

## Social welfare payments to Palestinian families & allowances to prisoners

### PALESTINIANS UNDER OCCUPATION

Since the beginning of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories in 1967 more than 800,000 Palestinians have been arrested or detained under Israeli military orders. This number comprises some 20 percent of the total Palestinian population in the occupied territories and as much as 40 percent of the total male Palestinian population. It also includes approximately 10,000 women imprisoned, as well as 8,000 Palestinian children arrested since 2000.

The vast majority of these people are ‘security prisoners’—people Israel deems as challenging the military occupation, including non-violent activists and those held without charge in ‘administrative detention.’

In accordance with articles 98 and 81 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, as an ‘Occupying Power’ Israel has a responsibility for ‘occupied territory and its people, including the provision of maintenance for those dependent on detainees.’ Palestinian Basic Law (article 22) also considers the care of prisoners and their families to be a public obligation.

Palestinians impacted by the Israeli occupation, either by incarceration, injury or death, receive vital social welfare payments and prison canteen allowances from the Palestinian Authority.

**To label people affected by the illegal Israeli occupation in these ways as ‘terrorists’ is victim-blaming at its most extreme.**

*Palestinians are subject to a military court system which falls short of international standards for the fair conduct of trials and administration of justice.*

Amnesty International



October 2020



Source: Addameer

## FACTS ABOUT THE SOCIAL WELFARE PAYMENTS

- Palestinians in Israeli jails are given a canteen allowance by the Palestinian Authority to buy food and essential items. The payments are controlled by the Israeli Prison Authority. The money is deposited as credit in the prisoner's name so they can buy goods from the prison canteen. The Palestinian Authority has no control over how this money is allocated.
- Families of Palestinians in Israeli jails are able to apply for monthly welfare payments due to the acute loss of income caused by imprisonment. Israel often denies family members of prisoners work and travel rights—stripping them of financial stability and forcing them to rely on the stipends.
- The benefits given to families take into account the years the spouse or dependent family member has spent in Israeli prison.
- Families of those killed by Israeli forces are given a minimum of US\$350 a month, and smaller payments are made to those who have been injured by Israeli forces.
- Former prisoners are able to apply for payments if they are unable to gain other work, as Israeli restrictions on former security prisoners often significantly affect their capacity to secure work.



Palestinian activists dressed as prisoners sit in a mock prison during a protest in solidarity with prisoners on hunger strike in Israeli jails.

[Photo: Mahmoud Nasser/APA images]

## IN COMPARISON WITH AUSTRALIA

- Families of people who are in prison commonly receive welfare payments, and a range of supports are offered through community and government organisations and not-for-profits; these include housing support, counselling, access to financial advisors, etc.
- People who are in prison are able to work for money through participation in work programs and prison programs, such as educational programs.
- “Victims of crime” schemes compensate people whose lives are significantly affected by violence or other crimes.

## ATTACKS ON THESE PAYMENTS

- In violation of the Oslo Peace Accords Israel has withheld US\$4.6 billion in Palestinian tax revenue, which is the same annual amount the Palestinian Authority uses towards welfare payments to families and canteen allowances to prisoners.
- According to the Middle East Policy Council, Israel defines any act of Palestinian resistance to occupation, including against occupied military forces, as an act of “terrorism.”
- In 2014, U.S. Department of State Assistant Secretary Anne Patterson testified before Congress that U.S. foreign aid to the PA is “extensively audited and reviewed” and is the “most extensively reviewed foreign assistance program we have on the planet.”
- These payments were set up with the support of donor countries in order to provide humanitarian assistance for Palestinian families who suffer from the economic loss of a breadwinner due to their imprisonment.
- Following the United States’ decision to cut aid to the Palestinian Authority, in 2019 the Australian government cut financial aid to the Palestinian Authority, claiming that Australia does not want to contribute to payments to Palestinian prisoners and their families.

---

*Australia’s decision to end direct aid to the Palestinian Authority in 2019 was based on false assertions about payments to families of prisoners and payments to prisoners.*

---