

Palestinians Hold General Strike to Support Prisoners



Ramallah, April 28 (RHC)-- Thousands of Palestinians have launched a general strike in solidarity with prisoners across the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, shutting down public transportation services, shops, businesses, banks and schools.

The strike began just one day before the Fatah movement's call for a Day of Rage on Friday, in which Palestinians clashed with Israeli forces in order to show their solidarity with the Palestinian prisoners' movement.

Palestine's Ma'an news service reported that during the strike, the streets were so empty, they were reminiscent of the First Intifada, which started in 1987, when Palestinians held general strikes as part of a coordinated civil disobedience campaign against Israeli forces.

Earlier this week, the National Committee to Support Hunger-Striking Prisoners also called on Palestinians to boycott Israeli products, adding that Palestinian merchants should stop selling Israeli products.

"As the freedom and dignity battle continues, the (Israeli) occupation escalates its discourse and oppressive measures against our children and our heroes who are fighting this saga," the support committee said in a statement. "To help them remain firm, it has been decided to completely boycott

Israeli goods in Palestinian markets."

That same day, a number of prisoners being held in solitary confinement in Ramla prisons had stopped drinking water as well. According to Qaraq, Israel Prison Service officials have continued to punish participating prisoners for their strike, including preventing them from accessing commissaries to purchase salt — as some prisoners are only consuming salt and water — giving them only dirty sheets and covers and carrying out provocative search raids of prisoners' rooms.

Last week, Israeli authorities had begun cracking down on the prisoners, forcibly moving many to different sections of Israeli jails, confiscating their clothes and personal belongings and preventing lawyers and family members from visiting them in jail.

Throughout the world, many groups have expressed their solidarity with the strikers, with near-daily rallies continuing to take place in Palestine.

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