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Position Paper Palestinian Bar Association September 2024

The Palestinian Bar Association views with deep concern the fate of Palestinian lawyers detained by the Israeli occupation since October 7, 2023. The Israeli occupation is held responsible for any harm to their safety or health, given the policies of torture, denial of rights, and inhumane treatment that Palestinian detainees endure in Israeli prisons.

Since October 7, the number of lawyers detained in Israeli prisons from the West Bank has reached 32, including 2 female lawyers. The total number of Palestinian prisoners exceeds 10,000, with no accurate information available regarding the number or identities of detained lawyers from the Gaza Strip, or Gaza detainees in general. The campaign of arrests, torture, and mistreatment of lawyers is part of the broader oppression faced by Palestinian detainees, which has been legitimized by Israeli military orders and procedures that violate international law and international humanitarian law, particularly the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions.

In the context of increasing pressure on the lives of prisoners, the regional commander issued Temporary Military Order No. 2148, allowing the extension of detention orders from 3 days to 6 days. Additionally, Article 33 of Military Order No. 1651, which permits the detention of individuals for 8 days without being presented to a court, was activated. The Emergency Law has been invoked to deprive prisoners of their basic rights, including family visits, legal representation, adequate food, blankets, clothing, access to beds, and medical services. All the rights that prisoners fought long and hard for have been stripped away.

According to reports and testimonies from released prisoners, Palestinian detainees, including lawyers, are suffering from a lack of medical care, daily

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abuse and torture using police dogs, as well as verbal and physical harassment. Since October 7, the number of martyr prisoners has reached 22, with the exact number of martyrs from the Gaza Strip remaining unknown. Prisoners from Gaza are treated as unlawful combatants and are subjected directly to the military rather than the prison authorities. Israel prevents their legal representation and disclosure of their detention conditions, following a policy of enforced disappearance. This classification has no basis in international law. According to the Israeli military prosecution, the legal process they undergo during their detention is not the recognized military legal process and does not fall under the Fourth Geneva Convention. This is despite their blatant disregard for the guarantees provided in the Third Geneva Convention concerning prisoners of war and their rights, as well as the Fourth Geneva Convention concerning the rights of civilians under occupation since October 7.

The policy of impunity remains the main obstacle to the enforcement of international law and international humanitarian law. Israel's persistence in committing acts of genocide and grave violations, which have claimed the lives of tens of thousands of victims, poses a threat to the international community and humanity, endangering international peace and security. In light of this, the Palestinian Bar Association calls on the international community to fulfill its responsibilities to protect Palestinian civilians, including prisoners, by taking the following steps:

- Forming an international commission of inquiry into the grave violations against Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons, to uncover the fate of those who have been forcibly disappeared or killed, and to assess their living conditions.
- Recognizing the actions of the Israeli prison authorities as war crimes and crimes against humanity, and hold the perpetrators accountable.

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- Applying international pressure on Israel to unconditionally release Palestinian prisoners and annul their trials, particularly for women, children, administrative detainees, and the sick.
- Urging the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to fulfill their obligations to stop Israel's grave violations against Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.