

Red Cross staff outraged over Israel's shackled, humiliated release of Palestinian prisoners



Palestinians who were imprisoned by Israel arrive on buses to the European hospital in Khan Yunis for checkups on February 1, 2025. (Photo by AFP)

Ramallah, February 2 (RHC)-- Officials from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were outraged over the way Israel released the Palestinian prisoners during Saturday's prisoner swap between the occupying regime and the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas.

Palestinian prisoners released to the ICRC on Saturday from an Israeli prison were led out in shackles with their hands behind their heads and wearing a bracelets with Israeli symbols.

According to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, ICRC staff were shocked by the regime's treatment of the Palestinian prisoners. Many of the released prisoners appeared in poor health, with some barely able to walk. They were taken to hospitals in the city of Ramallah for medical checks and treatment.

A number of freed Palestinian prisoners also arrived in Gaza and were taken to the European Hospital in Khan Younis in the southern besieged Strip.

As part of the fourth prisoner swap under the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas, the Tel Aviv regime on Saturday released 183 Palestinian detainees in exchange for three Israeli captives.

The freed Palestinian prisoners included 111 from the Gaza Strip, who were detained following the Israeli regime's genocidal war on the besieged enclave on October 7, 2023. Thirty-two of the freed prisoners from the occupied West Bank were handed over to the International Red Cross from the Ofer Prison facility near Ramallah.

Israeli forces, however, fired sound bombs toward hundreds of local residents and detainees' families gathered near the Ramallah Cultural Palace to welcome the freed prisoners.

Hamas also verified the poor health of the prisoners, saying it confirmed "the brutality" of what Palestinians endure in Israeli jails.

These violations amount to "war crimes and crimes against humanity that require immediate intervention by the international community, the UN and the rights group."

Earlier in the day, Hamas released three Israeli captives from Gaza and handed them over to the ICRC. Two of the captives were released Saturday in the southern city of Khan Yunis in a swift and organized ceremony with a few onlookers, while the third was submitted to the ICRC later in Gaza City in the north.

Israeli occupation forces on Saturday raided the homes of several recently released Palestinian prisoners in the city of al-Khalil (Hebron) in the south of the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian news agency Wafa reported, quoting local sources.

According to the sources, Israeli forces stormed the home of freed prisoner Imad Abu Ramouz in the al-Haras neighborhood in Hebron upon his release.

Israeli forces also raided the home of Sidqi al-Zaro, threatening his family and warning them against celebrating his release or displaying national flags and banners.

Israeli troops assaulted journalist Musab Shawar while he was covering the raid on Abu Ramouz's home. Shawar was wounded and transferred to Alia Governmental Hospital for treatment.

The Gaza ceasefire deal began on January 19 intending to end the 15-month Israeli war on Gaza and free captives still held in the blockaded territory in return for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners.

Israel has released a list of more than 700 Palestinian prisoners to be released under the deal. More than 230 prisoners are serving life sentences and will be permanently sent to exile upon their release.

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