

Israel Approves Bill to Force-feed Palestinian Hunger Strikers



Tel Aviv, June 15 (RHC)-- The Israeli cabinet has approved a proposed law authorizing the force-feeding of Palestinians who are on hunger strike in Israel's jails. The bill, promulgated under the title "Prevention of Damage by Hunger Strikers," was adopted by the Israeli cabinet on Sunday. It has yet to be endorsed by the Israel parliament (Knesset) before being signed into law.

Proposed by Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan, the legislation says Palestinian prisoners will be fed forcibly if their life is in danger. The bill also states that a doctor can apply the force-feeding measure upon the approval of a district court judge. The Israeli cabinet first sought in vain in June 2014 to adopt a similar bill.

The World Medical Association as well as the Israel Medical Association (IMA) have condemned the proposed law. The Physicians for Human Rights, an NGO, described the bill as a "disgraceful" move, saying the Israeli cabinet "has again proposed a disgraceful law that was condemned from the medical community in Israel and the world, and which will legalize torture and gross violations of medical ethics and international conventions."

"Instead of force-feeding prisoners who are humiliated and whose lives are in danger, Israel should deal with the demands of the hunger strikers -- through the ending of administrative detentions," the NGO added.

Administrative detention is a sort of imprisonment without trial or charge that allows Israel to incarcerate Palestinians for up to six months. The detention order can be renewed for indefinite periods of time.

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