

Hundreds of Palestinians Intensify Hunger Strikes



Ramallah, August 9 (RHC)-- Hundreds of Palestinians detained in Israeli jails have launched a hunger strike, protesting in solidarity with Bilal Kayed, who has been detained without trial, as well to call attention to poor prison conditions.

Kayed, 35 years old, has been fasting for over 50 days in protest to his detention without trial. Around 700 people are thought to be held in Israeli jails under an administrative law that can detain prisoners without bringing charges or putting them on trial.

He had served a 14.5 year sentence for his involvement with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, PFLP. Kayed was scheduled to be released on June 15, but remains incarcerated under Israel's administrative law. Palestinian officials say that he has lost at least 60 pounds and suffering from kidney failure.

The hunger strikers are also protesting against harsh prison conditions, including harassment by prison wardens, solitary confinement, the seizure of personal belongings, and isolating different prisoners. Palestinian authorities say that prisoners associated with Hamas were reportedly searched and isolated from one another, with their mobile phones taken by guards. There are 262 Hamas prisoners and 93 prisoners from the PFLP estimated to be currently on strike.

The Middle East Eye reported that as many as 400 Palestinian prisoners were taking part in the hunger strike with Palestinian officials expecting the protests to grow and continue.

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