State of Palestine

Strategic Communications & Media

Office of the Prime Minister

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PMO: Israel's Horrific Treatment of Bilal Kayed Amounts to Torture

Ramallah – Today, Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah called for the immediate release of Bilal Kayed, who has been on a hunger strike for 70 days, and who is currently shackled to his bed in an Israeli hospital.

"Israel is violating all medical ethics by shackling a human being like an animal," he said. "The Israeli authorities are directly responsible for Mr. Kayed's well-being and should release him immediately."

Israeli authorities issued an administrative detention order against Bilal Kayed on the day of his scheduled release from prison, after serving a 14.5-year sentence. To protest his detention, Mr. Kayed went on a hunger strike on June 15. Since then, he has suffered from vision problems, lung infection, heart complications and rapid weight loss.

In spite of his fragile condition and the presence of four armed guards in his room, Israeli authorities ordered to have him chained to the hospital bed, with cuffs tied around his right hand and left foot.

"Israel's horrific treatment of Bilal Kayed amounts to torture," said Jamal Dajani, Director of Strategic Communications & Media at the Prime Minister's Office. "The decision to keep Mr. Kayed imprisoned after he served his sentence is inhumane and violates basic human rights."

Robert Piper, the UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance and Development Aid in Palestine, in a statement expressed his “deep concern” about the deteriorating health of Bilal Kayed, calling it “an egregious case.”

Israel’s systematic use of administrative detention is against international law and has been repeatedly criticized by the UN. According to the Fourth Geneva Convention, administrative detention may be used only for “imperative reasons of security.” However, Israel makes ample use of the practice: In July of this year, 750 Palestinians were locked up in Israeli prisons without knowing the reason for their arrest.

Around 120 Palestinian prisoners have participated in temporary hunger strikes in solidarity with Mr. Kayed. Israeli authorities have retaliated against the strikers by placing some in solitary confinement and confiscating prisoners’ mattresses.

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