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ISRAEL'S IRON HEEL

The Defense of Palestinian Prisoners

By Nancy Glass & Reem Salah

Lawyers who represent Palestinians in Israeli military and civil courts face obstacles that systematically erode the right of Palestinian detainees to legal representation. Defense attorneys must contend with military orders, Israeli laws and prison procedures that curtail their ability to provide adequate counsel to their clients. Here we describe how, from the moment of detention through the process of appeal, lawyers are prevented from giving adequate counsel to Palestinian defendants. To summarize:

- More than 650,000 Palestinians have been detained by Israel since 1967. There are currently 9,493 Palestinians held in Israeli prisons. At least 765 of the prisoners are administrative detainees who are held on secret evidence, do not have a right to a trial, and can be held for six-month periods that can be renewed indefinitely. Palestinians detained by the Israeli military can be barred access to a lawyer for 90 days and held without being charged for 188 days.
- In violation of international law, Palestinian prisoners are transported to Israel from the West Bank. Lawyers from the West Bank and Gaza cannot visit their clients in Israeli prisons and interrogation centers because they cannot enter Israel without permission from the Israeli military. In violation of Israeli prison ordinances, prisons are open to lawyer visits only a few days each week. During prison visits, lawyers must interview their clients through a glass or plastic divider, often within earshot of a prison guard. If lawyers wish their clients to sign confidential documents, they must

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Food Security and Mental Health in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

By Feroze Sidhwa

The Israel Defense Forces invaded and occupied the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem (the Occupied Territories) in June 1967. Since then Israel has maintained a military occupation in those territories with several unique characteristics. According to Harvard's Sara Roy, the relationship between Israel and the Occupied Territories "is characterized by an economic process specific to Israeli rule, a process that could be characterized as de-development." The occupation has "proven more exploitative than ... other settler regimes, because [it] rob[s] the native population of its most important economic resources – land, water, and labor – as well as the internal capacity and potential for developing those resources." Indeed, "the government of Israel has structurally and institutionally dismantled the Palestinian economy as well as undermined the fabric of Palestinian society and the expression of cultural and political identity. The economy is but one (critical) reflection of this phenomenon." (*The Gaza Strip: The Political Economy of De-Development*, Washington, D.C., 2001.)

Two additional critical reflections of this phenomenon are the recent sharp rise in food insecurity and a long-term threat to Palestinians' mental health and children's development. (NB: Herein, "Palestinian", "Palestinians", etc., refer to the Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories, not to those living in Israel or in the Palestinian diasporas.)

The World Food Programme (WFP) reported in January 2007 that 34 per cent of Palestinian households are food se-

cure, 20 per cent are marginally secure, 12 per cent are vulnerable to food insecurity, and 34 per cent are food insecure. The U.N. Refugee World Administration (UNWRA) reports that as of November 2006, 40.2 per cent of Palestinian households lived in "deep poverty" (daily per capita consumption of less than \$2.10); in Gaza the figure is 79.8 per cent. The first half of 2006 saw a 38.3 per cent increase in the number of Palestinian households in deep poverty.

While in 2003 food security "remain[ed] poor and food insecurity [was] a real or constant threat for seven out of 10 Palestinians," since "2006, the political and economic situation in the WBGS [West Bank and Gaza Strip] has deteriorated even further." In 2004, the World Bank "estimate[d] that per capita food consumption declined some 25 per cent in real terms compared to 1999." The decline in food consumption continued, with a further decline of 8 per cent in the first half of 2006 alone.

The consequences have been severe and will likely have long-term effects on Palestinian children's development. In 2004, wasting reached 1.9 per cent; stunting 9.9 per cent; and vitamin A deficiency in children 12-59 months old reached 22 per cent; 50.5 per cent of West Bank children under 24 months and 71.9 per cent of Gazan children 9-12 months old are anemic. UNICEF reports that "one in ten children is stunted, one in two is anemic, and 75 per cent of children under the age of five suffer from vitamin A deficiency; ... low birthweight rates are as high as 8.2 per cent..."

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The observed vitamin A deficiency and anemia “are considered by WHO international standards as a severe public health situation...” Furthermore, “albeit slowly, chronic malnutrition is on a steadily rising trend; and micro-nutrient deficiencies are of concern...” The observed rise in malnutrition status is due to decreased food consumption and decreased quality of consumed food over at least the past eight years.

