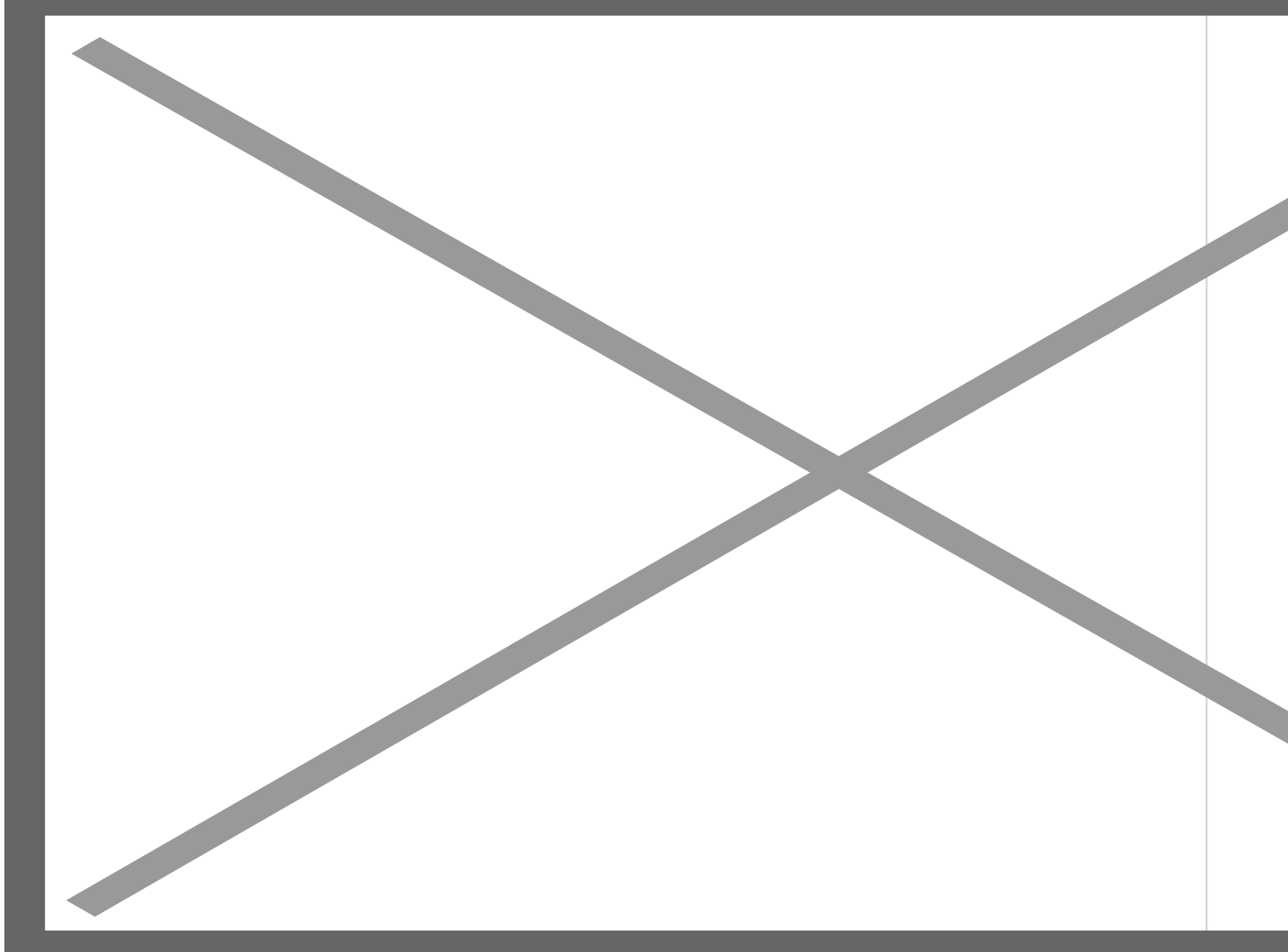


Israeli court rejects transfer of Palestinian hunger striker to West Bank hospital

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Palestinian protesters and members of an anti-Zionist Jewish movement who oppose Israel's existence, hold signs in solidarity with Palestinian detainee. (Photo: AFP)

Ramallah, October 29 (RHC)-- An Israeli court has turned down a request filed by lawyers of hunger-striking Palestinian prisoner Maher al-Akhras for his transfer to a hospital in the occupied West Bank. On Thursday, Israel's higher court of justice ruled that al-Akhras had no right to be transferred to a Palestinian hospital in the occupied West Bank, Palestinian Information Center reported.

Reacting to the ruling, the resistance group Islamic Jihad's Muhjat al-Quds Foundation for Prisoners accused Israeli authorities of endangering the lives of the prisoners and described the verdict as a slow death sentence against al-Akhras, who is now in his fourth month of hunger strike in Israeli custody.

Several international organizations have demanded the Israeli regime release Akhras, who entered the 95th consecutive day of his open-ended hunger strike on Thursday in protest against his administrative detention.

The United Nations recently urged Israel to put an end to the practice of administrative detention and immediately release Akhras. Michael Lynk, UN special rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories, called on Tel Aviv to end administrative detention, in which Israel keeps detainees for up to six months, a period which can be extended an infinite number of times, sometimes for years.

Lynk also called on Tel Aviv "to abolish" the practice of administrative detention and free those detainees it has placed behind bars in its prisons.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has warned that the inmate was entering a medically "critical phase." Palestinian inmate Maher al-Akhras has entered a medically critical phase after over 85 days of hunger strike, the ICRC warns.

Physicians have already warned of damage to several organs of the Palestinian prisoner's body, such as the kidneys, liver, and heart, adding that the inmate's senses of hearing and speaking have also been affected.

The 49-year-old Palestinian prisoner, the father of six children, was detained on July 27 and held under the administrative detention order, with no charge. This led him start a hunger strike nearly three months ago in an attempt to seek justice.

Palestinian detainees have continuously resorted to open-ended hunger strikes in an attempt to express their outrage at the detention. Palestinians hold Israeli authorities fully responsible for any deterioration of the circumstances in jails.

Currently more than 7,000 of Palestinian prisoners are reportedly being held in 24 Israeli prisons and detention centers. Palestinian prisoners are subjected to degrading conditions, including administrative detention, solitary confinement, and bans on family visits.

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