

International Committee of Red Cross calls on Israel to release Khader Adnan's body

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Geneva, May 2 (RHC)-- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the occupied territories has called for Israel to release the body of a senior leader of the Islamic Jihad movement, Khader Adnan, who passed away at an Israeli jail following an 87-day hunger strike.

"We call on the Israeli authorities to release Mr. Adnan's body, so his family can mourn and arrange a dignified burial according to their customs and beliefs," the ICRC said in a statement following Adnan's murder early on Tuesday. The humanitarian organization had visited the detainee several times since his arrest in February in the occupied West Bank to monitor his condition.

The 45-year-old went on hunger strikes several times after previous arrests, including a 55-day strike in 2015 to protest his detention without charge. Adnan was arrested 12 times and spent about eight years in Israeli prisons, most of which under the so-called "administrative detention," in which Israel holds Palestinians on "secret evidence" for renewable six-month intervals without trial or charges.

Palestinians staged a general strike across the West Bank and the besieged Gaza Strip, calling for confrontations with Israeli forces in protest at the regime's repressive measures against and the mistreatment of Palestinian prisoners.

Palestinian resistance groups and authorities have already mourned the murder of Adnan, holding the occupying regime in Tel Aviv fully responsible. Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh in a statement described the martyrdom of Adnan as a "deliberate assassination," saying Israel had killed him "by rejecting his request for his release, neglecting him medically and keeping him in his cell, despite the seriousness of his health condition."

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani on Tuesday strongly denounced the murder "as a crime against humanity," saying the international community's silence will further embolden the occupying regime. "The way this Palestinian citizen was arrested and the inhumane treatment he received from the Zionist regime is a clear example of the inhumane and violent behavior that the regime has used against the Palestinian nation and fighters for over seven decades in an organized and widespread manner, and constitutes a crime against humanity," he said.

The Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah in a statement lauded Adnan's "long march full of steadfastness" and "resistance" against Israel's "arbitrary practices," decrying the years he spent in prison facing "abuse and terrorism."

"We offer the Palestinian people and the resistance movements, especially the brothers in the Islamic Jihad movement and the bodies, clubs and associations of prisoners' affairs, our deepest condolences and blessings on the martyrdom of the heroic resistance fighter, the captive Sheikh Khader Adnan," the resistance movement stated. The resistance group also called for all Palestinian prisoners in Israel to be freed.

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held Israel fully responsible for the murder of Adnan. The 57-nation body in a statement strongly denounced "the Israeli occupation's systematic policy of medical negligence, arbitrary measures, inhumane treatment of Palestinian prisoners, and deprivation of their basic rights guaranteed by the relevant international conventions and covenants." The OIC also called on Israel "to stop its continuous violations against prisoners and to release them immediately."

There are reportedly more than 7,000 Palestinians held in Israeli jails. Hundreds of the inmates have been apparently incarcerated under the practice of administrative detention.

Human rights organizations say Israel violates all the rights and freedoms granted to prisoners by the Fourth Geneva Convention. They say administrative detention violates their right to due process since the evidence is withheld from prisoners while they are held for lengthy periods without being charged, tried, or convicted.

Palestinian detainees have continuously resorted to open-ended hunger strikes in an attempt to express outrage at their detention. Israeli jail authorities keep Palestinian prisoners under deplorable conditions without proper hygienic standards. Palestinian inmates have also been subject to systematic torture, harassment, and repression.

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