader Adnan Al-Hindi, Al-Jihad Al-Islami leader Bassam Al-Sadi, and the home of political detainee Bahaa' Abu-Sibaa'

Date	Governorate	Protest/Sit-in and crackdown method
18/09/2015	Bethlehem	Security forces attacked marches organised in support of Al-Aqsa Mosque. Some participants were beaten up, dragged across the street and attacked with teargas.
19/09/2015	Bethlehem	Security forces attacked participants in a march and arrested four journalists. The march was organised to protest the suppression of a peaceful march held the previous day.
18/09/2015	Tulkarm	Sayed Radad was arrested while he was taking part in a march that began at Othman Bin Affan Mosque. The march was organised to protest Israeli raids on Al-Aqsa Mosque.
18/09/2015	Nablus	Fifteen people were arrested while they were taking part in protests held in support of Al-Aqsa Mosque. At least three journalists were arrested and banned from heading towards Al-Quds street which leads towards an Israeli checkpoint.
22/09/2015	Nablus	Photojournalist Mahmoud Fawzi from RamSat was arrested and all of his equipment was seized while he was covering a protest held in support of political detainees in Tulkarm.
22/09/2015	Hebron	Security forces suppressed a peaceful protest held in support of Al-Aqsa Mosque.
2/10/2015	Tulkarm	Twenty youths were beaten up by security forces, including several minors. Most were later arrested and the camera used to document the incident was destroyed.
5-9/10/2015	Tulkarm	Security forces attacked protesters, beat some of them up and arrested many others for a few hours to prevent them from reaching Israeli factories built on Palestinian lands in Tulkarm.
9/10/2015	Qalqilya	Security forces prevented youths from taking part in a march near the eastern entrance of the city where the Israeli liaison offices known as DCO are located.

Date	Governorate	Protest/Sit-in and crackdown method
October 2015	Hebron	Preventive Security Force branch in Hebron ordered shop owners in the areas with the most protests to provide them with the names of youths taking part in these protests.
October 2015	Nablus	PA security forces banned travel agencies in Nablus from offering transportation services to students from Al-Najah University headed to Howara checkpoint.
07/12/2015	Qalqilya	Protesters in Al-Naqqar Neighbourhood in Qalqilya were attacked and 12 of them were arrested by National Security Services officers. Many reported being beaten up with hoses in addition to being forced to sign a pledge never to participate in any more protests or else face spending three months in prison and paying 10,000 JDs in fines.
4-18/12/2015	Ramallah	Hundreds of security officers from the Presidential Guards, National Security, Preventive Security, Intelligence Services and Military intelligence prevented protesters from reaching the venue.
25/12/2015	Ramallah	Scores of security officers, including many in plain clothes, attacked a protest headed towards Beit Eeel in Ramallah. At least 33 youths were injured in the attacks with batons and sticks, including a paramedic working for the Red Cross, several prominent political leaders, and a number of journalists whose equipment was also either destroyed or confiscated. Five of the injured were taken to Ramallah hospital for treatment. Falastin Al-Youm reported that two of its reporters-Jihad Barakat and Jameel Salhab- were among the injured.

Contempt for the Judiciary

The judiciary must act independently of the authorities but in the West Bank, the judicial branch is yet another tool in the hands of security forces which in turn determines who can be released and who must remain in custody. A number of judges openly declared to lawyers during trial sessions that they cannot afford to disobey orders from above. Judges at magistrate courts are the ones who usually extend a detainees' detention, every 15 days, even in cases where detainees complain of abuse and torture. Courts issue summary decisions against detainees during the first four sessions, and in some cases, without the court even convening. Defence lawyers can do very little to defend their clients and are rarely allowed to speak freely about their clients. Most of the charges involve claims of 'inciting sectarian hatred', 'undermining the authorities', 'collecting donation in an illegal manner', etc. All of these charges are usually baseless or rest on very flimsy evidence. Even in cases where judges order the release of detainees, security forces do not comply with these decisions. At least 26 release orders were issued during the period of this study and none was carried out.

Security forces unashamedly charged Palestinians held in Israeli prisons with various offenses. The list of charges were published in local newspapers. Judges considered them fugitives for failing to appear in court, despite the fact they are being held in Israeli jails. Others were sentenced in absentia after being charged without evidence of 'inciting sectarian hatred', 'undermining the authorities', and 'collecting donation in an illegal manner', the same offences they are charged with by Israeli military courts.

List of arrest warrants issued against Palestinians who have been considered fugitives despite being held in Israeli prisons.

