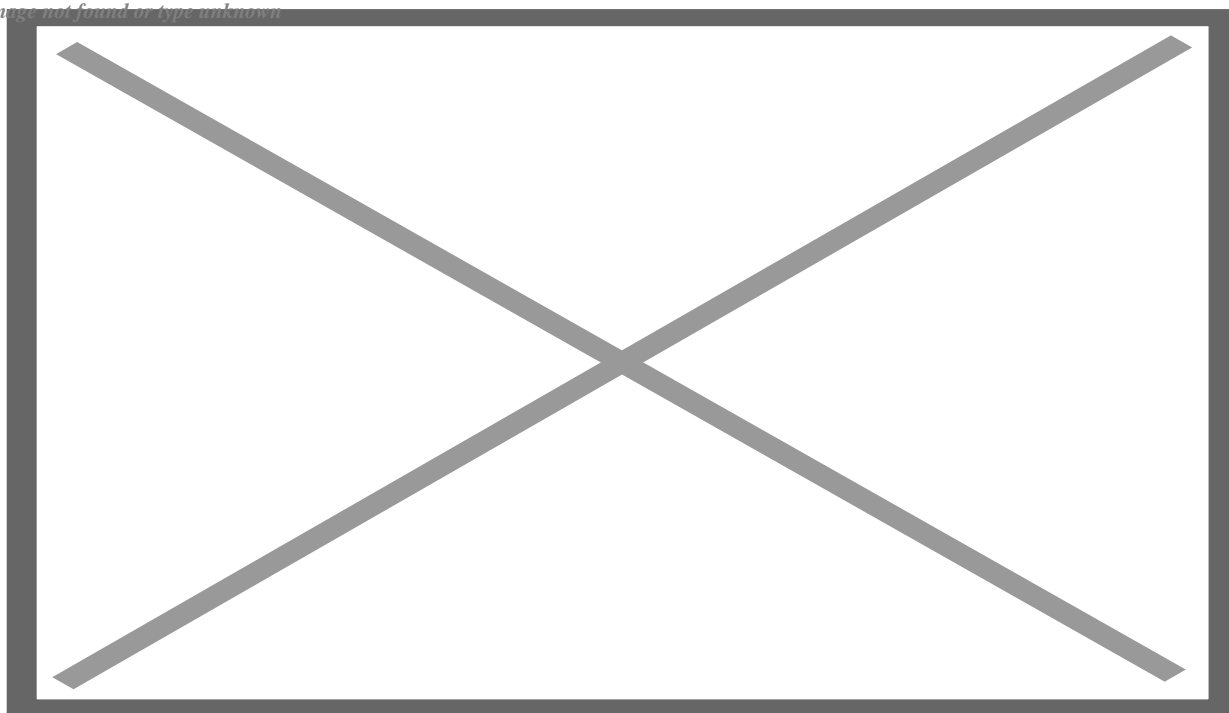


Palestinians warn of health condition of prisoner

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Palestinians warn of deteriorating health condition of prisoner. (Photo: Press TV)

Ramallah, November 2 (RHC)-- A group advocating Palestinian prisoners' rights has voiced serious concern about the health condition of a Palestinian prisoner who has been on hunger strike for over three months since he was arrested by Israeli military forces.

Qadri Abu Bakr, the head of the Prisoners and Ex-prisoners Affairs Authority, said that Maher al-Akhras is gradually losing his vision and hearing abilities and became unable to speak in addition to other dangers threatening his vital organs.

He added that nearly 100 days after the Palestinian prisoner's hunger strike, Israeli authorities are still refusing to release him and insist that Akhras must complete his current administrative detention.

The official, however, emphasized that Akhras has vowed not to end his hunger strike unless his immediate release or transfer to a Palestinian hospital in the West Bank. Bakr said the Palestinian inmate knows that Israeli authorities can extend his detention again.

"Palestinian efforts have not stopped in supporting Akhras in this heroic battle by following his condition at the highest levels," he added.

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 has led him to start a hunger strike in an attempt to seek justice.

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 United Nations and the European Union have called for Akhras's immediate release.

European Commission spokesperson for foreign affairs issues Peter Stano, in a statement released on October 30th, said the bloc is closely monitoring the situation of Akhras, saying: "Regardless of allegations against Mr. al-Akhras, the European Union reiterates its long-standing concerns about Israel's extensive of administrative detention without formal charges."

Hundreds of Palestinian prisoners are held under administrative detention, in which Israel keeps the detainees for up to six months, a period which can be extended an infinite number of times. Women and minors are among these detainees.

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. More than 7,000 Palestinians are reportedly held in Israeli jails.

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