

TORTURE OF PRISONERS BY ISRAEL

A few weeks ago, the news media contained reports that accused forces from the United Arab Emirates of torturing detainees in Yemen, and indicated that U.S. military interrogators may have been working along with these forces. In response to these reports, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) noted that because of this, our support for UAE forces could violate a law he wrote that **forbids funding to known human rights violators**¹.

Many Americans are not aware that one of our closest allies, the country that receives the greatest share of U.S. foreign military aid, is among those countries that routinely engage in torture of its prisoners. On June 26 of this year, Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, a Palestinian NGO that works to support Palestinian prisoners, issued a report on the continuing forms of physical and psychological torture of Palestinian prisoners and detainees by Israeli forces². The report states that “Human rights conventions, including the *Convention against Torture* and the *Fourth Geneva Convention*, prohibit the use of torture **with no exceptions**”.

However, Palestinian prisoners and detainees are subjected to torture and ill-treatment from the moment of arrest. These abuses include prolonged isolation from the outside world, inhuman detention conditions, excessive use of blindfolds and handcuffs, slapping and kicking, sleep deprivation, denial of food and water for extended periods of time, denial of access to toilets, exposure to extreme cold or heat, position abuse, yelling and exposure to loud noises, and insults and cursing². During the past spring, prisoners went on a hunger strike protesting their treatment, which led the Israelis to make some small changes, but as this report illustrates, for the most part, these violations persist.

Many prisoners are held in administrative detention without charge for periods of time that could last up to several years. For those who are charged, confessions extracted through these illegal practices are then admissible in court². Since 1967, 73 Palestinian prisoners and detainees have died as a result of torture in Israeli detention during interrogation².

The policy of physical assault against detainees is practiced in a widespread manner, regardless of age, gender, or health conditions. Of special concern is the arrest and treatment of children. Children as young as 12 (and sometimes younger) have been arrested and subjected to abusive treatment. The most common charges against Palestinian youth that result in arrest are stone-throwing and participating in demonstrations³. Children are frequently terrorized when they are arrested by soldiers who storm into their homes in the middle of the night. Although Israeli law stipulates that parents can be present during interrogation of children, Palestinian children are frequently denied this right. In addition to such abuses as being beaten, tied with plastic constraints, enduring insults and humiliation, children are frequently forced to sign testimonies written in Hebrew, which they do not understand. In extreme cases, they may experience threats of killing and sexual abuse³. All of this is in violation of the *U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and the *U.N. Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* to which Israel is a signatory.

Despite these human rights abuses, the U.S. continues to give Israel huge amounts of financial support. By doing so, we are in violation of our own laws.

1. [Waterbury] Republican-American, “Senators ask military officials to clarify U.S. role in Yemen torture,” June 24, 2017.
2. Addameer, “On the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture...” <http://www.addameer.org/international-day-support-victims>, June 26, 2017.
3. Addameer, “Imprisonment of Children,” http://www.addameer.org/the_prisoners/children, February, 2016.

Contact Jewish Voice for Peace New Haven at: JVPNH.org

*JOIN THIS VIGIL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE—EVERY SUNDAY 12-1 P.M.,
BROADWAY, PARK & ELM STREETS: RESIST THIS ENDLESS WAR!*

<https://newhavensundayvigil.wordpress.com/>

Distributed July 30, 2017