

Palestinian Hunger-Strikers Reach Deal with Israel and End Strike



Ramallah, May 29 (RHC)-- Israeli authorities have reportedly agreed to a deal with the Palestinian prisoners who have been on hunger strike in Israeli jails over the past 40 days. Issa Qaraqe, the head of the Palestinian Committee of Prisoners' Affairs, confirmed the deal over the weekend.

Israel Prison Service spokeswoman Nicole Englander said the deal was reached after talks between Tel Aviv on the one side and the Palestinian Authority and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on the other.

More than 1,600 Palestinian prisoners were participating in the hunger strike, dubbed the Freedom and Dignity Strike, which started on April 17th. The strike was led by Marwan Barghouti, a jailed leader of the Palestinian Fatah movement.

The hunger strikers were demanding appropriate medical care and treatment in Israeli prisons, as well as an end to solitary confinement and the so-called administrative detention, which is a form of imprisonment without trial or charge.

There had lately been rising concerns about the health conditions of the Palestinian inmates; some of them had been taken to hospital with deteriorating health.

Not all of the details of the Saturday deal were immediately clear. Some Israeli media outlets said that, under the agreement, Palestinian prisoners would be allowed two monthly family visits instead of one.

On Friday, Palestinian demonstrators had turned out on the streets in the occupied West Bank and blockaded Gaza Strip to express their solidarity with the hunger strikers. Israeli forces clashed with the demonstrators.

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