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Ramallah, August 22 (RHC)-- Palestinian prisoners have staged a mass hunger strike in Israeli prisons to protest crackdowns and mistreatment by prison officials.

The prisoners, who began their strikes on Monday, also refused to leave their cells for the routine so-called "security checks." They say their strike, which will last two weeks, aims to protest repeated inspection of cells by Israeli prison guards.

The decision to begin the hunger strike was made by a "Supreme Emergency Committee" which is made up of prisoners from all factions. It comes after Israeli prison authorities announced a set of repressive

measures against long-term prisoners in violation of an agreement reached with prisoners.

In March, the prisoners agreed to suspend their pressure measures after the regime decided to put an end to the retaliatory actions taken by the Israeli Prison Service (IPS).

There are thousands of Palestinians held at Israeli jails. Hundreds of the inmates have been apparently incarcerated under the practice of the so-called administrative detention. Some prisoners have been held in administrative detention for up to 11 years.

Israeli jail authorities keep Palestinian prisoners under deplorable conditions without proper hygienic standards. Palestinian inmates have also been subjected to systematic torture, harassment, and repression.

The new strike action also comes after the Israeli regime's Supreme Court tossed out an appeal request submitted for the release of a Palestinian prisoner, who has been on hunger strike for 172 days in protest at his illegal detention.

The court nixed the request lodged by Khalil Awawda's lawyer on Sunday, despite severe deterioration in his health conditions, the official Palestinian Wafa news agency reported.

The court denied the request after the regime's internal security apparatus Shin Bet forwarded a "confidential file" to the judge.

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