

Israel

Israel to deport comatose Palestinian hunger striker?

Israel has offered to release a comatose Palestinian if he is deported from the West Bank for four years. Mohammed Allan fell into the coma during a hunger strike to protest his administrative detention without charge.

Mel Frykberg / 18.08.2015

Though Israel's Supreme Court has delayed a decision on whether to release a hunger-striking Palestinian man currently in a coma, military authorities have offered to let him go on the condition that he agree to being deported from the West Bank for four years.

Skeletal, frail and unconscious, Mohammed Allan lies shackled and cuffed to a bed in southern Israel's Barzilai Medical Center, breathing with the help of a ventilator and being fed vitamins and a saline solution intravenously. A doctor says he will die if he resumes his hunger strike upon waking. The 31-year-old lawyer and Islamic Jihad sympathizer lapsed into his coma on Friday, after drinking only tap water for 60 days to protest his "administrative detention," under which mostly Palestinian prisoners are jailed indefinitely without charges or evidence provided to their lawyers. Allan was arrested last November.

Jamal Khatib, Allan's lawyer, has called Israel's offer of deportation unacceptable, and the Palestinian Prisoners Society has rejected the proposition, which is reportedly against Allan's wishes.

On very different grounds, Israeli Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan also opposes the deportation deal, saying that it could encourage other Palestinians held under administrative detention to follow suit.

Allan's hunger strike has also challenged [Israel's controversial force-feeding law](#), which was passed by the Knesset, or Israeli parliament, at the end of July, following the release of two men who had successfully protested their administrative detention.

Islamic Jihad's Adnan Khader was released in July. Samer Issawi from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) was released in 2013.

Unlike Allan neither of them had reached the point of lapsing into a coma.

Calling the law tantamount to torture, Dr. Leonid Eidelman, the chairman of the Israel Medical Association, has said the IMA would refuse to enforce it.

Dr. Hazi Levi, director of Barzilai Medical Center, said Allan would only be force-fed if his life was in immediate danger.

'Reducing tensions'

Though many oppose Allan's release, Israeli officials are concerned about the consequences should he die in detention.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman who asked that his name not be used told DW that the situation was dangerous for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Benedetta Berti, a political analyst at Israel's **Institute for National Security Studies (INSS)**, believes that officials offered the deal to Allan's representatives to avoid exacerbating confrontations already taking place in the West Bank.

"Israel doesn't want to escalate the current situation," **Berti** told DW. "The compromise was aimed at reducing tensions and allowing both sides to save face."

In a request to the attorney general quoted by The Times of Israel, the Arab Knesset legislators Ahmed Tibi and Osama Sa'adi wrote that "there is no justification to continue the administrative detention of a dying patient in the intensive care unit."

Islamic Jihad has warned that should Allan die the group, which is based in [the Gaza Strip](#), would no longer respect the truce agreed between Israel and the Palestinian political faction Hamas and would launch attacks.

"If they refuse to release Allan and he dies in detention, there will be mass unrest across the West Bank and Gaza," Dr. Samir Awad, of Birzeit University, near Ramallah, told DW. "This would lead to retaliation by Israel and the possibility of high numbers of civilian casualties, something that neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians want," he added.

The situation in the West Bank is already tense following the killing of about 25 Palestinians across the territory by Israeli security forces since the beginning of the year.

Between Saturday and Monday, there were also three separate [stabbing attacks on Israeli soldiers](#) by "lone wolf" Palestinians, resulting in the deaths of two of the attackers and the shooting injury of another.

Violent clashes between security forces loyal to the Palestinian Authority and protesters sympathizing with Allan have also taken place in a number of cities in the West Bank.

"The PA will not be able to keep a lid on the violence, which will increase over the next few months if the situation escalates," Awad told DW.

Hundreds of Palestinian prisoners are also carrying out acts of civil disobedience that have led to clashes inside Israeli prisons.

"The prisoners' issue is one which unites all Palestinians irrespective of their politics," Berti said.

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