

Israel demands action on Palestinian protests
Al-Ahram Publishing House, Al Bawaba
26 February 2013

Israel on Monday demanded that the Palestinian Authority act "responsibly" and rein in unrest, as Palestinian protesters vowed revenge over the death of a Palestinian prisoner allegedly under Israeli torture.

A spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issued the appeal for calm, the second in as many days, as thousands of mourners attended a tense funeral in the West Bank for Arafat Jaradat who died Saturday in an Israeli jail.

"Israel expects the Palestinian Authority to act responsibly to prevent incitement and violence which will only exacerbate the situation," spokesman Mark Regev told AFP.

Jaradat's death sparked violence in the West Bank city of Hebron, his hometown, along with a call to Palestinian Premier Salam Fayyad for a full inquiry.

Fayyad's office issued a statement on Sunday to express his deep sorrow and shock over the martyrdom of prisoner Arafat Jaradat in Israeli occupation prisons". He "affirms the need to promptly disclose the true reasons that led to his martyrdom", it added.

Moreover, the Gaza-based Hamas movement announced that Jaradat had died because of "the inhumane condition in Israeli jails."

According to AFP, Israel's Shin Bet internal intelligence service said Jaradat had been arrested on Monday for his involvement in a stonethrowing incident in November 2012 during which an Israeli had been wounded.

"After lunch, as he was resting in Megiddo prison, Arafat Jaradat was taken ill. Medics were called to treat him but they were unable to save his life," it added.

The intelligence service said Jaradat had back aches and had previous injuries, one to the left leg from rubber bullets and one to the stomach from a tear gas canister.

He had been examined several times by a doctor, "who did not find any medical problem. The investigation continued", Shin Bet said.

Israeli police were now probing Jaradat's death, it added.

The future of Palestinian prisoners, especially those who went on hunger strikes, had sparked protests across the Palestinian territories, causing further deterioration in the already-tense Palestinian-Israeli relations.

However, Israeli media reported that security officials had invited the Palestinian Authority to be present on Sunday for his autopsy.

Tough court sentence for Samer Issawi

The death of Jaradat is currently coinciding with the tragic problem of other Palestinian prisoner, Samer Issawi, who has been on hunger strike for 218 consecutive days.

An Israeli magistrate court issued an eight-month imprisonment verdict against Issawi, who has been on hunger strike for 218 consecutive days, his sister, Sherine, said on her Facebook account on Thursday.

Last week, Issawi published a message through his Facebook campaign, stating that his health had deteriorated dramatically, asserting that he was now “hanging between life and death.”

“I will continue until the end, until the last drop of water in my body, until martyrdom,” Issawi said. “My weak body is collapsing, but I’m still able to be patient and continue resistance.”

Issawi added that doctors had warned him that he might suffer a stroke due to declining sugar levels and falling blood pressure.

“Do not be afraid for my heart if it stops; don’t fear for my hands if they’re paralysed. I am still alive now, and tomorrow, and after death, because Jerusalem is in my blood, in my devotion, and in my faith,” Issawi concluded.

Issawi was released as part of an Egypt-brokered prisoner swap between Hamas and Israeli authorities in October 2011. That deal led to the release of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in exchange for more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails.

However, Issawi, among other 14 Palestinians, was rearrested in July of last year under Israel’s so-called administrative detention law. The law, which has been in place since the end of the British mandate in Palestine in 1948, allows for the arrest of Palestinians if they are deemed a “threat” to Israel’s national security.

The scope of the ongoing hunger strike has posed a new challenge to the Tel Aviv government, which has come under international criticism for its practice of detaining prisoners without trial.

The hunger-striking Palestinian announced that he will likely continue his protest because he does not know when he will be freed following the Israeli court sentence.

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