

UN calls on Israel to end administrative detention and immediately release Maher al- Akhras

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Palestinian prisoner and hunger striker Maher al-Akhras. (Photo: Press TV)

United Nations, October 26 (RHC)-- The United Nations has called on the Israeli regime to put an end to the practice of administrative detention and immediately release Maher al-Akhras, a Palestinian prisoner who is on hunger strike for the past three months and is going through the medically critical phase.

Michael Lynk, UN special rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories, strongly called on Tel Aviv to end administrative detention, in which Israel keeps the detainees for up to six months, a period which can be extended an infinite number of times, sometimes for years

In a statement, he also called on the Israeli regime to release Akhras, who entered the 92nd consecutive day of his open-ended hunger strike on Monday in protest against his administrative detention. "Mr. Al-Akhras is now in very frail condition," said Lynk.

"Recent visits by doctors to his hospital bed in Israel indicate that he is on the verge of suffering major organ failure, and some damage might be permanent," Lynk added.

The 49-year-old Palestinian prisoner, the father of six children, was detained on July 27 and held under the administrative detention order, with no charge. This has led him to start a hunger strike in an attempt to seek justice.

Physicians have already warned of damage to several organs of the Palestinian prisoner's body, such as the kidneys, liver, and heart, adding that the inmate's senses of hearing and speaking have also been affected.

On Thursday, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) warned that the inmate was entering a medically "critical phase."

"Administrative detention is an anathema in any democratic society that follows the rule of law," Lynk further said. "When the democratic state arrests and detains someone, it is required to charge the person, present its evidence in an open trial, allow for a full defense and try to persuade an impartial judiciary of its allegations beyond a reasonable doubt," he added.

"Administrative detention, in contrast, allows a state to arrest and detain a person without charges, without a trial, without knowing the evidence against her or him, and without a fair judicial review," the UN official went on to say, adding: "It is a penal system that is ripe for abuse and maltreatment."

Lynk called on Tel Aviv "to abolish" the practice of administrative detention and free those detainees it has placed behind bars in its prisons.

Palestinian detainees have continuously resorted to open-ended hunger strikes in an attempt to express their outrage at the detention. Palestinians hold Israeli authorities fully responsible for any deterioration of the circumstances in jails. More than 7,000 Palestinians are reportedly being held in Israeli jails.

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