

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1418/Add.1
18 December 1980

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Thirty-seventh session
Item 4 of the provisional agenda

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED
ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In paragraph 9 of its resolution 1.A (XXXVI) of 13 February 1980 the Commission on Human Rights renewed its request to the Secretary-General to collect all relevant information, concerning detainees, such as their number, identity, place and duration of detention and to make this information available to the Commission at its thirty-seventh session.
2. The attached report dated 6 November 1980 was transmitted by the Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations in Geneva, in connection with the request referred to in the preceding paragraph.

ANNEX

Report on the health condition of Palestinian detainees
and prisoners in occupier's prisons

Only seven doctors are available for all prisons in the Zionist entity and the occupied territories. And these doctors bestow aspirin tablets upon the detainees to calm their various aches and pains. These have become part of the detainees' bodies and stick to them throughout their stay behind the bars.

The problem of the Arab detainees' health conditions was brought out during the famous hunger-strike declared in the desert Nafha prison in the Neguev last July. This hunger-strike revealed the absence of medical care in Zionist prisons through the visits to the Nafha prison by lawyers and press correspondents.

Owing to their bad living conditions in Zionist prisons and to organized terror practised by the prison authorities Arab detainees are bound to catch deadly diseases. Nafha detainees say: "Eight to ten prisoners are placed in a non-ventilated room and suffer from respiratory difficulties as well as from insufficient lighting because the sun cannot enter the room". They also state: "food in prison is extremely bad and most of the prisoners suffer from hunger". Moreover, "many of them have been sentenced to life imprisonment and they have to eat and sleep on the floor without a mattress. They are ill but do not receive the required treatment in time" (1).

The inhuman treatment to which they were subjected by the Zionists compelled Arab detainees to declare hunger-strike many times to request that their conditions of detention be improved. In Beersheba prison for instance, following the death of a detainee in December 1979 the 600 Arab detainees in that prison appealed to world public opinion to help 126 of their number suffering from various illnesses. One of them, an inhabitant of Tulkarm, is 75 years old and was sentenced to 15 years in prison. Moreover some detainees have gone mad as a result of the harsh conditions imposed on them (2). For instance, the detainee is deprived of adequate nutrition or he is put in an isolation cell devoid of light into which so little air can infiltrate through a small hole that it kills the detainee instead of enabling him to remain alive. Moreover, the detainee has to sleep on the floor and the blanket he is given is absolutely unsuitable to the cold of winter especially in a desert climate where cold is known to be extreme at night (3).

One of the detainees who went mad in the Zionist prisons is the Palestinian militant Nader Al-Afuri. He was transferred to the psychiatric hospital as a result of the harsh treatment and the savage torture to which he had been subjected. This case induced Mr. Moshe Ammar, member of the Knesset to submit a request to the State legal adviser so that an inquiry could be opened into the incident which caused the madness of Nader Al-Afuri (4).

In the desert prison of Nafha, the Arab detainees declared a hunger-strike which lasted more than 40 days to protest the harsh conditions and the bad treatment to which they were subjected by the prison authorities. The Nafha detainees requested the prison authorities:

1. to guarantee them better accommodation;
2. to allow them to spend more than two hours a day in the open air of the prison courtyard;
3. to improve the kind of food served in the prison;
4. to allow them to obtain more books, copybooks, newspapers and letters;

5. to improve medical care in prison;
6. to increase to 600 Israeli lira per month the sum allowed as pocket money;
7. to increase monthly visiting time from one half hour to one hour;
8. to bring detainees to Court and conduct investigations before issuing arbitrary prison sentences.

The heroic uprising of the Palestinian detainees in the desert prison of Nafha, their general hunger-strike, and their legendary resistance in the face of all attempts aimed at breaking their hunger-strike injured the Zionist authorities. They decided to give the detainees injections of serum after chaining them with iron chains or to introduce plastic tubes into their mouths, thus condemning them to suffocation in case the tube reaches the lungs instead of the stomach. This happened indeed to the Palestinian militants and martyrs Mohammad Ali Al-Joafari and Mohammad Halawah. The same method nearly killed the two other militants Mustafa Abu Zahra and Ishak Marara who were both transported to hospital in very critical condition (6).

This nazi method was confirmed by the Jewish lawyer Lea Tsemel who reported: "the prisoners were artificially fed with salt water after being beaten" (7). The head of the health section of the Zionist prison service administration also admitted that "the prisoners' lungs had been damaged owing to artificial feeding" (8). Hayim Levi, director of the Zionist prison service administration asserted that the situation in Israeli prisons had become unbearable (9).

The attempt to feed the detainees by force aroused anger against the Zionist authorities. The newspaper "Al-Hamishmar" published an article entitled "Prisoners' security" which said: "It is well-known that the State of Israel is still giving the prisoners the minimum conditions for human life. Thus, the hunger-strike and particularly the death of one of the prisoners gives rise to a lot of questioning" (10).

At the ICRC headquarters in Jerusalem, Dr. Ahmad Hamzeh Annatsha strongly criticized force-feeding which led to the death of two prisoners (11).

