

Palestinian hunger striker's vital organs failing in Israeli jail

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Demonstrators display support for Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. (By Al Mayadeen)

Tel Aviv, August 12 (RHC)-- The vital organs of Palestinian prisoner Khalil Awawdeh have been badly damaged, about five months into his open-ended hunger strike in protest against his administrative detention by Israel.

Local media reported on Thursday that Awawdeh, 40, was transferred to an Israeli medical center in Tel Aviv, following a deterioration in his health. His lawyers and family members said he experienced sudden and severe cognitive decline and is at risk of death at any moment, Samidoun Palestine Prisoner Solidarity Network reported on Thursday.

Ahlam Haddad, a lawyer of his, says her client prepared a message for her that reads, "I went on strike for freedom, and I have sacrificed a lot for the dearest and strongest need, freedom...My abstinence from food is not a rejection of life, but rather a rejection of chains." According to the lawyer, the detainee cannot even utter the name of his four daughters.

Despite the deterioration of Awawdeh's health, an Israeli court responsible for the case is not scheduled to reconvene and hear the medical evidence until Sunday.

Meanwhile, Awawdeh's wife slammed the negligence of the Israeli court, noting that "the prisoner's health condition is intolerable." Speaking with Al Mayadeen on Thursday, Dalal Awawdeh said the family has been barred from visiting Khalil for about eight months. She said "the prisoner is now unable to speak or move."

The long hunger strike has led to Awawdeh's significant weight loss as he is "less than 35 kilograms" now, said his wife, adding that he has almost lost his faculty of vision.

Earlier, the head of the Palestinian Prisoners' Club Qadura Fares had said Awawdeh "could die at any moment."

Israel issued an order to renew Awawdeh's administrative detention for a period of four months from June 26 to October 25 despite his highly critical health condition. According to reports, the freedom of Awawdeh was one of the clauses of the Egyptian-mediated ceasefire between the Palestinian Islamic Jihad resistance movement and Israel to end the latest episode of the regime's brutality against Gaza, which killed nearly 50 Palestinians, including 17 children.

The head of the political department in the Islamic Jihad, Muhammad Al-Hindi, said on August 7th that "a formula for the Egyptian declaration of the truce agreement has been reached, and it includes Egypt's commitment to work for the release of the two prisoners, Khalil Awawdeh and Bassam Al-Saadi."

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