

Two Palestinian prisoners from Gaza die from torture in Israeli jails

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Ramallah, August 2 (RHC)-- Two Palestinian prisoners from the war-ravaged Gaza Strip have died from torture they endured at Israeli detention centers, according to a pair of Palestinian prisoners' rights

groups.

The Commission of Detainees' and Ex-Detainees' Affairs and the Palestinian Prisoners Society (PPS) said in a statement on Thursday that 42-year-old Islam al-Sarsawi, a resident of Gaza City's eastern neighborhood of Shuja'iyya, lost his life at the notorious Sde Teiman Prison in the Negev Desert.

The Palestinian prisoners' affairs groups noted that Sarsawi was arrested during a recent Israeli raid on al-Shifa Hospital in the northern Rimal neighborhood of Gaza City. The Israeli military previously stormed the Gaza Strip's largest hospital twice, once on November 16 last year following a week-long siege and another time in March. The latter offensive left the vital medical facility in ruins, resembling a mass grave.

"Sarsawi is among dozens of detainees who have lost their lives in Israeli prisons and detention camps. The Israeli authorities continue to conceal their identities," the statement read.

The statement clarified that al-Sarsawi died in March but recent information confirmed his fate. "He was arrested alongside many others during the initial raid on al-Shifa Hospital, and their whereabouts remained undisclosed due to enforced disappearance," it added.

Moreover, Gaza's Ministry of Detainees and Ex-Detainees confirmed on Thursday the death of Palestinian prisoner Omar Junaid, a 26-year-old resident of Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza.

The prisoner's father, Abdul-Aziz, told the ministry that he received a phone call from the Israeli human rights group HaMoked, saying that his son Omar had died on June 17 after being subjected to severe interrogation and torture.

Omar Junaid was kidnapped along with his brother, Yasser, from their home in Jabalia camp on December 24. His family did not know about his fate throughout that period, even after his brother was released last April.

"We sought help from many human rights organizations inside and outside Gaza to find out his fate. However, we received no answer because Israeli authorities refused to provide any information about him," the father said. "Last May, we contacted HaMoked, which in turn filed a petition with an Israeli court," he added.

The family says Omar had no health issues before Israeli forces kidnapped him, and called for the handover of his body to be buried in his hometown in northern Gaza.

The Israeli army is believed to have detained thousands of Palestinians, including women, children and medics since the outbreak of Gaza war on October 7, 2023. Those released have shown signs of torture.

Both CNN television news channel and the American daily newspaper The New York Times have reported on the abuse of Palestinians in Israeli detention since the bombing of Gaza began.

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

Human rights organizations say Israel continues to violate all rights and freedoms granted to prisoners by the Fourth Geneva Convention and international laws.

According to the Palestine Detainees Studies Center, around 60 percent of the Palestinian prisoners detained in Israeli jails suffer from chronic diseases, a number of whom died in detention or after being released due to the severity of their cases.

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