Palestinian food insecurity is highly correlated with the long-term intensity of Israel’s closure regime, the extent of land confiscation, the attendant destruction of assets and infrastructure, and loss of income. Closure and physical destruction of Palestinian economic infrastructure are both core policies of the occupation and lead directly to de-development.

The World Bank reports that as of December 2002, Palestinian gross national income (GNI) losses “reached some U.S.\$5.2 billion in 27 months – when one considers that GNI was estimated at U.S.\$5.4 billion in 1999, the opportunity cost of the crisis represents almost one entire year of Palestinian wealth creation. Cumulated raw physical damage [from September 2000 to December 2002] has jumped in the last year to some U.S.\$930 million, and lost investment to U.S.\$3.2

billion.” The U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) reports that the “post-Oslo investment surge ... was followed by extraordinary Israeli restrictive measures and destruction and losses of up to one-third of the existing physical capital and productive capacity” of the Occupied Territories. Real per capita GDP declined 10 per cent further in the first half of 2006 alone.

The WFP lists nine major risk factors predisposing Palestinian households to food insecurity; all but the ninth are due to Israeli occupation policies. They note further that “increased mobility restrictions, continued building of the Barrier, and the ... boycott of the PA have all put increased negative pressure on the factors that influence food security...” A joint European Union and U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization report lists eight reasons for the increasing cost of food; all but the eighth are due to Israeli occupation policies.

The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports closure and fragmentation by Israeli settlements “is at the root of the West Bank’s declining economy.... Unless the problems caused by the existence and expansion of the settlements are addressed, the dismal humanitarian outlook for Palestinians will intensify.” Several World Bank reports affirm this judgment.

Roy describes the core policies of de-development as “measures designed... [to] fragment Palestinian society... to render it unviable... include: ...the introduction of advanced agricultural technologies concomitant with the steady confiscation of land and water; the introduction of refugee rehousing programs together with the establishment of Jewish settlements on Arab land; improved access to employment in the Israeli economy in conjunction with prohibitions on the development of the domestic Palestinian economy (e.g., restricted access to international markets, control over all forms of indigenous production and over the flow of information, and consistently low levels of government investment in key economic sectors)...” Following the Palestinian legislative elections of January 2006, Israeli prime ministerial advisor Dov Weisglass bluntly summarized Israeli policy toward the Palestinians: “It’s like an appointment with a dietician. The Palestinians will get a lot thinner, but won’t die.” (*Haaretz*, Feb. 19, 2006.)

Mental Health

Garbarino and Kostelny note that while “single incidents or brief periods of intense stress tend to have limited effects on children, repeated and chronic stresses may lead to anger, despair and severe psychic numbing, which in turn result in major personality changes. Such chronic trauma, or ‘continuous traumatic stress syndrome,’ and its resulting psychological consequences are a major concern ... going beyond PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] to a broader range of developmental and behavioral issues.”

The level of conflict and violence in the Occupied Territories since the occupation began in 1967 has been and remains extraordinarily high. In 1979, “85 per cent of Palestinian children reported having witnessed a violent event related to occupation and resistance, and 39 per cent had lost a family member to ongoing conflict with the Israelis.” In the first two years of the first Intifada, Israeli forces injured “between 50,000 and 63,000 Palestinian children and youth... in shootings, beatings, and tear-gassing,... about 7 per cent of the total child/youth population.” (*Child Development*, 1996, Issue 67.) Note that the first Intifada continued for another four years. Save the Children reports, “Some two-thirds of children living in the West Bank and Gaza do not have safe areas for entertainment, socializing and playing sports.”

In the first two years of the second Intifada, the IDF inflicted \$930 million in “raw physical damage” on the Occupied Territories; UNCTAD estimates that up to one-third of Palestinian infrastructure has been physically destroyed by Israeli military force since September 2000. According to B’tselem and Human Rights Watch, Israeli forces demolished at least 8,772 Palestinian homes from 1987 to 2006. Amnesty International reports IDF bulldozers uprooted and destroyed “hundreds of thousands of olive, citrus, almond, date and other trees” between September 2000 and May 2004 alone; these orchards “constituted a source, and in many cases the only source, of livelihood for hundreds of thousands of people.”

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reports 31,426 occupation-related injuries since September 2000. According to UNICEF, “Nearly half of all students have seen their schools be-

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