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Torture by Palestinian Security Services before ICC

The International Forum for Democracy and Human Rights (IFDHR), in conjunction with Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHRUK) has filed an Article 15 submission with the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) at the International Criminal Court (ICC) concerning the widespread and systematic torture of Palestinian detainees in the West Bank, committed by the Palestinian Security Services.

AOHR UK through its contacts in situ undertook significant research and evidence collation concerning the plethora of individuals who had been detained by the Palestinian Security Services and subjected to prolonged instances of torture.

Having assessed and analysed that evidence, it has become clear to both the IFDHR and AOHR UK that the use of torture is so widespread amongst detention facilities, that it can only be part of a systematic and widespread attack upon the fundamental liberties of Palestinian citizens as part of a 'Policy', and therefore constitute a 'Crime Against Humanity'.

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The Preventative Security Force, commanded by the Minister of the Interior, is alone alleged to have been involved in the violation of detainee's rights, and the use of torture, on 949 separate occasions.

It is apparent, that all elements of the Security Services have engaged in the use of such methods, including the General Intelligence.

It is on this basis that an Article 15 submission has been drafted and filed with the OTP at the ICC.

Toby Cadman, Barrister and founder of the IFDHR stated *"It is clear that torture has been used by Security Services under the supervision of the Palestinian Authority, as part of a systematic policy for a substantial period of time. It is essential that this practice is brought to an end along with the associated impunity for its protagonists"*.

The evidence collated includes witness testimony from numerous individuals who have since been released from custody who have recalled the horrific treatment that they were forced to endure, including but not limited to, daily beatings-many of which were carried out with the use of innumerable inanimate objects such as rubber hoses, prolonged periods of time held in stress positions, electrocution, and the threat of sexual assault.

Such treatment cannot be classified as anything other than instances of torture, and it is clear, given the inaction of the Palestinian Authority

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generally, and those in positions of authority and supervision with the relevant Security Services, that there is no appetite whatsoever to investigate and address the complaints of those who have been forced to endure such treatment.

The only option therefore in seeking to address the rampant impunity with which the Security Services operate at present, is to seek the assistance of the OTP at the ICC by way of independent and impartial investigation into the complaints of the many victims, and the behaviour of those responsible for detention and interrogation.

Mohamed Jamil of the AOHR UK stated “*The Palestinian Authority has shown itself to be either ignorant to the plight of those detained by its security forces, or complicit in their torture. The only option is for there to be a credible international investigation into the issue*”.

Acts of torture can never be justified and any instance must be addressed as a matter of priority. It is therefore of the utmost concern that the Palestinian Authority has thus far shown itself to be either unwilling, or incapable of protecting its citizens.

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