

UN rights chief concerned about health of Palestinian hunger strikers in Israel jails

24 May 2017 – The United Nations human rights chief today expressed serious concern about the health of more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons as their hunger strike entered its 38th day without resolution.

“I am especially alarmed by reports of punitive measures by the Israeli authorities against the hunger strikers, including restricted access to lawyers and the denial of family visits,” UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein [said](#) in a news release from his Office ([OHCHR](#)).

“The right of detainees to access a lawyer is a fundamental protection in international human rights law that should never be curtailed,” he added.

The Palestinian prisoners began a hunger strike on 17 April, demanding, amongst other things, an end to administrative detention and solitary confinement. They are also demanding an increase in the number and length of family visits and improved access to healthcare.

“Various international bodies have repeatedly called on Israel to end its practice of administrative detention,” Mr. Zeid said, noting that such detainees should either be charged with an offence and tried, according to international standards, or released immediately.

An estimated 6,300 Palestinians are currently being held in Israeli prisons, mostly outside the occupied Palestinian territory, in contravention of article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.