No.	Name	Town	Prison	Judgement
1	Abdulaziz Hamad Meri'	Qirwat Bani Hassan, Salfit	Jalbou'	Detained
2	Waleed Khalid Harb	Salfit	Negev	Sentenced
3	Khader Khalid Sarkaji	Nablus	Negev	Administrative detention
4	Qassam Mahmoud Abu Rabee	Ramallah	Negev	Administrative
5	Ahmed Abu Rabee	Ramallah	Negev	Sentenced

List of detainees sentenced to various sentences during 2015

No.	Name	Date of detention	Place of Residence		Judgement
1	Mohammed Mahder Hamed	16/10/2015	Silwad/ Ramallah	Military Intelligence	10 years after clashing with Israeli occupation forces
2	Abdulaziz Mari		Qirwat Bani Hasan, Salfit	Israeli Occupation	3 months in absentia
3	Thaer Habis Deria	10/11/2015	Beit Fajjar, Bethlehem	Preventive Service	Six months in prison

The Number of Detainees in PA Prisons

Although the total number of Palestinians held in PA prisons has decreased significantly, it is still difficult to provide an accurate account of the number of detainees, or their names due to the fact that many are constantly being detained and released and detained again. Most remain in custody for days or week, and a few remain in custody for months or years, and join the list of old prisoners. According to our estimates, there are on average between 40-85 political detainees at any given moment, including some who have been detained for years. Some were released only to be detained again by the Israeli's.

List of Palestinians long held in PA prisons

No.	Name	Town	Date of arrest	Place of arrest	Nature of arrest
1	Abdulfattah Shraim	Qalqilya	30/05/2015	Jericho	Sentenced to 12 years
2	Alaa Hisham Thiab	Qalqilya	02/06/2009	Juanid	Sentenced to 20 years
3	Amin Khalid Al-Quqa	Nablus	31/07/2007	Juanid	Wanted by the Occupation authorities
4	Jad Hmaidan	Al-Ein Refugee Camp/ Nablus	07/04/2009	Juanid	Wanted by the Occupation authorities

No.	Name	Town	Date of arrest	Place of arrest	Nature of arrest
5	Bajis Adel Hamdia	Al-Yamoun/ Jenin	March 2010	Juanid	Wanted by the Occupation authorities
6	Alaa Shabaan Zlood	Silat Al-Harithia/ Jenin	March 2010	Juanid	Wanted by the Occupation authorities
7	Saleh Ali Rabee	Deir Abu Mashaal/ Ramallah	2008	Juanid	Sentenced to nine years
8	Atif Rohi Salhi	Silwad/ Ramallah	04/09/2014	Intelligence branch in Al-Balou'	Served his 3 years but has not been released
9	Mahmoud Suleiman Abu Shihab	Azoun/ Qalqilya	02/07/2015	Juanid	Held by Major General Majid Faraj
10	Amjad Mohamed Hasan Hussein	Azoun/ Qalqilya	02/07/2015	Juanid	Held by Major General Majid Faraj
11	Ahmed Yasin Shibrawi	Silwad/ Ramallah	03/07/2015	Preventive Security branch in Bitounia	detained
12	Muath Saleh Hamed	Silwad/ Ramallah	03/07/2015	Preventive Security branch in Bitounia	detained

Legal Framework

International law protects basic human rights such as the right to life, and physical and mental safety that ought not to be breached even in times of war⁽⁸⁾. Similar to other countries, the Palestinian Authority incorporated these rights into its local legislation. Although the amended Basic Law of 2005 protects freedom of expression and assembly, prohibits arbitrary arrests for political reasons, and regards torture as a crime punishable by law, these laws have not been implemented. Security forces continue to violate even the most basic human rights⁽⁹⁾.

Being under occupation, the rights of the Palestinian people are protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention 1949 which regards arbitrary arrests and torture a gross violation of human rights. Article 8 of the Rome Statute of International Criminal Court (ICC) regards these violations as crimes of war⁽¹⁰⁾.

The Government of Palestine accepted ICC jurisdiction from 13th June 2014 by means of a declaration as per article 12(3) of the Rome Statute, which was accordingly accepted by the Registrar. Consequently, the Court has temporal jurisdiction to judge such crimes committed after 13th June 2014 either by Palestinian citizens or citizens of other states within the territory of Palestine.

In addition The State of Palestine deposited the instruments of

8 - <http://www.un.org/ar/documents/udhr/>

9 - <http://muqtafi.birzeit.edu/pg/getleg.asp?id=14138>

10 - <https://www.icrc.org/ara/resources/documents/misc/6e7ec5.htm>

accession to the Rome Statute on second January 2015, with it to take effect on first April 2015. With this accession, the State of Palestine became the 123rd State member to the Rome Statute⁽¹¹⁾.

11 - <https://www.icc-cpi.int>

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. PA security forces have arrested many Palestinians for political offences and sought to cover up these violations by charging those detainees with criminal offences.
2. This report has demonstrated that PA security forces have engaged in systematic torture, especially for the purpose of extracting information from political prisoners.
3. Arbitrary detentions and torture are gross violations of the Geneva Conventions and fall under the jurisdictions of the ICC.
4. President Mahmoud Abbas, the Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and directors of security apparatuses are fully responsible for these crimes.
5. Security apparatuses pose a great danger to the rights of the Palestinian people who are struggling for independence from Israeli occupation. That is why these security apparatuses must be dismantled and replaced with a police force that protects the rights of the Palestinians.
6. The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment is urged to work closely with the UN Human Rights Council to put an end to human rights violation of the PA security apparatuses and bring those responsible to justice.