Once again the brutality with which the prisoners were forced to break their hunger-strike was confirmed when "Asaf Haruvieh" Hospital broadcast its report on the state of health of the detainee Ishak Marara eight days after he was transported to hospital. The report stated: "The prisoner's condition is still very serious after the discovery of foreign matter in his lungs" and this must have resulted from the introduction of feeding tubes into his windpipe instead of his stomach (12).

Moreover, owing to the absence of medical care in the Israeli prisons, the detained Palestinian militant Anis Mahmud Dawla died on 30 August 1980 in Ashkelon Hospital. It appeared that he suffered from a heart condition and did not receive the required treatment. This martyr is one of the heroes of the Nafha prison hunger-strike and had been transferred by the Zionist authorities from Nafha prison to Ashkelon prison.

A former Jewish prisoner called Yussuf Flankel related how Palestinian militants were tortured in Zionist prisons. He said: "During the hunger-strike in Nafha prison I was in Ramleh. Several days after the beginning of the hunger-strike 26 prisoners were transferred from Nafha to Ramleh. One day as I went to get my treatment for ulcer from the prison hospital I heard screams from one of the rooms. The door of the room was open, so I went there, hid myself behind the door and looked in the room

through the space between the door and the wall. I saw three Arab prisoners, their hands behind their backs, their feet chained at the ankles and their hands and legs bound together from behind by an iron chain. They were surrounded by 6 or 7 prison guards who were forcing them to sit straight and were introducing feeding tubes in their mouths. At that moment the Arab prisoners shouted and clamoured. But the prison guards paid no heed. They forcibly opened their mouths and continued to introduce the tubes into their mouths. At that moment, one of the prison guards suddenly pulled out a tear-gas grenade and threw it at the prisoners who began to cough and spit blood. This lasted 10 minutes. During that time I was hiding behind the door and could see all that happened. The prison guards treated the prisoners like animals. They continued their brutal actions until they finally succeeded in introducing the tubes and feeding them. All this happened before my eyes and resembled the stories I had heard about the Nazi Gestapo ... (13).

The following picture of the life of Palestinian prisoners comes from the desert prison of Nafha: the director of health affairs, Dr. Kohen, came to visit the detainees. Their conversation went as follows: "We have been sleeping on the floor for 13 years, illness has taken hold of us, the food is really fourth class In brief, our conditions are inhuman. How do you permit this since you are the highest health authority?" Dr. Kohen answered: "Conditions are imposed from higher up." We said to Kohen: "We defy you to put a Jewish prisoner in such conditions. We even defy you to put 8 or 10 cows in the same small space and the same limited volume of air. Listen Doctor Kohen ... give us conditions similar to those you give your cows in kibbutz barns, give us as much air and light as you give them ...". Dr. Kohen did not answer. He turned his back and left.

What do Palestinian detainees in the Neguev desert ask for? They themselves answer: "We want air, we want to breathe, we want to see the colour of the Neguev sand, we want to smell at least the smell of its storms. We are facing a cold-blooded murder conspiracy, a new murder technique, we appeal to you to stand on our side, we appeal to you to support us, not to let us die lonely in the desert. We did not disappoint you, do not disappoint us. We want air. Nafha prison is a collective tomb in the desert." (14).

Another picture reaches us from Jenin prison: "There, Arab detainees suffer from deadly illnesses resulting from their conditions of detention and bad nutrition. Among them are the militant Shakib Abu Jabal, sentenced to 136 years imprisonment and his son Yussuf who suffers from an eye disease and a swelling of the water pocket between the testicles to the size of an orange. As for the detainees Fuad Ashaer, Fawzi Hussein Abu Jabal, Majed Fuad Abu Jabal and Najib Salim Mahmud, they suffer from tooth decay and various other diseases." (15).

In Ashkelon prison the racist character of Zionism is obvious. Indeed the negligence of the medical team toward Arabs led to the death of the militant Yasser Shafah and before him Idris Nawfal, Amr Ahmad Awadallah, Fuad Salameh, and Yussuf Karim, while Jewish prisoners obtain the required care ... (16).

Nothing is different in the other Zionist prisons. The health condition of Arab detainees is very bad and medical care is nonexistent. Treatment, when there is any, is limited to tranquilizers. And yet, Hayim Levy, director of Israeli prisons, shamelessly admits that there are no more than seven prison doctors (17).

- (1) Davar: 9 July 1980
- (2) Al-Hamishmar: 27 December 1979
- (3) Haaretz: 6 February 1980
- (4) Al-Hamishmar: 18 February 1980
- (5) Yediot Aharonot: 30 July 1980
- (6) Haaretz: 25 July 1980
- (7) Haaretz: 23 July 1980
- (8) Haaretz: 24 July 1980
- (9) Haaretz: 11 July 1980
- (10) Al-Hamishmar: 24 July 1980
- (11) Davar: 19 August 1980
- (12) RTA: 28 July 1980
- (13) Arra'y Al-Urdunia: 31 August 1980 from the Israeli magazine "Haolam Haze"
- (14) Arra'y Al-Am Al-Koweitiya: 19 August 1980
- (15) Arra'y Al-Urdunia: 9 March 1980
- (16) Arra'y Al-Am Al-Koweitiya: 18 February 1980
- (17) Arra'y Al-Urdunia: 19 August 1980.