



UNITED NATIONS

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
occupied Palestinian territory

**STATEMENT BY THE UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT AND HUMANITARIAN
COORDINATOR FOR THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY
MR. MAXWELL GAYLARD ON
PALESTINIAN PRISONERS DAY**

17 April 2011

On the occasion of Palestinian Prisoners day, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Maxwell Gaylard called for protection of the rights of Palestinians in Israeli detention, particularly women and children.

Mr. Gaylard stressed that regardless of the causes of detention, the rule of law must be applied to all of the approximately 6,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention, in line with international human rights and humanitarian law. In this regard, Mr. Gaylard noted that the International Committee of the Red Cross continues to play an important role regarding the circumstances of Palestinians held in Israeli detention.

Israel's policies and practices regarding Palestinian prisoners raise a number of concerns, including a lack of clarity on the legal status of such prisoners, the location and conditions of their incarceration, the need for access to legal counsel and representation, the issue of administrative detention, and the prevention of family visits for detainees from Gaza. "Not allowing family members to visit Palestinian prisoners is inconsistent with international humanitarian law," Mr. Gaylard observed. "It breaks family ties and leads to the almost total isolation of these individuals, some for many years."

Mr. Gaylard stressed that: "The situation of over 200 child prisoners under the age of 18 and 37 women prisoners is of particular concern. We continue to remind the Government of Israel of the importance of addressing the varying needs and protecting the specific rights of these particularly vulnerable detainees, in accordance with international conventions on the treatment of those in detention. Children under the age of 18 are entitled to special protection, and this must be observed by the Israeli authorities", he noted. Mr. Gaylard also noted that the practice of detaining Palestinians in Israel was contrary to the Geneva Conventions.

Israel is party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention Against Torture, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other international instruments that guarantee basic rights to all persons subject to its jurisdiction.

ENDS.

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