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Ramallah, November 2 (RHC)-- A number of Palestinian families have urged the International Committee of the Red Cross to pressure the Israeli regime to release the bodies of their martyrs withheld in Israeli morgues or buried in unknown graves. Dozens of the martyrs' families as well as activists on Tuesday attended sit-ins staged outside the Red Cross headquarters in Ramallah, al-Khalil (Hebron), Bethlehem, Nablus and Jenin, according to Palestinian media.

During the sit-ins, spokespersons of the families handed Red Cross officials letters, urging the international body to assume its responsibilities and pressure Israel to release the bodies. The protesters carried pictures of the martyrs, holding banners that said “we want our children” and “keeping hold of martyrs is a crime.”

They denounced the Israeli policy of withholding the bodies of Palestinians, killed by the regime’s forces, for bargaining reasons. They also pointed out that Israel is the only regime in the world that holds bodies of martyrs, saying the move is an “international, humanitarian and moral crime committed against their families and a clear violation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention.”

The families demanded the immediate release of the bodies of their loved ones without restrictions and conditions so that their families can give them a proper burial.

Back in July, Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh said Israel had continued to withhold the bodies of Palestinians killed by the regime’s forces to use them in laboratories of medical schools in a flagrant violation of human rights.

“The (Israeli) occupation authorities are augmenting the pain of the families bereaved at the loss of their children by withholding the corpses of their children and using them in the laboratories of medical schools in Israeli universities in flagrant violation of human rights, values, principles and scientific ethics,” Shtayyeh said on July 4.

Israel has been withholding the remains of hundreds of Palestinian martyrs or burying them in nameless graves since 1967.

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