

11 May 2012, Jerusalem - WHO is extremely concerned about the health conditions of the more than 1600 Palestinian detainees and prisoners who are currently on hunger strike to protest their conditions of imprisonment, including prolonged administrative detention and denial of family visits. Prisoners are being held in Israeli detention centers and prisons within Israel and in one Israeli prison in the occupied Palestinian territory, and include hundreds held without trial.

Most of the prisoners began their hunger strike on April 17, Palestinian Prisoners' Day, but seven began their strike earlier and have now been striking for more than two months. One administrative detainee, a Thalessemia Major patient who has been held for more than one year without trial, has also refused his regular life-saving blood transfusions in addition to food. A number of hunger strikers are reportedly being subjected to forced feeding.

WHO calls on the Israeli authorities to ensure immediate and adequate access to appropriate on-going health care for the hunger strikers, and to respect the Right to Health of all prisoners, which is a fundamental right for all people. WHO also requests Israel to ensure that:

adequate medical care be assured for all ill prisoners

no medical treatment or procedure be undertaken without consent of prisoners

release to hospital be facilitated for prisoners requiring medical treatment

family visits be enabled for all prisoners as an essential element of the mental health of prisoners

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