

# *Israel Suspends Family Visits for Gaza Prisoners*

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Gaza City, June 30 (RHC)-- The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas says the Tel Aviv regime has suspended family visits for prisoners from the besieged Gaza Strip in Israeli jails. Hamas said in a statement on Thursday that the Israeli authorities had "surprisingly" decided not to allow any Gazans to visit family members in jails.

The Palestinian resistance movement denounced the Israeli decision as a "declaration of war." The statement said: "This decision is the beginning of a war on (Hamas) prisoners and we will not allow it."

Hamas stressed that it held the Israeli authorities accountable for any deterioration in conditions of prisons in the coming period. Relatives of Hamas members in jail were previously able to apply for permits to visit prisoners.

According to Israeli website Ynet, the measure is an attempt to force Hamas to release two Israelis believed to be held captive by the group, as well as the bodies of two troopers killed in the 2014 Israeli war on Gaza.

The Palestinian prisoners' rights group Addameer earlier said that some 6,200 Palestinians, 320 of whom Gaza residents with different political affiliations, had been imprisoned by Israel since May. Hundreds of Palestinian prisoners staged a 40-day hunger strike earlier this year to denounce the infringement of their

basic human rights in Israeli custody.

The strikers demanded basic rights, such as an end to administrative detention, solitary confinement, and deliberate medical negligence. They also notably demanded the reinstatement of family visits facilitated by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to twice a month.

The much-criticized administrative detention is a policy under which Palestinian inmates are kept in Israeli detention facilities without trial or charge. Nearly 700 prisoners are currently held under administrative detention. Some of them have been held in such detention for up to 11 years.

The Israeli regime has also begun reducing electricity supplies to the besieged Gaza Strip.

The blockade of Gaza has caused a decline in living standards as well as unprecedented unemployment and poverty.

Israel has launched several wars on the Palestinian coastal sliver, the last of which began in early July 2014. The Israeli aggression, which ended on August 26, 2014, killed nearly 2,200 Palestinians

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